



United Nations Global Compact



## **Advancing Women, Advancing Business and Supporting International Development Goals: Guiding Principles for the Corporate Sector**

### **- Questions for Reflection -**

#### **Introductory Note**

There is consensus that empowering women to fully participate in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to build strong economies, more stable societies, and achieve internationally agreed-on goals for development and human rights. Until recently, guiding principles for business to advance women in the global marketplace have been unarticulated.

In 2004, the investment firm Calvert, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women--UNIFEM, developed the first global voluntary code of conduct for business on how to empower, advance and invest in women worldwide; the document brought together the variety of ways in which business can contribute to the advancement of women around the world.

Based on the interest from business and others, the UN Global Compact and UNIFEM is launching a consultative international process around opportunities and obstacles for business in working with such a set of Women's Principles, especially in the current context of the global economic crisis. The process will include dialogue around the potential value of the Women's Principles, and how they might be operationalized, including what business would need in the way of guidance materials and other assistance to support their implementation. The questionnaire below begins that dialogue.

The Women's Principles are attached for your reference. We solicit your reflections about how applicable you think the Principles are to your business/organization and/or more broadly.

#### **A. ASSESSING THE VALUE OF THE WOMEN'S PRINCIPLES**

1. Do the Principles offer a practical vision for how business can help empower, advance and invest in women worldwide? Why/why not?
2. Do you see gaps in the coverage of the Principles, and, if so, where?
3. What are the main benefits that you see in working with the Principles?
4. What are the main obstacles and challenges that you see in working with the Principles?
5. Do you see the Principles being applicable for:
  - business/organizations generally?
  - business/organizations in your sector?

- business/organizations in your country?
- business/organizations of your size?
- business/organizations locally?
- business/organizations globally?

## **B. CONSIDERATIONS ON APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES**

1. Do the Principles connect to work already being done in your business/organization? If so, how and within what business functions (e.g. Human Resources, Procurement)?
2. Can you share with us any examples of good practices from your business/organization that help to advance and empower women (whether relating to your workplace, supply chain, public-private initiatives and/or other initiatives)?

## **C. COLLABORATING ON NEXT STEPS**

1. What steps should UNIFEM and UN Global Compact take with the Women's Principles? (select all that apply)
  - a. Collect and share resources/guidance materials and tools that may help businesses/organizations with their implementation of the Principles
  - b. Collect and share good practice examples of the different ways businesses/organizations can help to advance empower, advance and invest in women worldwide
  - c. Invite businesses/organizations to support the Principles
  - d. Invite businesses/organizations and other stakeholders to join a Working Group to explore how to make the Principle's vision a reality for businesses/institutions (if you would be interested in joining such a group, please contact Sunok Lee (lee21@un.org))

## **D. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS**