

# Women's Empowerment Principles Equality Means Business

A joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact



## Introduction

The **Women's Empowerment Principles\*** are a set of Principles for business offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. They are the result of a collaboration between the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact. The development of the Principles included an international multi-stakeholder consultation process, which began in March 2009 and culminated in their launch on International Women's Day in March 2010.

Subtitled **Equality Means Business**, the Principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and are informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe. The **Women's Empowerment Principles** seek to point the way to best practice by elaborating the gender dimension of corporate responsibility, the UN Global Compact, and business' role in sustainable development. As well as being a useful guide for business, the Principles seek to inform other stakeholders, including governments, in their engagement with business.

## Principles in Brief

In brief, the **Women's Empowerment Principles** are:

1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
4. Promote education, training and professional development for women.
5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

## Company support and partnership

Companies can engage with the WEPs in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

- Demonstrating high-level commitment through signing the CEO Statement of Support;
- Using the Principles to assess, improve, promote and report on progress in implementing gender equality goals within the company and its sphere of influence;
- Sharing examples of business efforts to advance gender equality and empower women, for inclusion in the complementary WEPs document 'Companies Leading the Way: Putting the Principles into Practice';
- Participating in events, such as the Annual WEPs event each March and webinars to share experiences and learn;
- Promoting the WEPs to peers and partners.
- Offering financial support and corporate sponsorship.

## CEO Statement of Support

The CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles offers business leaders an opportunity to signal their support for the overall goal of advancing and empowering women and, more specifically, the guidance offered by the seven Principles. The Statement encourages business leaders to use the seven Principles as guide



United Nations Global Compact



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality  
and the Empowerment of Women

posts for actions that advance and empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community, and communicate progress through the use of sex-disaggregated data and other benchmarks. The CEO Statement of Support and first group of 39 lead signers was publicly announced on 21 June 2010. [[http://www.unifem.org/news\\_events/story\\_detail.php?StoryID=1112](http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=1112)].

The initiative to expand the list of leaders signing the CEO Statement of Support continues through direct contacts with CEOs and also via UN Women field offices and UN Global Compact local networks. In less than a year, over 180 companies signed the CEO Statement. The current list of signers and information about how to join them can be viewed online at:

[http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues\\_doc/human\\_rights/WEPs\\_CEO\\_Statement\\_of\\_Support\\_Signatories.pdf](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/issues_doc/human_rights/WEPs_CEO_Statement_of_Support_Signatories.pdf)

### **Non-corporate support for the WEPs: the role of civil society and other stakeholders**

While only chief executives of corporate entities can sign the CEO Statement of Support, civil society leaders – including heads of business associations, non-governmental organizations, human rights organizations, women’s organizations and academic institutions – are invited to demonstrate their support for the Women’s Empowerment Principles by making the WEPs part of their programmatic approach to engagement with the private sector and encouraging companies and business leaders within their sphere of influence to sign the CEO Statement, and implement the WEPs.

### **Women’s Empowerment Principles Annual Event and webinar series**

UN Women and the UN Global Compact host an annual event in NYC around International Women’s Day to provide a forum for companies and other stakeholders to discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with using the Principles and identify good practices to advance equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. In addition, the WEPs team offers webinars on topics relating to the WEPs.

For information about upcoming or previous WEPs events, visit:

[http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human\\_rights/equality\\_means\\_business/meetings\\_and\\_events.html](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business/meetings_and_events.html)

### **Keep Up-To-Date with the WEPs Initiative**



**Twitter**

The WEPs are now tweeting! Follow us at: [@WEPrinciples](https://twitter.com/WEPrinciples).

To learn more about Twitter or to set up an account, go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com).



**Facebook**

We have also created a Facebook page to keep the WEPs community updated on relevant news, events and engagement opportunities. [Take a look and spread the word!](#)

### **Contacts and Additional Information**

For further information, please contact:

- Lauren Gula (gula@un.org), UN Global Compact Office and
- Laraine Mills (laraine.mills@unwomen.org), UN Women

See also: [http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human\\_rights/equality\\_means\\_business.html](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/human_rights/equality_means_business.html) and [http://www.unifem.org/partnerships/womens\\_empowerment\\_principles/](http://www.unifem.org/partnerships/womens_empowerment_principles/)

\* The Women’s Empowerment Principles, the product of a collaboration between UN Women and the UN Global Compact informed by an international multi-stakeholder consultation, are adapted from the Calvert Women’s Principles®. The Calvert Women’s Principles were originally developed in partnership with UNIFEM (now part of UN Women) and launched in 2004 as the first global corporate code of conduct focused exclusively on empowering, advancing and investing in women worldwide.