



UNITED NATIONS PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM 2017



United Nations Private Sector Forum 2017: Concept Note **18 September 2017, Delegates Dining Room, UNHQ, 12:30-15:00**

Hosted annually by the UN Secretary-General, the UN Private Sector Forum brings the voice of business to the UN when government leaders gather in New York for the opening session of the UN General Assembly. This unique luncheon event brings together leading CEOs and investors, Heads of State and Government, senior UN leadership and select civil society representatives for an interactive discussion and high-level networking opportunity designed to help participants identify new opportunities to work together to achieve shared objectives.

This year's Forum theme is *Financing the 2030 Agenda: Unlocking Prosperity*. With just thirteen years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the global community needs to accelerate progress. Unlocking innovative forms of financing at an unprecedented scale, redirecting existing financial flows to be consistent with sustainable development, and catalyzing responsible business growth are critical. Recognizing that building sustainable financial markets comes with diverse challenges, including overcoming market tendencies toward short-termism, the Forum will focus on identifying solutions all sectors must take to drive capital towards achieving the SDGs.

The event itself will feature a series of messages from leaders representing both government and the private sector. Building on concepts presented, solutions-focused discussions will take place on actions each stakeholder must take to drive capital toward the achievement of the SDGs. Investments will only be effective in driving sustainable outcomes if they operate in supportive ecosystems. It is important that the UN, Member States, investors, companies and civil society all work together.

To maximize the impact of the discussion and generate momentum, each global leader attending the event will be asked to come ready to share one scalable solution that can be taken forward to help unlock prosperity.

Participants are encouraged to consider bringing solutions to the table in any of the following areas:

I. Financial Innovation:

- There has been a tremendous growing interest in Green Bonds as a solution to climate finance. Additionally, Social Impact Bonds, Pay for Success models, Islamic Finance, insurance mechanisms and other SDG-consistent financial products could offer innovative financial solutions – including in risk reduction. There is ample room for investors, companies, civil society and Government to consider innovations around traditional financial instruments.



UNITED NATIONS PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM 2017



II. Responsible Investing and Corporate Action:

- While the investment community has been increasingly working to ensure environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors are part of their investment decision-making, the lack of uniformity among and accessibility of data on company sustainability performance has been a barrier to systemic change. The recent report by the Business and Sustainable Development Commission recommends the creation of publicly-available corporate Global Goal benchmarks to compare company performance as one way of addressing this, and an effort led by GRI and the UN Global Compact on Reporting on the SDGs will enable businesses to consistently assess their impact. Companies can also play a major role in terms of responsible Foreign Direct Investment, research and development, and aligning corporate pension fund investments with the SDGs. Communication between companies and investors is also key to ensuring a sustainable financial system that supports achievement of the SDGs. There are numerous ways investors and companies can improve their communication both internally and externally on ESG considerations, and now more specifically on the SDGs.

III. Enabling Environments:

- **Government Leadership:** Investments will only be effective in driving sustainable outcomes if they operate in supportive ecosystems. There are several ways Governments can use public policy to create enabling environments and align financial regulation to reduce the dependence on Overseas Development Assistance, attract private investment, and drive SDG progress at the country level.
- **UN Support and Leadership:** In addition to supportive regulation that Governments can provide, the UN can support Governments in monitoring private sector contributions to the SDGs. As part of this the UN could help clarify what it considers a relevant 'SDG investment' and provide a transparent mechanism for the private sector to understand the criteria that would be used to track this progress. This effort could help companies and investors alike to ensure both their work and reporting are well aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

For further guidance on scalable solutions to bring to the UN Private Sector Forum, please see the Programme – including an Annex of Guiding Resources – available [here](#).