
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the
UN Global Compact Office



CALL TO ACTION FOR GENDER PARITY ON BOARDS

1. ADOPT A GENDER POLICY

Board diversity promotes healthier conversations, better decision-making and eliminates groupthink. A company-wide gender policy is an effective way of clearly communicating the company's strategy to achieving diversity, inclusion, and gender equality, including on boards. The policy should be intersectional in nature to ensure recruitment and retention of women from diverse backgrounds, abilities and identities. A focus on eliminating gender biases and stereotypes signals that the board values women's equal representation and contributions. An effective gender policy requires clear targets and strategies for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

2. CARRY OUT REGULAR BOARD EVALUATIONS

Regularly reviewing board culture, composition, effectiveness and performance can offer insights on how the board can improve by identifying gaps in diversity and inclusion. Appointing a diversity manager or board focal point to monitor progress can help the company stay on track and ensure that women are equally represented and valued on boards.

3. PROVIDE SKILLS-BUILDING, MENTORSHIP, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Glass ceilings and walls in workplaces hinder women's ability to climb the corporate ladder, therefore limiting the pool of eligible women for board positions. Collecting gender data with strong attention to intersectionality

can help identify where barriers exist along the corporate pipeline. This can inform gaps in women's access to skill-building, leadership training, mentorship opportunities, and access to 'hot projects' that would allow them to grow and be part of initiatives that launch their company forward.

4. INSTITUTE AGE AND TERM LIMITS

Boards must balance the need to bring fresh perspectives, skills and experiences, while retaining institutional memory and knowledge. Putting in place age and term limits will not only help to continuously refresh the board composition but also increase opportunities for women. Adding seats at the table for qualified women and underrepresented groups is a quick win.

5. EXPLORE NEW METHODS AND AVENUES OF RECRUITMENT

Candidates tend to be drawn from the same familiar networks, contributing to narrow and homogenous groups of candidates. Built-in biases within recruitment and hiring practices tend to prioritize men over women, for example requiring previous board director experience, rather than valuing skills that make a board member truly effective. New evaluation matrices and networks should be explored to broaden the pool of possible talent and to help identify suitable women candidates.

Equality Means Business

Sign the Women's Empowerment Principles
and say #WeCommit to advancing gender
equality in the workplace, marketplace and
community. Make today your signature
moment at weps.org



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Principle 1



Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.

Principle 2



Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.

Principle 3



Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

Principle 4



Promote education, training and professional development for women.

Principle 5



Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.

Principle 6



Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.

Principle 7



Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

The work on WEPs and equal pay for work of equal value is funded by the European Union through the WEEMPOWER – G7 programme, implemented in collaboration with the ILO (2018-2020).



Funded by the European Union