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ECONOMIC PROFITS OF DIVERSITY
Through its Resolution (A/RES/66/223), the UN General Assembly has called on UN Global Compact Local Networks to take action to support and promote gender equality and the Women’s Empowerment Principles in the manner stated below:

The UN General Assembly “requests the United Nations Global Compact Local Networks to promote the Women’s Empowerment Principles and to create awareness of the many ways in which business can promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community”.
Just one year ago, when surveying the representation of women in the global workplace, I asked whether we were amidst a “snowball” moment or a “Sisyphus” moment – meaning whether all the hard-won advancements in gender equality over the last few decades were building momentum towards break through, or taking two steps back with every step forward.

This year, on International Women’s Day 2017, I think many international business leaders are asking the same question. We appear to be amidst a worldwide inflection point, and the answer is not entirely clear.

Despite global recognition that women’s empowerment is good for business, the economy and society, many women of the world today do not feel equally valued. Many workplaces are too dominated by unconscious bias against women, and it is the role and responsibility of the global business community take this fundamental problem seriously.

In the last year we’ve witnessed more women of all backgrounds come together to champion their own rights, desires and beliefs. As they join arms and voices, more attention is being turned to important issues like equal opportunity, parental leave, executive representation and pay equity. But there is still much work to do.

Women’s participation in the global labor force is actually on the decline, dropping from 52.4 percent in 1995 to 49.6 percent in 2015, according to the International Labour Organization. And according to a 2016 review of 1,000 listed companies by Bloomberg LP, the average representation of women in leadership was 23 percent in senior management; 21 percent on boards. Among those companies, 4 percent have a female chairperson and only 3 percent have a female CEO.

From Lise Kingo, General Director of UN Global Compact
Gender bias has long been a roadblock to establishing better representation in high-level corporate leadership for women – despite the fact that if there was gender equality in the workforce, the global economy could gain as much as $28 trillion by 2025, according to the McKinsey Global Institute. So why are business leaders still holding women and the economy back? It’s simple: their biases – which are undermining the future of women – are invisible to them.

There are unconscious and conscious factors influencing gender bias in business and concrete ways leaders can unwind them. Adopting a mindset of a gender champion is a first step. If business leaders can shift from unconsciously gender-biased decisions to consciously championing women, imagine the possibilities for women to be treated fairly at work, rise through development opportunities, and increase the health and safety of both women and men in the workplace.

**Fortunately, women are already blazing the trail towards consciously championing equality.**

First and foremost, women are taking their own steps to assume leadership positions by becoming their own bosses. Women now make up 40 percent of new entrepreneurs in the United States — the highest percentage since 1996, according to the 2016 Kauffman Index of Startup Activity. Yet, according to the Global Banking Alliance for Women, 80 percent of women-owned small and medium enterprises with credit needs are un-served or under-served.
With more women setting the example for what gender equality can look like, business leaders have an opportunity to watch, listen and learn what’s possible with women leading business – and take action to support and/or partner with them for mutual and societal benefit. But in order to unleash the possibilities, they must be willing to acknowledge that gender bias does exist, and it can be an unconscious attitude that even the most well-intentioned CEO may hold.

Because there is no time to wait and the business, economic and social gains of gender equality are significant, we are working to equip business leaders with a tool to identify their own gender bias and find practical solutions to consciously champion equality. With the release of the Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool this week, which helps the global business community identify their own gender bias and suggests practical solutions to consciously champion gender equality, the UN Global Compact, together with partners including UN Women and the Inter-American Development Bank, empowers every business to take action now, without delay. This is just one step of many we urge the business community to take action – today and throughout the year.

International Women’s Day provides us with a moment to recognize and celebrate gender equality, but it is only the start. This is clearly the time for action. We can unlock growth by breaking the bias on gender, but only if our sustained actions create a snowball of change. We must move forward, not back.

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With more women setting the example for what gender equality can look like, business leaders have an opportunity to watch, listen and learn what’s possible with women leading business.
Since 2010, the Warsaw Stock Exchange has been recommending that listed companies should seek to ensure the presence of women in management boards and supervisory boards.

At present, diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace are features without which a company cannot expect to develop satisfactorily and build a market position. Diversity and equal opportunities are still viewed mainly in terms of women’s rights. Women’s rights continue to be a burning social issue despite the fact that the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted nearly 40 years ago, in 1979. Since 2010, in its collection of corporate governance rules: Best Practice for GPW Listed Companies, the Warsaw Stock Exchange (GPW) has been recommending that listed companies should seek to ensure the presence of women in management boards and supervisory boards.

Corporate governance rules aimed at listed companies can contribute to the creation of a concrete value for shareholders, reflected not only in strengthened corporate rights, enhanced transparency, and increased availability of information about the enterprise, but also in a real increase in the company’s market value. Corporate governance improves the image of a listed company and the level of confidence in relations with stakeholders and thus strengthens the competitiveness of the public market. The first set of good practices aimed at companies listed on the regulated market of the Warsaw Stock Exchange was created in 2002. After Poland joined the European Union, the legal environment changed and as new crises arose, new problems came up in the area of corporate governance and new
conceptions started to grow in importance. All that affected Best Practice for GPW Listed Companies — the document was modified a number of times. The current set of corporate governance rules for listed companies (Best Practice for GPW Listed Companies 2016, Best Practice), which entered into force on 1 January 2016, addresses issues considered to be of the utmost importance for corporate governance in listed companies, indicated in EU documents, specialist studies, and collections of good practices applicable on other stock exchanges. A topic that has been a major corporate governance issue around the world for many years is diversity in the composition of company bodies. Best Practice, just like most sets of corporate governance rules of this type, includes provisions pertaining to the issue of diversity.

**Best Practice recommends that listed companies, when evaluating candidates for the management board and the supervisory board, should take into account the issue of ensuring diversity in company bodies — as an element enhancing the effectiveness of their work.**

Irrespective of the issue of increasing the proportion of women on management boards and supervisory boards, it needs to be pointed out that diversity in company bodies is also considered in terms of professional qualifications, experience, age, independence or other features of their members that can be crucial for the contribution of individuals towards achieving the desirable comprehensiveness of a given company body.
It is highly probable that the fact that women holding senior managerial positions in an organisation is beneficial to the organisation’s performance and contributes to its growing value. Irrespective of the purely business-oriented calculations resulting from this thesis, it is necessary to take up systematic activities that will help eliminate actual discrimination against women on their path to professional success. Diversity, as addressed in Best Practice for GPW Listed Companies, understood as offering men and women equal opportunities for employment and promotion, is consistent with EU efforts to encourage the Member States to take actions aimed at ensuring equal rights for women in many aspects of life. The magnitude of the inequality is clearly reflected in the results of analyses of the composition of management and supervisory boards of listed companies. An analysis conducted in 2012 by the Warsaw Stock Exchange and the Capital Market Institute (IRK) revealed that as the seniority of the position increased, the presence of women decreased. In 2012, in companies listed on the regulated market of the Warsaw Stock Exchange, women accounted for nearly 11% of members of management boards and over 12% of members of supervisory boards. Over the next years, the situation slightly improved. According to data published by the Women Leadership in Business Foundation, in 2015, the proportion of women in management boards increased to more than 12% and was close to 14.5% in the case of supervisory boards¹. A larger percentage of women in company bodies is a step forward in building awareness of the conditions for achieving the best results in teamwork, however, we need a few more years to assert with certainty that we are observing a

Women accounted for nearly

11% of members of management boards

12% of members of supervisory boards

Apart from its recommendation indicating the need to take diversity into account during the appointment of members of the management board and the supervisory board, Best Practice requires all companies to publish on their websites information about their diversity policy with regard to the company’s authorities and key managers.

The “comply or explain” principle applies — if a company pursues no policy on one or more issues, it should disclose this fact and state its reasons.

Under law, large listed companies (exceeding at least two of values such as: average annual employment of 250 persons, total assets as at the end of a financial year of PLN 85 million, annual net revenues from sales of goods and products of PLN 170 million) are obliged to include such information — however, only with regard to the management board and the supervisory board — in their corporate governance statements being part of the annual report on the company’s operations. The description of the diversity policy followed by a company should indicate its purpose, manner of implementation, and the effects of the policy in a given period.
Diversity in company bodies among the “Top 10 Trends“ in corporate governance
by Agnieszka Gontarek, President of the Management Board of BondSpot S.A.

Doubtless, the regulatory initiatives and solutions described above are a step forward in building awareness of the conditions for achieving the best results in teamwork, e.g. through the correct selection of persons being members of company bodies.

The recommendations included in Best Practice caused listed issuers to notice the problem of building company bodies with diversity taken into account. The continuous yet still too slow evolution of companies’ approach can be observed in explanations published as part of the disclosure obligations related to the application of the Best Practice rules. At first, explanations concerning the issue of diversity sounded rather radical and were dominated by dry statements to the effect that members of the governing bodies were selected exclusively on the basis of candidates’ qualifications, although some issuers also expressed the opinion that taking diversity into account was illegal. The circumspect attitude of some companies towards the presence of women in company bodies and in senior managerial positions probably stems from a lack of understanding of the importance of this issue, its essence, and its purpose. However, with time, listed companies started to adopt more balanced positions on their websites. In the light of the applicable legal regulations and the corporate governance rules set out in Best Practice, companies are not obliged to have any diversity policy, however, more and more entities have been developing appropriate procedures or declaring their intention to address this issue in the nearest future.
A reality where there is full equality of opportunities for men and women in the field of employment will certainly come. However, it is estimated that without actions accelerating this process, it will take us over 100 years to achieve this goal. The question is if we can really afford to passively surrender to the natural course of things today, as we are witnessing dynamic cultural and demographic changes. The efforts of organisations and institutions aimed at bringing the issue of gender equality to the attention of company owners and persons organising recruitment processes contribute towards searching for and developing solutions that lead to real changes.

**On 12 March 2018, the Warsaw Stock Exchange and Global Compact Network Poland will join an international event: Ring the Bell for Gender Equality.**

It is an initiative addressed to stock exchanges from all over the world, aimed at emphasising the importance of gender equality in the workplace. The purpose of the event is to strengthen the position of women in the development of enterprises and economy and to highlight the role that the private sector can play in creating opportunities for women in the workplace and in society. If we agree that accelerators are needed, then any initiatives, regulatory and educational, governmental and institutional, but also those at grass-roots level, deserve support and should be followed as good examples.
Why investment in equality pays off!

By Ole Egberg Mikkelsen, Ambassador of Denmark

When looking at the World Economic Forum’s annual Global Gender Gap Report, Denmark is among the highest scoring countries alongside our Scandinavian neighbours. Equality between men and women is a deeply rooted value in the Danish society. For generations, politicians from across the political spectrum have created a family friendly welfare state with easy access to publicly supported day-care centres. This made it possible for Danish women to become part of the labour market.

The importance of improving equality does not only stem from political and ideological arguments, it is also a question of economic benefits.

In 2016, McKinsey & Company presented a study showing that full equality on the job market would raise the global GDP by 26% towards 2025. Even if all countries just followed the most ambitious country in their respective region it would mean an 11% rise in global GDP. It so seems that gender equality and economic performance are closely related. In Danish terms, the improved equality has not only economically empowered Danish woman and increased their possibilities of creating the life that they want; it has also been a huge socioeconomic benefit for Denmark.

According to a recent study made by a Danish think tank there is a positive relation between investments in family benefits and a country’s GDP. Furthermore, it finds that one of the most effective ways to improve gender equality in a society is by improving family policies such as day care, child support schemes and maternity/paternity leave.
The nations with a high level of expenditure on family benefits, like the Scandinavian countries, are also prosperous nations, which have benefitted from high economic growth for a long time. Not in spite of, but because of the high level of gender equality and female participation in the labor market.

However, it is also important to remember, that while Denmark has come a long way, we can still improve equality and make sure that we use the resources and talent of each individual to the fullest. The Danish government has launched an action plan for 2018, which will focus on getting more women in managerial positions and in politics as well as encouraging men to take longer periods of paternity leave.

Another important point is to change gender stereotypes when it comes to choosing education. More women should choose an education within science and IT. More men should be encouraged to become teachers and caretakers for smaller children. We do not know what the labour market will look like in 20 years, but we do know that we will need all hands on deck.

In other words, investment in equality pays does not only pay off – it is a necessary precondition for maintaining our level as a developed and prosperous country.
Women’s Empowerment and Sustainable Development

Through its Resolution (A/RES/66/223), the UN General Assembly has called on UN Global Compact Local Networks to take action to support and promote gender equality and the Women’s Empowerment Principles in the manner stated below:

**The UN General Assembly “requests the United Nations Global Compact Local Networks to promote the Women’s Empowerment Principles and to create awareness of the many ways in which business can promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community”**.

Gender equality is a fundamental human right recognized in international human rights treaties and internationally-agreed on documents, including:

- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**
- **ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work**
- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**
- **The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**
While governments have a primary duty to protect human rights, businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights, including the rights of women and girls. Further, the UN Global Compact and the WEPs call on businesses to support women’s rights.

**The United Nations Global Compact’s Human Rights and Labour Principles**

**The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**

Women’s empowerment is a critical driver of sustainable development. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to:

- **Expand economic growth and build strong economies**
- **Promote social development and establish more stable and just societies**
- **Improve quality of life for women, men, families and communities**
- **Propel businesses’ operations and goals, and enhance business performance**

Research shows that raising female employment to male levels could have a direct net impact on GDP of 34 per cent in Egypt, 12 per cent in the United Arab Emirates, 10 per cent in South Africa, and 9 per cent in Japan as a result of an increased labor force.
Women’s empowerment is not only a development goal in itself but also a key ingredient to achieving a wide range of sustainable development targets.

When addressing global challenges, it is imperative that the particular impacts on women and girls are considered and that the talents, skills and innovation of both women and men are leveraged to bring lasting change.

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that if women had the same access as men, agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise by an estimated average of up to 4%. This could reduce the number of undernourished people in those countries by as much as 17%, translating to up to 150 million fewer hungry people.

Structural, cultural and unconscious barriers continue to hinder women’s and girl’s rights and contributions to economic growth, sustainable development and business productivity and performance:

- **Women are underrepresented in power and decision making roles**
- **Women receive unequal pay for equal work**
- **Experience physical and/or sexual violence**
- **Are not offered the same opportunities in jobs, education, training and professional development**
- **Women are economically disadvantaged and lack equal opportunity to compete for business**
- **Gender equality continues to be under-prioritized by decision makers**
Opportunities

Supporting women’s health leads to higher return and reduces absenteeism

Addressing violence against women reduces company costs

Creating diverse workplaces increases productivity

Investing in women-owned businesses yields higher return on investment

Taking advantage of women’s consumer power is a smart business decision

Increasing women in leadership roles leads to organizational effectiveness and a prosperous bottom line

Risks

Less competitive

Legal risk from unlawful discrimination

Lower productivity

Missed opportunity to increase market share

Less innovation

Reputational risk
Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development

Fortune 500 companies with three or more women corporate directors outperformed those with no women on the board.
The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) is a joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact

Launched on International Women’s Day 2010 following a year-long international, multi-stakeholder consultation process

Provide a roadmap for business on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community

Help companies mainstream gender equality throughout business operations and other areas of corporate sustainability

Elaborates the gender dimension of good corporate citizenship, the UN Global Compact, and business’ role in sustainable development

The Principles

1. Leadership Promotes Gender Equality
2. Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Nondiscrimination
3. Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence
4. Educating and Training
5. Enterprise, Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices
6. Community Leadership and Engagement
We, business leaders from across the globe, express support for advancing equality between women and men to:

- The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) is a joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact
- Bring the broadest pool of talent to our endeavours;
- Further our companies’ competitiveness;
- Meet our corporate responsibility and sustainability commitments;
- Model behaviour within our companies that reflects the society we would like for our employees, fellow citizens and families;
- Encourage economic and social conditions that provide opportunities for women and men, girls and boys; and
- Foster sustainable development in the countries in which we operate.

Over 1,000 CEOs Have Signed the CEO Statement of Support and Committed to Advancing Gender Equality!
**Why Sign the CEO Statement of Support**

Demonstrate leadership on gender equality & lead by example

Use the 7 Principles and WEPs tools & resources to assess company policies and programmes and develop an action plan

Connect with fellow businesses and other stakeholders

Engage in dialogue and collective action & share good practices and lessons learned with others

Join exciting engagement opportunities and WEPs related events

Showcase the gender dimension of good corporate citizenship and business' role in sustainable development and corporate responsibility

Communicate progress to stakeholders

“When you embrace these Principles, you join a great and gathering movement to unleash the power of women and change the world... By working together based on shared values, we can advance the common good.” - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
Principles into Practice: Implementation of the WEPs

**Commit**
Leadership commitment to mainstream gender equality throughout corporate sustainability and other relevant strategies and operations

**Assess**
Apply a gender lens when assessing risks, opportunities, and impacts

**Define**
Apply a gender lens when defining goals, strategies, policies and metrics

**Implement**
Implement gender equality strategies and policies throughout the business and across the value chain

**Measure**
Measure and monitor impacts and progress towards goals

**Communicate**
Communicate progress and strategies while engaging with stakeholders from continuous improvement

Women's Empowerment and Sustainable Development
Demonstrate Progress

Benchmark

Gain Recognition

Detect Gaps

Track Progress

Replicate Success

Source: UN Global Compact
Gender equality is a fundamental and inviolable human right. Yet women around the world continue to face significant economic, social, and legal barriers to equality. Women are more likely than men to be unemployed, are overrepresented in low wage jobs, hold fewer managerial, entrepreneurial and leadership positions, and on average, only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. In 18 countries, men can legally prevent their wives from working. Women continue to bear disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work and often experience maternity-related discrimination. Women entrepreneurs also face particular challenges to building and growing their businesses including lack of access to financing and business networks. In fact, less than 1% of spending by large businesses on suppliers is earned by women-owned businesses.

While progress has been made in terms of education and health, significant gaps remain. STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programmes and fields continue to be dominated by men, women around the world continue to lack access to reproductive and maternal health care, and worldwide, an estimated one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime.

The private sector has an important role to play in advancing gender equality. All businesses have a fundamental responsibility to respect the rights of women and girls, as per the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Leading companies recognize that their greatest contribution to SDG 5 is ensuring that they meet this responsibility and will prioritize the management of potential human rights risks accordingly. Leading companies will also seek to maximize their positive impact towards gender equality across all levels and functions of their business, throughout their supply-chain and within the communities where they operate, rather than only identifying the easiest point of entry. The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) provide a holistic framework for business action to advance gender equality and can provide further guidance to businesses looking to contribute to the achievement of Goal 5. This SDG Brief draws from the WEPs to provide additional inspiration on what comprises business leadership in support of Goal 5.
Fifty percent of the population has been unable to realise its true potential due to gender-based discrimination.

By ensuring respect for women and girls and supporting gender equality, businesses can unlock vast amounts of economic potential. Research demonstrates that gender diversity helps business perform better. Fifty percent of the population has been unable to realise its true potential due to gender-based discrimination. If this were to be corrected, businesses would find themselves with more productive labour, higher levels of innovation and, a more stable, inclusive and equitable climate. Gender equality is both an objective and driver of sustainable development. Women’s empowerment has a multiplier effect and is essential to building strong economies; establishing more stable and just societies; and improving the quality of life for families and communities. Action to support gender equality can contribute positively to a host of other Goals. Estimates suggest that advancing women’s equality can add $12 trillion to global growth. It can also reduce poverty by bringing work opportunities to women and ensuring equal access to economic resources; improve health and educational outcomes since initiatives to foster gender equality will focus on maternal health and reduce the educational gap between men and women, and directly contribute to the overarching goal of reduced inequalities, which in turn will create the foundations for more peaceful and inclusive societies.
## Business Actions in Support of Goal 5

### Targets of Goal 5

1. **5.1 End gender based discrimination**

2. **5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation**

3. **5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation**

4. **5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work**

5. **5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership**

6. **5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights**

7. **5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources**

8. **5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women**

9. **5.C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels**
Business Actions

1. Implement policies and practices that are free from and prevent gender-based discrimination across the workplace, marketplace, and community.

2. Support women’s employment and strive for gender balance at all levels across the business and supply chain.

3. Develop products and services and implement marketing practices that empower women.

4. Promote gender equality through investment, community initiatives, and advocacy.
Do your actions satisfy the Leadership Qualities?

**Intentional**

- Is your company committed to supporting the achievement of Goal 5? Have you developed a holistic strategy that reflects this commitment, covering end-to-end operations and the wider community?

- Are you committed to learn from your actions and do you have processes in place to improve them accordingly?

- Is your strategy supported by the highest levels of management, including the Board of Directors?

**Ambitious**

- Do your actions achieve long-term outcomes that greatly exceed those resulting from current industry practice?

- Are your actions aligned with what is needed to achieve Goal 5?

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Top-level commitment helps position gender equality as a strategic business priority. Establishing a holistic strategy that manages risks and opportunities across the workplace, marketplace and community is crucial. Intentionally addressing unconscious bias is particularly important to ensuring that gender equality policies and practices have their intended impact.

Ambitious action on gender equality is holistic and goes well beyond normal good practice. Leading companies will identify cutting-edge approaches based on industry and/or regional best practice, establish robust policies and practices, and set clear targets to track progress and ensure continuous improvement.
Consistent

• Is support for Goal 5 embedded across all organizational functions?

• Are staff and board incentives aligned with achieving Goal 5?

Collaborative

• Do you proactively look for opportunities to partner with Governments, UN agencies, suppliers, civil society organizations, industry peers and other stakeholders to inform how to advance Goal 5?

Accountable

• Do you publicly express your commitment to advance Goal 5?

• Do you identify, monitor, and report on impacts, including potentially adverse impacts?

• Do you mitigate risks associated with your action?

• Do you remediate negative impacts associated with this action?

• Do you engage stakeholders in a meaningful way?

Rather than looking for the easiest point of entry, leading companies will identify how they can maximize their positive impact toward the achievement of Goal 5. Leading companies will ensure that their gender equality strategy is embedded across all organizational functions. Importantly, leading companies know that action taken to support women’s empowerment is a complement to, not a substitute for, action to respect the rights of women and girls.

Leading companies understand the importance and benefits of meaningful multi-stakeholder consultation to inform policies and practices. Stakeholders may include those affected by the company’s operations as well as external experts. Leading companies also recognize that achieving gender equality cannot be achieved by one sector alone and proactively look for opportunities to partner and collaborate to achieve common objective.

Making commitments public, and progress transparent is key to drive gender equality performance. The use of sex-disaggregated data is critical to making and measuring progress and accountability for specific goals and targets related to gender equality. When it comes to addressing adverse impacts, having in place effective grievance mechanisms is particularly important.
The Global Goals are inherently interconnected. Action taken toward one Goal can support or hinder the achievement of others. Identifying and addressing these interconnections will help business to build holistic and systemic solutions that amplify progress and minimize negative impacts. To help build a greater understanding, we have illustrated some of the ways in which the Goals connect. These are not exhaustive, and we encourage business to consider how they apply in their own operations.

**Maximise likelihood of positive impact on:**

Action to support gender equality can contribute positively to a host of other Goals and is a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty. With women and girls making up more than half the global population, improving health and educational outcomes (Goal 3 and 4), reducing poverty (Goal 1), and tackling inequality (Goal 10) requires specific consideration of the particular needs of women and girls and the barriers they face. At the same time, women’s empowerment is proven to have a multiplier effect, contributing to the health and well-being of whole families and communities, as well as economic growth (Goal 8) and peaceful societies (Goal 16).

Source: UN Global Compact
How taking action on Goal 5 is interconnected with other Goals
Diversity and equality in the workplace
(women’s rights in business and their role in companies)
By Prof. Ewa Lisowska, D.Sc. (SGH) Warsaw School of Economics

INTRODUCTION
Diversity is currently referred to human capital and treated as a driver of market competitiveness – people are a key resource of any enterprise. Diversity falls in line with the concept of so-called distinctive competencies (according to P. Selznick, Leadership and administration, 1957) which can be women’s competencies and talents. Diversity is the outcome of the evolution of the notion of „equal opportunities” in the workplace. In this evolution – from the assimilation paradigm, through the diversity paradigm, to the integration paradigm – it is important to appreciate resource differences between individuals and to take advantage of them for better economic performance owing to higher creativity and innovation.

WOMEN’S RIGHTS
The United Nations (UN) organization which was established in 1945, has attached, since its inception, great importance to issues of equal treatment of women and offering them equal opportunities in society, which was proved by the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as early as 1946. The key UN document concerning the protection of women’s’ rights was the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention was adopted, as it turned out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly at the end of 1948 did not cause a change in the position of women – human rights were applied in practice to men, while women suffered discrimination and violence (in many countries, the unpunished practice of selling wives, daughters and widows persisted). Therefore, feminist communities demanded that the UN should issue a legal act applying human rights directly to women. In 1975, Mexico hosted the first UN conference on women, and its conclusions contributed to the development of the CEDAW convention.
The Convention defines discrimination against women as any distinction, exclusion or restriction that prevents women from exercising human rights or enjoying them on equal terms with men in all fields. This Article is in harmony with Article 3 which obligates all States Parties to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to prevent discrimination against women and that human rights are recognized relating to women and that women will be able to enjoy fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. The Convention imposes on the States Parties (Poland ratified the Convention on 18 July 1980) the obligation to take measures at the national level, which will ensure that guarantee that women and men enjoy equal political and civil rights, as well as those relating to education, employment, health care, marriage and family relations (Articles 7–16). In particular, the provisions of the Convention obligate the States Parties to introduce the principle of equality to national constitutions. The Conventions obligates the States to abolish any laws and regulations the discriminate against women and to eliminate prejudices and customary and all other practices of such a nature, including in particular stereotyped presentation of the roles of women and men in school textbooks.

The Convention prohibits all forms of traffic in women. At the same time, Article 4 emphasizes that shall the adoption of temporary special measures of a transitional nature (also referred to as positive actions or compensatory measures) aimed at accelerating de facto equality shall not be considered discrimination.
Equal treatment of women and men in employment is one of the priorities of the European Union, which is reflected both in primary law (treaties) and in secondary law (directives). In its equality policy, the European Union recommends the use of positive actions (compensatory measures) in relation to the gender with lower representation in different positions, but also following the principle of gender mainstreaming, i.e. the inclusion of the issue of gender in the main stream of affairs that the government deals with on a daily basis. In the countries where institutions are in place that control compliance with law, as well as systems monitoring the situation not only in the public sector but also in the private sector, there is less disparity between law and practice. Phenomena of discrimination against women are witnessed less often in those countries than in Poland where monitoring and control mechanisms are lacking.

**RESPECTING WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN BUSINESS**

The situation in Poland as regards compliance with women’s rights by employers operating in Poland was first recognized in connection with the Gender Index project which was initiated and managed by the UNDP, implemented in 2004-2008 under the EQUAL Community Initiative financed by the European Social Fund (Gender Index. Monitoring the equality of women and men in the workplace, EQUAL, UNDP 2007). The main objective of the project was to promote the equality of women and men in business. An index was developed for monitoring equal treatment on grounds of gender in the workplace, which was used in two editions of the competition „Business of Equal Opportunities” (2006 and 2007) to recognize employers who best contribute to respecting women’s rights and can set a good example for others. Each company participating in the competition received an individual report evaluating its situation in terms of equal treatment, together with guidance on what can be done to improve the policy of equal opportunities.
The Gender Index method was also used in surveys conducted in institutions involved in the implementation of the Human Capital OP (2011), at Lasy Państwowe company (2012) and in surveys conducted in late 2011/early 2012 in the central administration. The main conclusion from the surveys is that employers have a stereotyped view of women and men in the workplace, and show a lack of knowledge of the applicable anti-discrimination law and equality measures that can be implemented in the workplace. In particular, this concerns areas related to access to career advancement and promotion of women to managerial positions, facilitating the reconciliation of working and family life, as well as recruitment. It is worth noting that surveys conducted in companies showed that the cultural factor plays a significant role in how women and men are viewed in business and how the principle of equal opportunities is implemented. This is best reflected in the quotation below:

“We understand that a new unstable world is emerging. However, we rely on hierarchies created and dominated by men. We are restructuring, but the way of thinking in men’s categories remains the same. We respect women’s ‘rights’ but we ignore their value. We value ‘toughness’. However, we do not notice that women’s toughness resembles ‘steel’ more than men’s. We have repeatedly pointed out that we accept new forms of activity. But we disregard the fact that women suit leadership positions better.”
(T. Peters, Biznes od nowa!, 2005, p. 269)
UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

It was launched in July 2000 on the initiative of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The UN Global Compact calls on the private sector worldwide to align their business strategies with universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption, and to take action in support of UN goals. The UN Global Compact is the world’s largest business initiative with over 13,500 members in 170 countries. It coordinates activities within the UN Business Action Hub, where the United Nations partners with business to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK POLAND

A national network operating under the official authorization of the United Nations Global Compact. In Poland, it was launched in July 2001 under the United Nations Development Program, and since 2013 is has been run and managed with the support of the Global Compact Poland Foundation. It is the secretariat of the UN Global Compact members, the UN Global Compact’s project office, its local contact and information point. Its mission is to promote and implement global initiatives of the UN Global Compact and UN objectives in Poland. All initiatives of the Global Compact Poland are conducted in partnership with the world of business, administration and academic communities.

KNOW-HOW HUB

A think-tank and scientific foundation. Created under the UNDP in Poland in 2011, it groups together experts who create and implement development projects. Currently, KHH also acts as the Scientific Council to the Global Compact Network Poland.
Study experts and members of the steering committee

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The opinions and views presented in the report by the various companies do not reflect the publisher’s opinions or views. The graphical material used in the publication comes from the UN Global Compact’s resources, the author’s resources and from public sources.
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It is a tool created by working group “diversity and equality in the workplace”, to help raise awareness of the importance of women’s economic empowerment to sustainable development and sustainable business.

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
standardetyki.org
and get engaged in the next Programme’s events and activities

Do not forget to save the date for the annual GLOBAL COMPACT GALA, where we will be celebrating 70th anniversary of adoption the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

October 15th,
Ufficio Primo, Warsaw!
MOBILIZE A GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE COMPANIES AND STAKEHOLDERS TO CREATE A WORLD WE WANT

FROM THE MISSION OF THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG TARGETS:

16.5
Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

16.5.2
Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months

8.8
Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

8.8.2
Increase in national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status