



**AFRICA BUSINESS  
LEADERS COALITION**



# **THE AFRICA BUSINESS LEADERS' GENDER STATEMENT**

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**KIGALI 16 - 17 MAY 2024**



**We, the members of the Africa Business Leaders Coalition (ABLC)**, today assert our unwavering commitment to gender equality. Our coalition, representing more than USD 150 billion in revenue and more than 900,000 employees across 50 African countries, stands united in the conviction that gender equality is not only a moral imperative but a catalyst for business value, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development on the continent.

**We firmly believe in the power of the private sector** to spearhead this transformative journey. Our vision is unambiguous: to establish and foster a business and societal environment where gender equality is woven into the fabric of every strategic business decision. This vision aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5. It builds on the ambitions of the United Nations Global Compact outlined in the Global Strategy, Africa Strategy and the Forward Faster Initiative.

Harnessing the full spectrum of talent across genders is expected to enhance our competitive edge, profitability and market relevance compared with companies that have not implemented similar gender-responsive changes. Gender equality in the workplace is a business imperative, not a remedial action targeted at empowering women.

Moreover, as the world continues to be confronted by systemic inequalities and societal norms that limit the representation and advancement of women, the ABLC recognizes the urgency needed to dismantle these barriers in the workplace, marketplace and broader community. To this end, the ABLC commits to driving this vision through partnering with institutions (e.g., the private sector, educational institutions, etc.) and governments. We invite dialogue, encourage collaboration and seek to ignite a continent-wide movement that aligns with our sustainable development, equality and progress ethos for every individual and business we represent.

**We affirm the critical importance of gender equality** in our workplaces, marketplaces and communities at large and the substantial socioeconomic benefits that it produces.

**We commit to consistently improve women's representation** with the long-term ambition to achieve equal representation, participation and leadership at all levels of management. Committing to bridging this gap in the decades to come, we envision gender parity in position, idea contribution and governance.

This statement is underscored by a commitment to nurture a pipeline of leadership-ready women. We will create a variety of opportunities to support women from entry-level positions to the C-suite, ensuring a robust talent pipeline that feeds into our vision of equal participation and leadership across all levels.

**We commit to ensure the equal treatment of women and men** within our organizations, supply chains and beyond, considering the advancement of gender equality as an executive leadership priority. Through equal treatment, we aim to establish a foundation upon which diversity and inclusivity can thrive, acknowledging that addressing disparities in treatment is the first step towards a balanced representation of genders in positions of influence and decision-making.

**We commit to consistently collect, analyze, use and report on standardized sex-disaggregated data** (e.g., women's representation in leadership, suppliers, etc.), underscoring the critical role of measurement and transparent reporting in fulfilling our gender equality objectives. A culture of transparency will drive accountability and informed decision-making. Illuminating gender disparities with data will further ensure more tailored interventions are implemented and impact is measured more accurately. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned to existing frameworks of the UN Global Compact will be developed to measure progress towards the stated commitments. This approach allows us to address gender equality as a measurable goal, not an abstract ideal.

**We commit to implement gender-responsive policies and practices** that foster inclusive and bias-free workplaces for all, including, but not limited to, recruitment, development, performance management, advancement and equal pay for work of equal value. Appropriate internal accountability

mechanisms, such as grievance channels, need to be established to underscore the integrity of gender-responsive policy implementation, thereby ensuring that women have a credible voice when gaps are identified.

**We commit to have gender equality mainstreamed** across our ESG strategies and actions, recognizing gender's impact on our operations, investments and community engagements.

**We commit to provide flexible working arrangements**, parental leave and family-friendly workplace policies and practices to support dependent care. Our approach includes offering flexible hours, the possibility of remote work, parental leave for both mothers and fathers and support for child and elder care. Beyond organizational policies and practices, we aim to offer care infrastructure, either centrally or through partnerships, to support the well-being of all employees, enabling them to thrive both at work and home.

**We commit to establishing procurement policies** and implementing gender-responsive business practices that support suppliers' efforts to attain higher levels of gender equality. This approach reflects our belief in using our economic influence to promote gender equity beyond our immediate operations, amplifying our commitments' impact across the value chain.

**We commit to supporting women entrepreneurs**, particularly those in the informal sector, and SME business owners by leveraging our diverse strengths and resources to provide offerings such as training, mentorship, financing and procurement opportunities where applicable. Acknowledging that Africa boasts some of the highest rates of women entrepreneurship globally yet faces significant barriers, we see the support of women entrepreneurs as a critical key to unlocking the continent's economic potential.

**We commit to employing our collective insights** and learned best practices to advocate for the eradication of negative gender stereotypes and biases in our workplaces, marketplaces and communities at large. Our pledge to eradicate negative stereotypes and biases begins with recognizing their presence in critical areas such as education and marketing. By addressing these practices, we commit to changing the narrative around gender, fostering an environment where both men and women can pursue their ambitions free from bias.

The role of government support in pursuing gender equality cannot be overstated; legislative frameworks and policy initiatives play a pivotal role in dismantling barriers to gender parity. Harnessing the voice and influence of the ABLC, we are committed to engaging with governmental bodies to enact and enforce policies that support the advancement of women in the workplace, marketplaces and larger communities. We call on African institutions and governments to enact legislation, formulate policies and initiate supporting measures that encourage and promote women's labour force participation and business ownership (e.g., eliminating transport insecurity).

As we turn towards implementation and action, we recognize that women's health, safety and well-being are paramount to achieving true gender equality.

**We call on African institutions and governments to strengthen policies and laws that prevent all forms of discrimination and violence against women, thereby ensuring safer workplaces, marketplaces and communities.**



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## THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT



### HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



### LABOUR

- 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



### ENVIRONMENT

- 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- 8 undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- 9 encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



### ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

## ABOUT THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

As a special initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, the **UN Global Compact** is a call to companies worldwide to align their operations and strategies with Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Our ambition is to accelerate and scale the global collective impact of business by upholding the Ten Principles and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals through accountable companies and ecosystems that enable change. With more than 20,000 participating companies, 5 Regional Hubs, 61 Global Compact Networks covering 66 countries and 15 Country Managers establishing Networks in 34 other countries, the UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative — one Global Compact uniting business for a better world.

For more information, follow [@globalcompact](https://twitter.com/globalcompact) on social media and visit our website at [unglobalcompact.org](https://unglobalcompact.org).



**United Nations**  
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