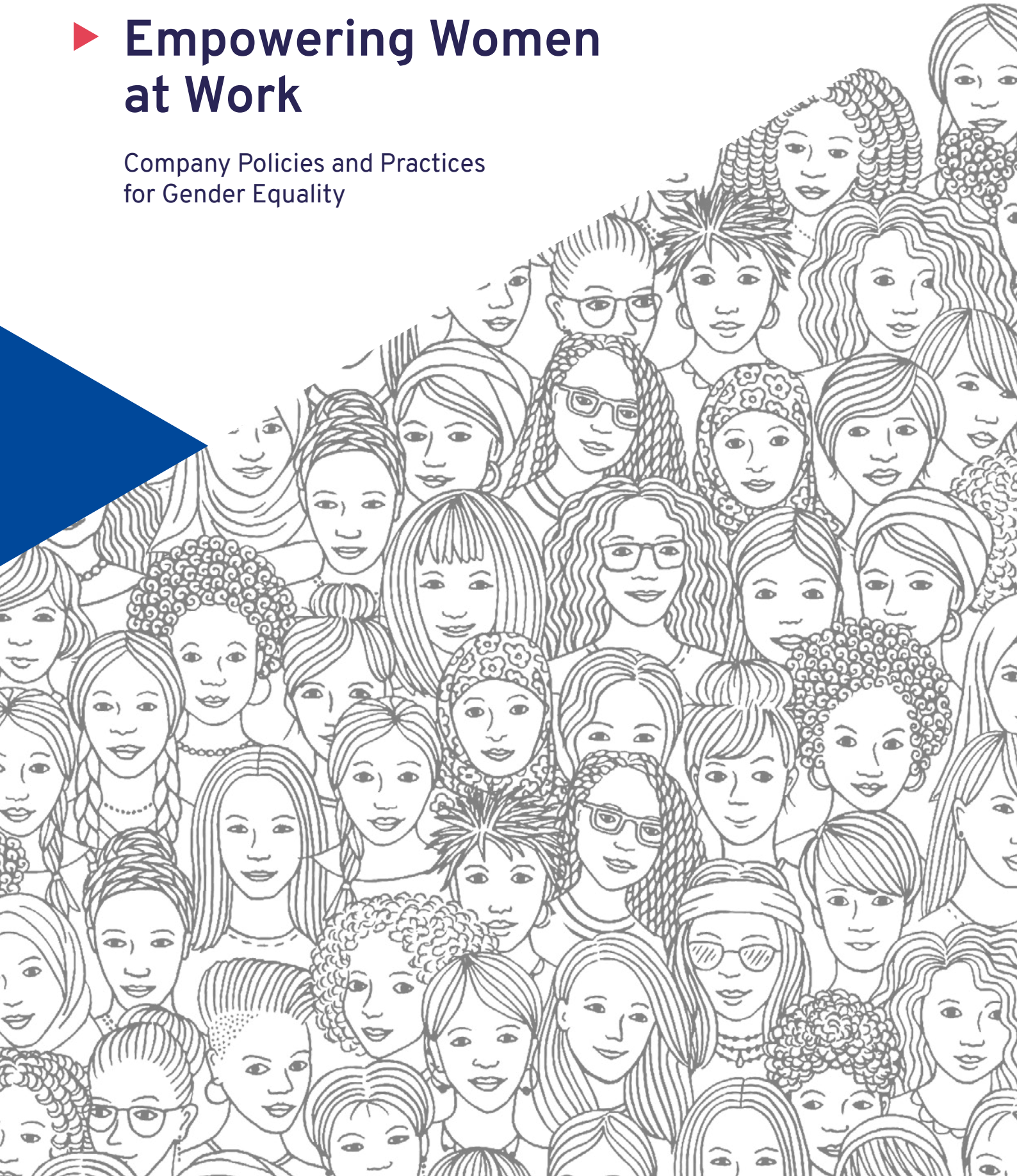


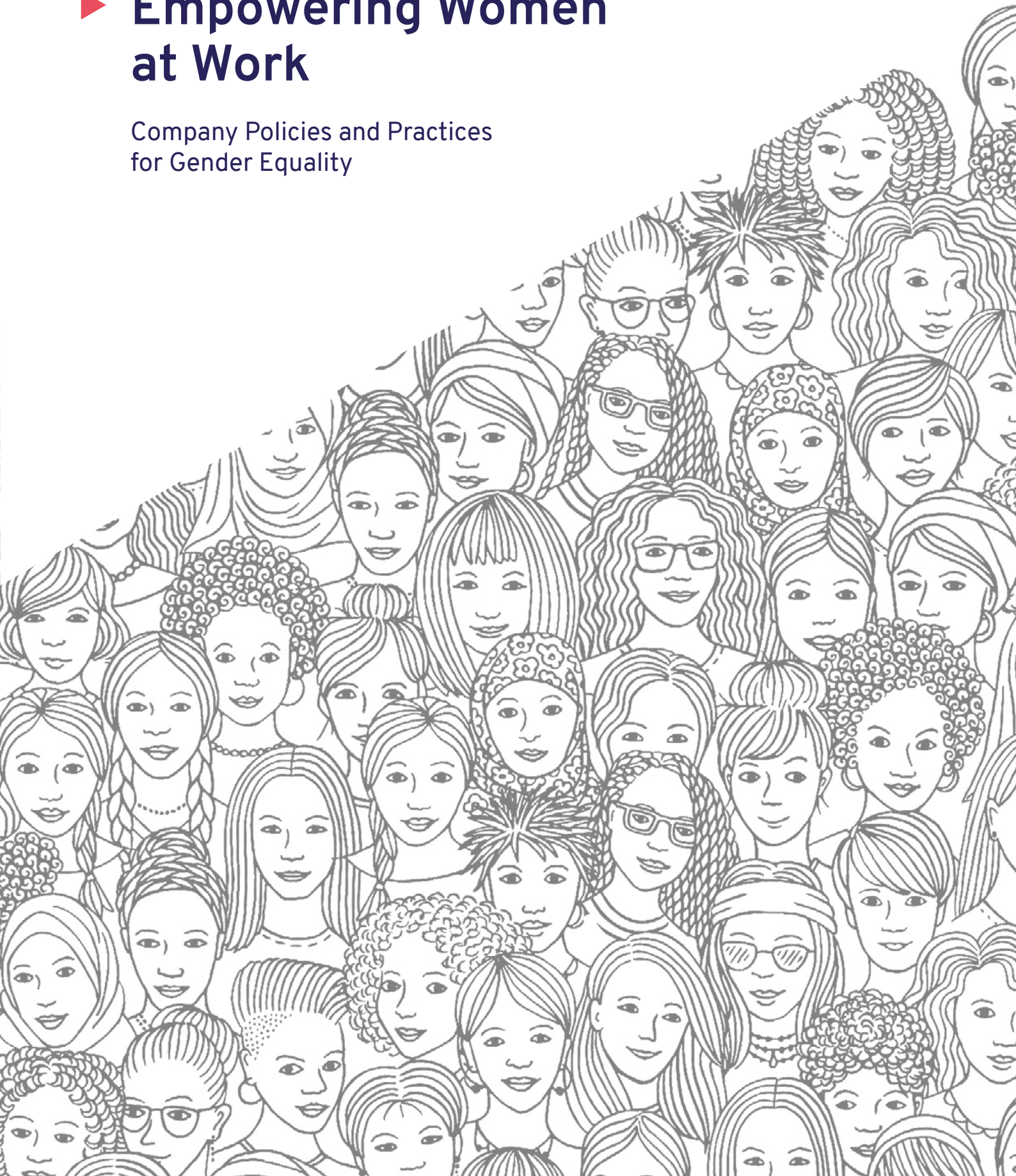
► Empowering Women at Work

Company Policies and Practices
for Gender Equality



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for Gender Equality



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WE EMPOWER – G7 convenes multi-stakeholder dialogues in G7 countries and the EU to exchange knowledge, experiences, good practices and lessons learned. The project is guided by the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPPs), as well as international labour standards on gender equality, and the ILO’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration). See more at [ILO website on the project](#).

This technical report was drafted under the technical guidance and overall coordination of Laura Addati, Annie van Klaveren and Emily Sims, ILO specialists at the Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (MULTI) at the ILO Enterprise Department. The preliminary draft and illustrative practice review was prepared by Angela Goulovitch (ILO consultant). Camilla Bober, Rana Alotaibi and Sombul Munshi conducted further research and drafting and helped finalize the publication while ILO interns. The report was reviewed by the following experts from several ILO departments: Vic van Vuuren, Githa Roelans, Emanuela Pozzan and Irini Proios Torras; and from UN Women: Anna Fälth, Meral Guzel, Diana Rusu, Diana Ranola, Carla Kraft, Mariko Saito, Stephanie Dei, Stephanie Foster, Madison Bailey, Nancy Mitchell and Sarah Merusi. Their inputs and contributions, which have enriched the report, are highly appreciated.

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Executive summary

Over the last 20 years, equality between women and men in the world of work has seen some encouraging improvements, but there remains scope for further progress. The private sector, including employer and business membership organizations, plays an important role in accelerating progress on closing gender gaps in the workplace. Women represent more than 50 per cent of the population worldwide, but only 45.3 per cent of women had a job in 2018.¹ Women accounted for less than 4 per cent of board chairs across nearly 7,000 companies in 44 countries in 2017.² Therefore, it is crucial to examine how key players in the private sector can implement policies that promote a future of work that is decent by design and is anchored in genuine and substantive gender equality.

This document focuses on five key areas where companies can contribute:

1. achievement of equal pay for work of equal value
2. prevention and elimination of violence and harassment
3. creating a harmonious work-life balance for both women and men
4. equal representation of women in business and management roles
5. investment in a future of work that works for women.

Part 1 provides an overview of the guiding frameworks for company policies to promote gender equality in the workplace. It includes an introduction to the leading normative instruments and initiatives concerning women's economic empowerment and gender equality at work, and a brief summary of the international labour standards that underpin expectations for companies concerning gender equality. For easy reference, annexes provide further information on the normative instruments, initiatives and international labour standards.

Part 2 sets out the business case, provides 38 illustrative company practices and indicates sources from which companies can obtain further information. The examples are drawn from publicly available sources and do not assess impact. The objective is to present a range of measures companies can take – from more modest to more ambitious – to inspire companies of varying sizes, sectors and financial situations to identify ways in which they might be able to contribute to gender equality, in both the short and medium term, based on their unique circumstances.

Despite the commendable efforts of companies to promote women's economic empowerment in the workplace, renewed and transformative efforts are needed, especially in the context of COVID-19 policy responses and crisis recovery.

This document was prepared as part of a series of publications on key stakeholders' illustrative practices on gender equality at work under the EU, UN Women and ILO project "Empowering women at work through responsible business conduct in G7 countries" (WE EMPOWER – G7). WE EMPOWER – G7 aims at supporting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth by promoting women's economic empowerment in the public and private sectors in G7 countries. Hence, this report has a particular focus on companies operating in G7 and EU countries, but can be of use to companies regardless of where they are located.

List of acronyms

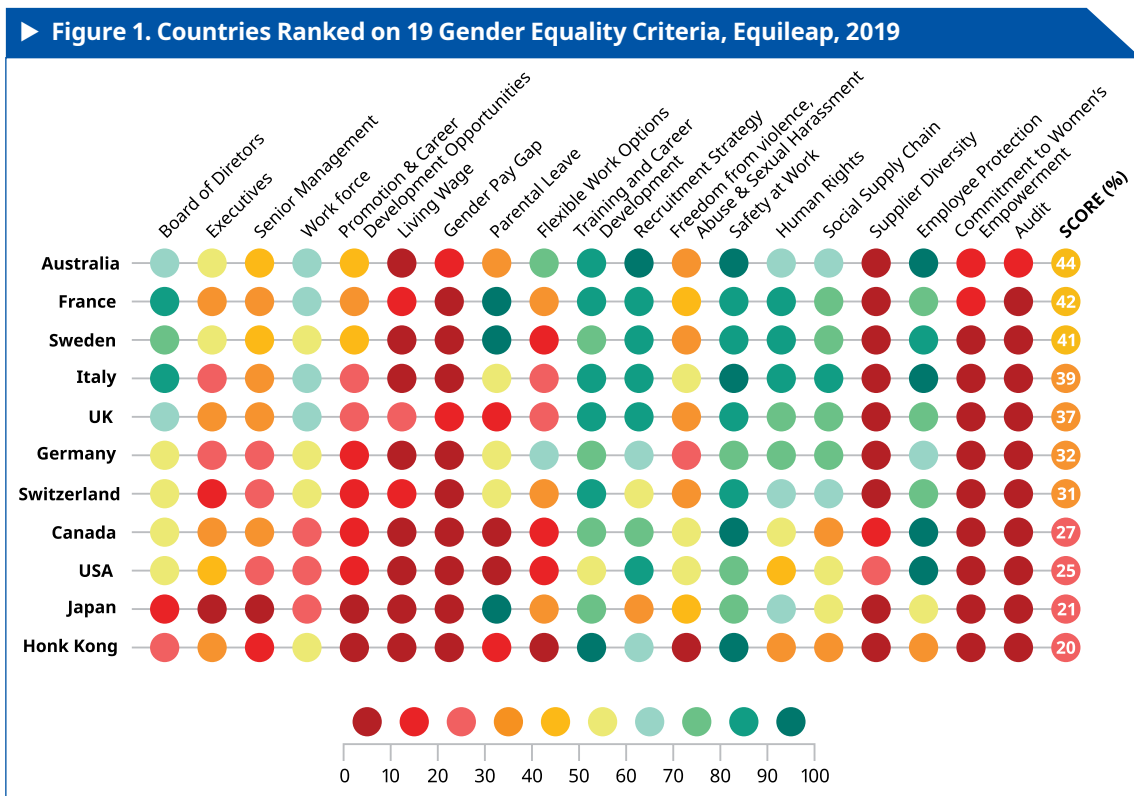
AI	Artificial intelligence
BSDC	Business & Sustainable Development Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COBC	Code of Business Conduct
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EBMO	Employer and Business Membership Organizations
EPIC	Equal Pay International Coalition
EU	European Union
G7	Group of 7
G20	Group of 20
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO MNE Declaration	ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN Guiding Principles	UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
W7	Women 7
WE EMPOWER – G7	EU, UN Women and ILO project “Empowering women at work through responsible business conduct in G7 countries”
WEPS	The Women’s Empowerment Principles



Introduction

Equality between women and men in the world of work has seen some encouraging improvements, but progress on closing gender gaps has stalled.³ Persistent disparities remain between women and men, including in labour market participation, pay for work of equal value, representation of women in high-paying occupations and managerial positions, and the distribution of unpaid care work. Violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, also remains a reality for many women in the world of work.⁴ Achieving economic empowerment and gender equality for women will require proactive and transformative policies from a variety of global stakeholders, including governments, companies, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and civil society.

However, private-sector performance on gender equality varies widely depending on country, sector and company size, as well as corporate leadership and culture, with small and medium-sized enterprises experiencing the greatest challenges. The Equileap Index of the top publicly traded companies leading on gender equality shows how countries rank in producing top company performers. The index is built on the Gender Scorecard methodology that was inspired by the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs). It reviews data on 3,519 companies from 23 countries and is based on 19 criteria linked to a number of workplace policies on gender equality (Figure 1).⁵



Note: The dataset represents companies from 23 countries. Countries for which there are less than 50 companies in the dataset have been excluded from the ranking.

Source: Equileap, [Gender Equality Global Report & Ranking](#), 2019, 14.

Companies that operate in G7 countries have total gender-equality scores ranging between 42 (France) and 21 per cent (Japan). The ranking indicates that areas in which all of the G7 countries tend to display the highest scores include “Safety at work”, “Training and career development” and “Recruitment strategies”, while the challenges are more significant in respect of transparency on gender equality, closing the gender pay gap and providing living wages.⁶ Legal frameworks play a key role in enabling better gender equality scores. Companies in Japan, France, Germany and Italy tend to have the most comprehensive parental leave policies, in line with national legislation.

Furthermore, women’s representation in the workforce, including in higher echelons of job categories and company leadership positions, varies across companies in G7 countries. Companies in Canada, the United States and Japan have the lowest proportion of women in the workforce. In France and Italy, these proportions improve as women move into higher level positions such as directorships, while these numbers are low for Japan across all levels. The greatest challenge for companies in G7 countries in this area is the promotion of women to executive and senior management positions.

The private sector, including employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs), plays a central role in fostering an enabling environment in which women can meaningfully participate and thrive in the economy through proactive, transformative and measurable workplace policies and practices. Company policies are key in complementing, strengthening and enhancing national laws and policies and help stimulate transformative change within societies.

This report is divided in two parts. Part 1 provides an overview of the normative instruments and initiatives to guide companies in adopting and implementing the most up-to-date frameworks on gender equality. Part 2 presents the business case for gender equality and illustrative company practices touching on one or more of the following issues: achieving equal pay for work of equal value, preventing and ending violence and harassment in the world of work, promoting a work-family balance and the sharing of childcare responsibilities, promoting women in business and management, and building a future of work that works for women.

This compilation of company illustrative practices on gender equality has been prepared under the auspices of a [European Union \(EU\) funded project](#) to promote the economic empowerment of women at work through responsible business conduct in G7 countries—WE EMPOWER G7. The project is guided by the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) as well as international labour standards on gender equality, and the ILO’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration). Further information on the MNE Declaration, the WEPs and WE EMPOWER G7 is contained in Annexes 1 and 2.

Methodology

This report relies on a variety of sources. It draws on research carried out by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Commission, Eurostat and the OECD; and on research from Equileap, a Dutch organization that collects data on gender equality in the corporate sector. Publicly available company documents were reviewed, in particular Communication of Progress (CoP) reports submitted by companies that are signatories to the UN Global Compact’s 10 Principles and by signatories of the WEPs, principally larger companies headquartered in G7 countries and EU Member States. Particularly helpful in this regard were the 2018 and 2019 Equileap Gender Equality Global Reports,⁷ which review over 3,500 publicly traded companies from 23 high-income countries to create a selection of 100 companies that are outperforming on gender equality.⁸

The selection of illustrative company practices featured in this document was made in the light of their transformative and replicable nature, their positive impact on gender equality, where assessed, and their alignment with the principles contained in international labour standards and other normative frameworks.

The examples come from publicly available reports and hence are skewed towards larger companies, which generally have more resources available to provide such disclosure. A variety of economic sectors were selected in order to illustrate a wide range of efforts and promising practices across different private-sector contexts. The WE EMPOWER G7 programme aims at supporting sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth by promoting women's economic empowerment in the public and private sectors in G7 countries. Hence, this report has a particular focus on companies operating mainly in G7 and EU countries, with examples from outside these groups that are notable in terms of gender-equality policies. Nonetheless, we hope they will provide inspiration for a wide range of enterprises to adapt to their own circumstances. Table 1 categorizes the 38 illustrative practices by topic, geographical location and sector of economic activity.

► Table 1. Illustrative practices by topic, geographical coverage and sector/industry of economic activity			
Topic	Company Headquarters Country	Sector/Industry of economic activity	Total
Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial services, Banking • Retail, Furniture production • Retail, Restaurants • Technology, IT equipment and services • Technology, Software services • Utilities, Energy 	6
	Germany		
	Japan		
	Netherlands		
	Sweden		
United States			
Violence and Harassment in the World of Work	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail , Apparel • Retail, Beverages • Retail, Supermarkets • Technology, Cybersecurity • Utilities, Electricity 	5
	Spain		
	United Kingdom		
	United States		
Work–family Balance	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive Manufacturing • Chemical production, Sales • Financial services, Banking • Food processing • Pharmaceuticals • Professional services, Accounting • Professional services, Analytics • Professional services, Consulting • Retail, Household and personal products • Retail, Real estate • Retail, Footwear • Retail, Sportswear 	13
	France		
	Germany		
	Japan		
	Italy		
	Switzerland		
	Turkey		
	United Kingdom		
	United States		
	Women in Business and Management		
Italy			
Germany			
Norway			
United States			
Future of Work	Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication, Telecommunication services • Retail, E-commerce • Technology, Business services technology, IT services • Utilities, Energy 	6
	Ireland		
	Spain		
	Sweden		
	United States		
Total			38



PART 1:

GUIDING FRAMEWORKS FOR COMPANY POLICIES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The resources available to companies seeking to promote gender equality in the workplace come in two broad forms: normative instruments and initiatives. Normative instruments derive their universal authority from the process by which they were developed. International labour standards and other ILO normative instruments are adopted by the International Labour Conference, which consists of delegates from the governments and most representative employers' and workers' organizations for each of the 187 ILO Member States. The UN Guiding Principles were adopted unanimously by the 193 UN Member States.

Initiatives build on normative instruments to make them more operational for business. The most comprehensive of these initiatives is the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs),⁹ which builds on international labour standards and UN treaties that address gender equality, most importantly the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).¹⁰

1.1 Normative Instruments

Normative instruments set out the broad objectives of gender equality, identify key obstacles that need to be addressed and advocate for a systemic approach to tackling gender discrimination. In the world of work these consist mainly of ILO conventions and recommendations. Although directed at governments, conventions and recommendations can nonetheless serve to guide company policies; and they are referenced in other normative instruments and initiatives, serving to standardize and coordinate approaches. Other normative instruments – most notably the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN Guiding Principles) – address business directly and reference conventions and recommendations concerning particular aspects of gender equality.

ILO conventions and recommendations on gender equality

Numerous ILO conventions and recommendations set out international labour standards related to gender equality at work. These include: the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and Recommendation No. 90; the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) and Recommendation No. 111; the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981, (No. 156) and Recommendation No. 165; the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and Recommendation No. 191; and, more recently, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and Recommendation No. 206.¹¹ The gender perspective is mainstreamed through many other ILO instruments on working time, part-time work, home-based work, social security, occupational safety and health, and domestic work.

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Adopted in 1998, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work commits Member States to respect and promote principles and rights in four categories, whether or not they have ratified the relevant conventions. These categories are: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of child labour, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation and the principle of equal remuneration of men and women for work of equal value.

The ILO has worked hard to promote the ratification of the relevant conventions, with great success. 173 countries have ratified Convention No. 100 on equal pay for work of equal value¹² and 175 countries have ratified Convention No. 111 on non-discrimination in employment and occupation.¹³

ILO MNE Declaration

The ILO promotes synergies between government and business policies to promote responsible business conduct, including gender equality in the world of work, through its Multinational Enterprises (MNE) Declaration. It is the only global instrument in this area that has been elaborated and adopted by governments, employers and workers from around the world. It was adopted close to 40 years ago and most recently updated in 2017.

The principles of the MNE Declaration are addressed to multinational and national enterprises, governments of home and host countries, and employers' and workers' organizations. Areas covered include employment, training, conditions of work and life, and industrial relations (Figure 2).¹⁴ A summary of the principles directed to governments and companies is provided in Annex 1.

▶ Figure 2. The Principles of the MNE Declaration

1. General policies**2. Employment**

- ▶ Employment promotion
- ▶ Social security
- ▶ Elimination of forced or compulsory labour
- ▶ Effective abolition of child labour: minimum age and worst forms
- ▶ Equality of opportunity and treatment
- ▶ Security of employment

3. Training**4. Conditions of work and life**

- ▶ Wages, benefits and conditions of work
- ▶ Safety and health

5. Industrial relations

- ▶ Freedom of association and the right to organize
- ▶ Collective bargaining
- ▶ Consultation
- ▶ Access to remedy and examination of grievances
- ▶ Settlement of industrial disputes

Source: [Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#) (MNE Declaration).

The ILO has developed “A manual for gender audit facilitators: The ILO participatory gender audit methodology (2nd Edition)”,¹⁵ which helps organizations to put the principles contained in ILO normative instruments into practice.

1.2 Other Normative Instruments

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs), which implement the UN “[Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework](#)”. They provide global guidance to prevent, mitigate and remediate business-related adverse human rights impacts.¹⁶ The Council also established the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) and the [UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#) to disseminate examples of good practices, assist in capacity-building, make on-site visits, and maintain a consistent multilateral dialogue that is then reported to the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁷

The Working Group and the Forum play an important role in stimulating dialogue and formulating recommendations to tackle every stage of women’s economic empowerment within companies, from inception to implementation to analysing efficacy. In 2019, the UN Working Group and the UNDP published guidance for companies concerning gender equality.¹⁸

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to lift large portions of humanity out of poverty while protecting human rights and the planet. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are integral to the achievement of all 17 Goals. The SDGs “seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve

A 2017 flagship report [Better Business, Better World](#) of the Business & Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC) estimates that achieving the SDGs could create 380 million jobs and open at least \$12 trillion in opportunities for business by 2030.

gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”. Some SDGs are particularly relevant to achieving women’s economic empowerment and gender equality at work:

- ▶ **SDG 3** on ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages
- ▶ **SDG 4** on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all
- ▶ **SDG 5** on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls
- ▶ **SDG 8** on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- ▶ **SDG 10** on reducing inequalities within and among countries
- ▶ **SDG 16** on promoting justice and peace in implementing the SDGs
- ▶ **SDG 17** on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development

Decent work for all women contributes not only to making poverty history, but also to achieving better education, peace and safety, as well as food security and improved nutrition and health outcomes for children and all members of households.¹⁹

1.3 International Initiatives

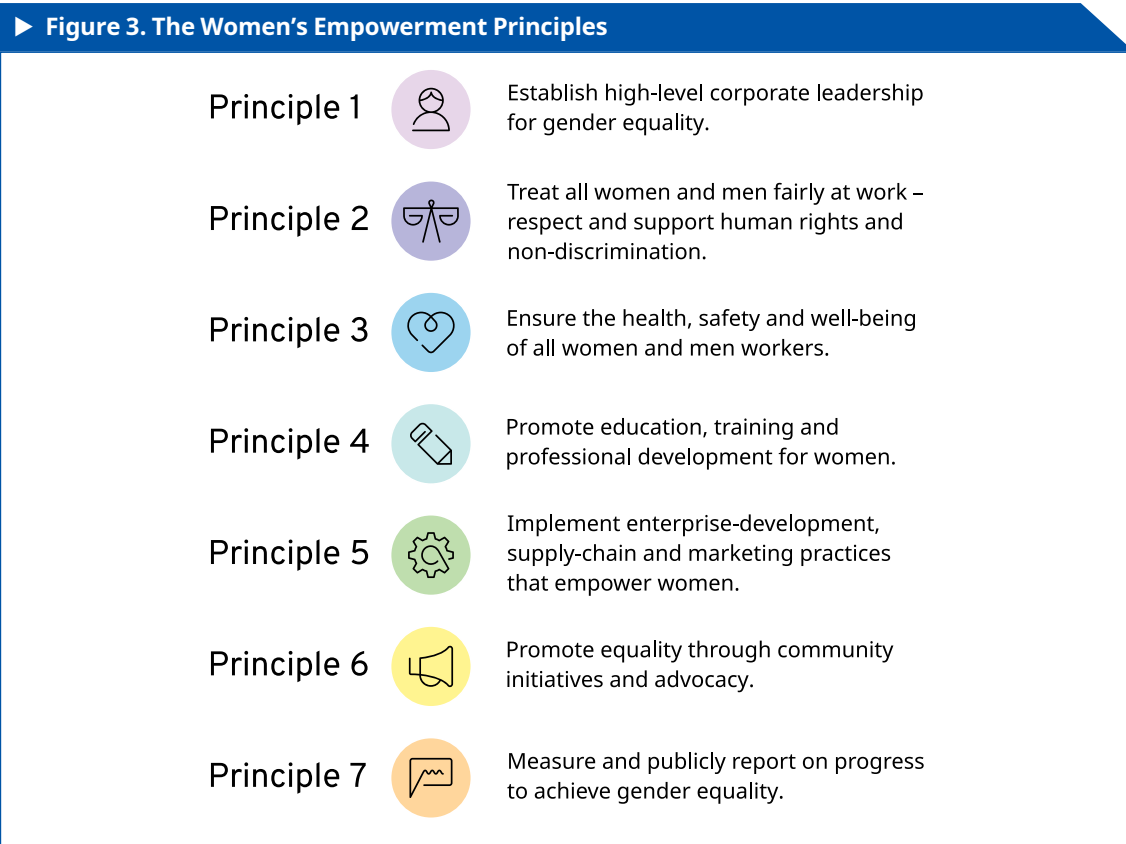
All international initiatives recognize the importance of gender equality as a key contribution that business can and should be making to economic and social development and respect for human rights. The most important initiatives concerning gender equality are the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC).

The Women's Empowerment Principles

Launched in 2010 by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) have been endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, the G20 and the G7.²⁰ They provide a platform to mobilize business action for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG5 on gender equality and women's empowerment. The seven Principles offer guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Informed by international labour and human-rights standards, the WEPs are grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

By joining the WEPs community, a CEO signals commitment to this agenda at the highest levels of the company and to working collaboratively in multi-stakeholder networks to foster business practices that empower women. These include equal pay for work of equal value, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance against sexual harassment in the workplace. The full list of WEPs targets and a more detailed description are available in Annex 2.

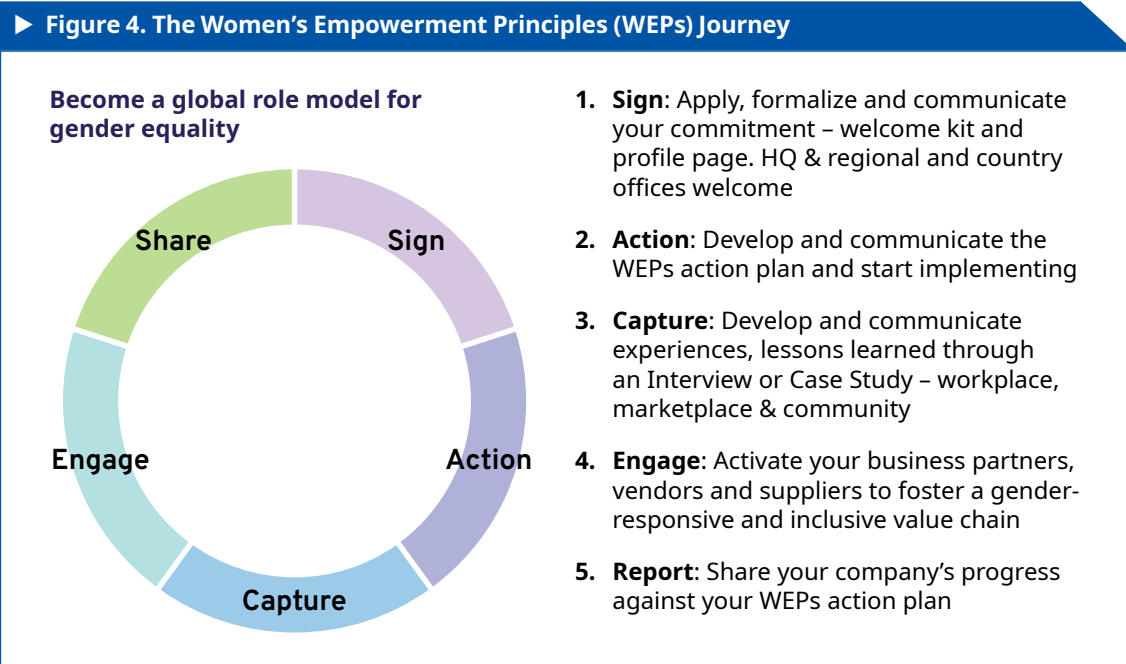
The principles are:



Source: The Women's Empowerment Principles at weeps.org.

The WEPs Journey is a learning ecosystem of resources and tools designed to assist WEPs signatories through an effective journey of implementation, driven by accountability and transparency. This ecosystem offers WEPs signatories a menu of actions so that they can begin their WEPs journeys with a bold gender-equality action plan.

The WEPs Journey represents the five stages of a company's engagement with the WEPs: Sign, Action, Capture, Engage and Report. This step-by-step engagement, offered to signatories in the form of capacity-building, encouragement and assistance, forms the basis for incentivizing companies to report. Finally, when companies reach the reporting phase, they feature their progress publicly on the WEPs reporting platform.



Source: The Women’s Empowerment Principles at weps.org.

The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)

The [Equal Pay International Coalition](http://equalpaycoalition.org) (EPIC) is an initiative driven by stakeholders committed to reducing the gender pay gap and making equal pay for work of equal value a reality across all countries and sectors. Led by the ILO, UN Women and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Coalition engages with governments, employers, workers and their organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia to take concrete steps to accelerate the closing of the gender pay gap and the achievement of pay equity.

EPIC provides a platform for member companies to express their views, experiences and ideas on how to tackle the gender pay gap. The ILO, UN Women and the OECD offer resources to address this challenge through their expertise and convening power. EPIC also has a network of experts in the field of equal pay and opportunities to provide teaching and inputs from a tailor-made perspective. Companies currently belonging to EPIC include the Ingka Group (IKEA), Powher New York, The Fair Pay Innovation Lab (FPI) and The Equal Pay Company.

1.4 G7 and EU policy frameworks

The G7 and the EU have both fostered on-going dialogue, often tripartite, and adopted policy frameworks and calls to action to accelerate progress towards gender equality in the world of work.

G7 Recommendations on Gender Equality at Work

Combining international standards and goals with social and economic dialogue, the Group of 7 (G7) promotes the connection between gender equality and increased prosperity.²¹ At Taormina in 2017, the G7, along with Women 7 (W7), published a roadmap of recommendations for different parties. They proposed positive action plans to fully recognize the beneficial effects of women's activity in the workplace,²² as well as the effects of unpaid care work, violence, stereotyping and a lack of representation in leadership on gender equality at work.²³

The G7 Social Communiqué of June 2019²⁴ called for a tripartite approach (engaging government and employers' and workers' organizations) to identify market barriers that create labour segregation based on gender; increase women's representation on boards, in management and in entrepreneurship; invest in skills development and education in all fields (especially science, technology, engineering and mathematics – STEM); formulate a gender-balanced care system; and close gender gaps in employment, pay (especially after leave) and workplace participation.²⁵ To ensure success in these initiatives in both the public and private sectors, the G7 additionally recommends prior and post-activity public assessments to ensure transparency and the positive development of women's economic empowerment²⁶ and international cooperation.

European Union Frameworks

Gender equality is one of the core values of EU legal frameworks, embedded in the Treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Pillar of Social Rights. There is extensive EU legislation related to gender equality, particularly in the workplace, that touches on issues such as maternity and parental leave; equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in employment and occupation, including equal pay, social security, working conditions and harassment; as well as equal opportunities for workers in self-employment, including access to maternity leave benefits.²⁷ In June 2019, the European Parliament adopted a Directive on the work-life balance for parents and carers, which sets out the conditions for paternity, parental, and carers' leave, and extends current provisions on flexible working arrangements for workers with young children and other carers.²⁸

The European Commission has adopted a Gender Equality Strategy 2020-25, which focuses on: ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; closing gender gaps in the labour market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; addressing the gender pay and pension gaps; and closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics. As one of the first deliverables of the Strategy, the Commission has prioritized binding pay transparency measures, to be proposed by the end of 2020.²⁹



PART 2:

TAKING ACTION FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The Business Case

International instruments and frameworks, together with national laws, are crucial to the realization of gender equality at work and women's economic empowerment, but they alone cannot address all the gaps that contribute to inequality. No amount of progressive legislative solutions could work without meaningful and proactive action from social partners and, in particular, employers in the public and private sectors. Remedying gender inequalities is an end in itself, but also a critical means of achieving broader economic growth and social justice.

ILO estimates indicate that, were the G20 "25 by 25" target (to reduce the gap in participation rates between men and women by 25 per cent by the year 2025) to be realized globally, such an outcome would raise global GDP by 3.9 per cent, or US\$5.8 trillion (equivalent to raising average global GDP growth over the next eight years by almost half a percentage point per annum).¹ Gender inequality restricts the talent pool employers draw from and impedes the development of new ideas, which is critical for entrepreneurship and economic diversification, the important drivers of sustainable growth.² Research by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) shows that if the gender pay gap were lowered, even to 13 per cent, OECD nations could experience a boost in GDP of US\$6 trillion.³ The causes of this anticipated large jump in GDP, according to the ILO, include "increased female participation in the labour market, entrepreneurship and women moving into higher-paid and higher-skilled jobs".⁴

► **Table 2. The Business Case for the WEPs**

To uphold human rights and be inclusive, just and fair: It is really as simple as that. Gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community advances the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. It is good for society; it is good for the economy; and it benefits everyone.

To improve corporate performance: Women’s equal participation at every level of the company – from the factory floor to the corporate board – leads to better financial performance, and raises returns on investment, market share and stocks.

To attract and retain talent: Companies with fair HR systems that respond to both women’s and men’s needs lead to inclusive recruitment practices, improved retention rates, reduced absenteeism and turnover rates, and an equitable promotion system.

To attract investments: Investors know that companies that promote gender equality are more productive, more profitable and maintain a positive reputation. They are holding companies to more rigorous standards and choosing to invest in sustainable companies that balance purpose and profit and meet the needs of both shareholders and stakeholders.

To increase innovation capacity: A diverse workforce fosters diverse ideas and generates dynamics that encourage creativity and lead to innovation.

To diversify the supplier base: A diversified pool of suppliers enhances supplier availability and security; promotes innovation through the entrance of new products, services and solutions; drives competition; and increases market penetration and access to new markets. Investing in and engaging with women-owned businesses in corporate supply chains also boosts the reputation of companies among their stakeholders and shareholders.

To meet the needs and demands of consumers: Increasingly, consumers are demanding products and services from companies with transparent, responsible business practices that advance gender equality. Women influence the majority of purchasing preferences and decisions. A diverse workforce and supplier base, representing the composition of its consumer base, can help a company meet the product and service needs of its consumers.

To end harmful gender-based stereotypes in advertising and outreach materials: An unsteretyped world is no longer only a social imperative, but a business one. Advertisements which portray women respectfully as progressive and modern, authentic and multi-dimensional helps advance gender equality, while improving customer perception and brand reputation.

To fully integrate into communities: Companies that undertake community consultations with local leaders – women and men – establish strong ties and programmes that benefit all community members and advance gender equality and sustainable development.

Source: The Women’s Empowerment Principles at weps.org.

Growing evidence for the specific benefits of gender equality for business is also compelling. According to the consulting firm Accenture, “the power of a workplace culture of equality to drive employees’ innovation mind-set – or their willingness and ability to innovate – is strong. It has more impact than age or gender and leads to an increase in innovation in all industries and all countries. Furthermore, a company culture of equality is associated with greater levels of innovation in its workforce.”⁵

This translates into more productive and profitable companies. The ILO report “The Business Case for Change”, which surveyed nearly 13,000 enterprises across the world, shows there are longer-term and strategic benefits to the bottom line connected with gender diversity. Enterprises with an equal-opportunities or diversity-and-inclusion policy are 3.8 per cent

more likely to report increased productivity and profitability.⁶ Increased profits range from 5 to 20 per cent.⁷

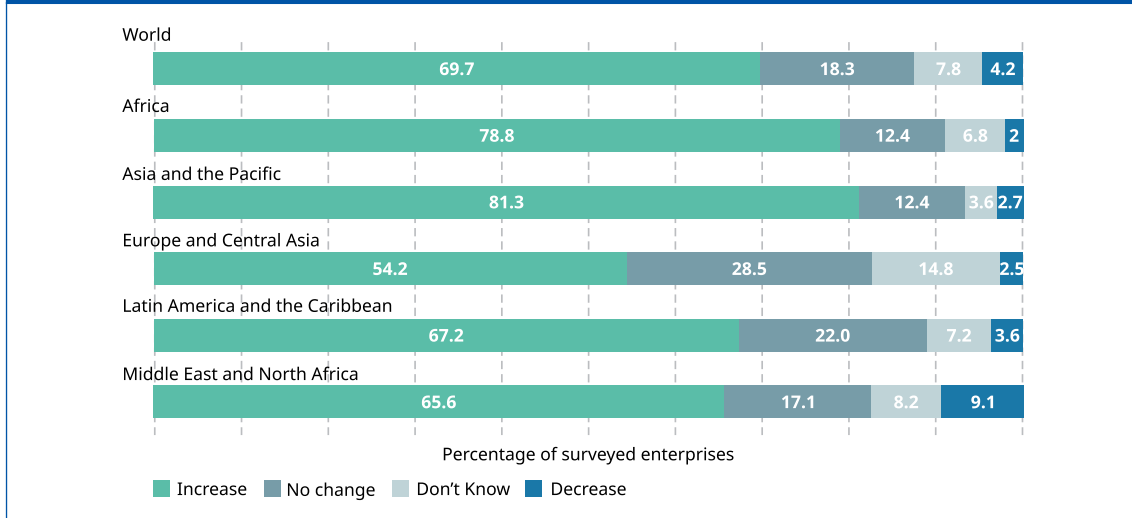
Statistically, gender diversity is a predictor of increased profits and productivity (62.6 per cent); an increase in recruitment and retention (59.7 per cent); greater creativity, openness and innovation (59.1 per cent); enhanced company reputation (57.8 per cent); and the ability to better gauge consumer interest and demand (37.9 per cent).⁸ When employees feel that they will be valued equally, they are more likely to feel safe in making their unique contributions and are more likely to remain with the company.

A commitment to equal pay for work of equal value also benefits companies. By making this commitment, a company attracts talents and experiences a higher retention rate of women employees. Closing gender pay gaps helps increase the performance and productivity of the workforce. It also contributes to increased growth and sustainability for companies and the economy at large.⁹

A proactive approach to ensuring employees' work–family balance, including in times of crisis, promotes the well-being and equality of a company's workforce and enhances the company's bottom line.¹⁰ Research by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) finds that most businesses with paid family-leave policies report a positive return on their investment in implementing the policies.¹¹ Employers reported benefits such as "... improved employee retention, the ability to attract the best talent, reinforced company values, improved employee engagement, morale, and productivity, and enhanced brand equity".¹² Similarly, according to an EY survey, over 90 per cent of employers that offered paid family-leave benefits found that the impact was positive or neutral on costs.¹³ These positive effects are probably linked to improved employee satisfaction, which enhances recruitment and retention. A survey found that 77 per cent of workers agreed that the availability of paid leave can affect where they choose to work.¹⁴ A study by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) showed that the provision of childcare benefits increased employee retention, and made for better recruitment, higher productivity and improved reputation.¹⁵ Finally, an ILO study showed that small investments by SMEs in supporting breastfeeding yielded returns on investment by maintaining employee retention and satisfaction.¹⁶

Being able to balance work and life is essential for everyone's success, both in and outside the workplace. Conversely, the idea that top-level figures must be available "anytime, anywhere"¹⁷ can hinder the career advancement of women, who face a "motherhood penalty" with respect to employment, pay and pensions.¹⁸ In some companies, policies that increase inclusivity and promote a better work–life balance have already shown increased sustainability and effectiveness. Flexible working arrangements can also foster productivity (Figure 5) and allow all employees to feel more valued at work and involved in contributing to the success of the enterprise.

► **Figure 5. Share of survey respondents who experienced changes in productivity as a result of flexible working and/or remote or teleworking arrangements by world and region, 2018**



Source: ILO, [Women in Business and Management: The business case for change](#), 2019, 67.

Companies stand to lose when violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and domestic violence, are not addressed. Violence and harassment may lead to low productivity and increased absenteeism and turnover. By some estimates, for each employee who was sexually harassed, a company lost an average of US\$22,500 in lost productivity alone.¹⁹ Nor does this include the high cost of litigation and reputational damage,²⁰ which can impact the market value of the company and deter valuable talent.²¹ Victims of violence and harassment, including domestic violence, may end up leaving their jobs, which leads to talent loss.²²

As women now surpass men in tertiary education graduation,²³ the pool of potential employees widens as companies recruit talented individuals for management roles. Research shows that a broad range of talents and skills on executive teams contributes to better decision-making, corporate governance and company profitability, which drives economic growth.²⁴ On average, an increase in inclusivity increases creativity, openness and innovation by 59.1 per cent, which can lead to smarter and more longitudinal business decisions, and enhances the company's image by 57.8 per cent among consumers.²⁵ Multiple studies have found that gender balance in company leadership is correlated with enhanced financial performance.²⁶ Increasing gender diversity in leadership roles, for instance on boards, has even higher outcomes, with enterprises 20 per cent more likely to experience better business outcomes.²⁷ There is mounting evidence around the globe that promoting gender diversity among employees, management and boards can boost the performance of a business.²⁸ Globally, only 27.1 per cent of managers and leaders are women – a figure that has changed very little over the past 30 years.²⁹

Concerning technological transformations in the world of work, as women increase their technological skills, their productivity improves. Combining technology with changes in workplace structure can increase company productivity, as both male and female employees can work remotely and at different times to optimize their focus and balance work with other responsibilities, thereby improving personal productivity.³⁰ Focusing company policies on women during the digital revolution will also aid recruitment and retention. Transparent and effective policies against online gender-based violence and harassment will help women to feel safe in cyberspace, expanding a company's customer or user base.

Workplace Policies and Practices

This section reviews policies aimed at companies, sets out useful steps that can foster commitment and action towards gender diversity, and provides illustrative company examples. The five key aspects covered here that drive the promotion of gender equality are:

- ▶ achieving equal pay for work of equal value
- ▶ preventing and ending violence and harassment in the world of work
- ▶ promoting work–family balance and an equal sharing of childcare responsibilities
- ▶ fostering women in business and management
- ▶ building a future of work that works for both women and men.

2.1 Achieving equal pay for work of equal value

Achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment at work requires that the work done by women and men is valued equally, and that they receive equal pay for work of equal value. Despite the widespread support for the principle of equal pay, the gender wage gap persists at about 20 per cent on the global level.¹

The pay gap prevails at all levels of employment, including management, and gap rates vary based on employment level and region.² Gender pay gaps among women show wide variations across countries and between different groups of women, depending on their age, race, ethnicity, migration status and other categories of disadvantage. Women cannot be treated as one homogenous group. For example, the gap between mothers and non-mothers, known as the "motherhood pay gap," ranges from 1 to as much as 30 per cent. Women from ethnic minorities and other groups at risk of discrimination, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) workers, face multiple barriers and even wider gaps in pay and advancement in the workplace.³

The gender pay gap tends to grow at higher income levels, particularly in high-income countries. To take the example of Belgium, while the gender pay gap at the lowest income levels is only 3 per cent, it widens to 13 per cent in the top quartile.

The ILO Global Wage Report⁴ identifies various contributing factors, which are often interrelated:

1. occupational segregation and undervaluation of feminized industries;
2. the “motherhood penalty” versus the “fatherhood premium” and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work driving women into lower-paying occupations;⁵ and
3. differences in participation in full-time wage employment.⁶

The motherhood penalty contributes to the gender pay gap through a variety of factors, including career interruptions or reductions in working time; over-representation in lower-paying but family-friendly jobs; or discriminatory hiring and promotion practices that disadvantage women who are or may become mothers.⁷ To effectively address the gender pay gap, efforts must encompass policies that enable both women and men to succeed in their work, while thriving as parents and care-givers, and increase the expectation that unpaid care work is a shared responsibility of both women and men.

Gender pay gaps can be partly explained by factors such as education and training, care responsibilities, work experience, enterprise size and union density. However, other factors may also be involved, in particular discrimination, implicit biases and social norms, further replicated at the company level. These gaps lead to substantive disparities in lifetime earnings, which continually reinforce women’s unequal position in the labour market and the workplace.⁸ The ILO has proposed a new methodology for calculating pay gaps: the “factored weighted gender pay gap”, which aims to take into account some of these factors.

2.1.1 Key International Labour Standards and other instruments

The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is enshrined in the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and Recommendation No. 111. The right to equal remuneration applies not only in cases where men and women do the same or similar jobs, but also when they perform work that is different but of equal value, based on objective criteria, such as skills, working conditions, responsibilities and effort. Remuneration is not limited to the basic pay or wage that the worker receives, but also other forms of compensation, such as bonuses, stock options or overtime pay.⁹

The principle of equal remuneration applies to all workers. Through their representative organizations, enterprises should work with government and workers’ organizations to establish job evaluation criteria. They should apply appropriate techniques for objective job evaluation to determine value, comparing factors such as skill, effort, responsibilities and working conditions.¹⁰

Other instruments

Women's Empowerment Principle 2 calls for action by its signatories to pay equal remuneration, including bonuses and benefits, for work of equal value and to ensure at least a living wage for all women and men employees.¹¹ For its part, the Equal Pay Directive 75/117/EEC prohibits both direct and indirect pay discrimination.

2.1.2 Guiding principles for companies

Through the adoption, effective implementation, monitoring, evaluation and public reporting of comprehensive equal pay policies, companies can ensure that workers' contributions are valued equally, regardless of their gender. Comprehensive equal pay policies are more effective when they:

1. Ensure commitment and leadership from the top
2. Promote social dialogue and collective bargaining
3. Establish and implement a comprehensive equal pay policy
4. Measure the gender pay gap and perform gender-neutral job evaluations
5. Promote pay transparency and reporting

Ensuring commitment and leadership from the top

Consistently communicating from the top that equality and inclusion are company priorities contributes to creating an organizational culture and ensuring that any accompanying initiatives will succeed. Demonstrating commitment and leadership in promoting gender equality also involves engaging with other members of the business community and stakeholders to share best practices and collaborate on building momentum for positive change.

Leadership should extend to ensuring that adequate policies and practices are put in place. Policies should include the necessary pay adjustments to close gender pay gaps and require regular pay equity reviews. In addition, they should provide for the allocation of a special (temporary) budget to eliminate any identified differences in wages between women and men.¹²

Promoting social dialogue and collective bargaining

Although it is ultimately up to each company to determine how it wishes to develop and implement gender equality policies, companies are encouraged to use social dialogue and collective bargaining. These mechanisms provide a channel for management to acquire the best possible information about existing obstacles to gender equality, and to generate creative solutions that can be implemented in partnership with workers and their representatives.

Social dialogue and collective bargaining are most likely to promote inclusive and gender-equal employment systems when such bargaining is coordinated and conducted at a national or sectoral level.¹³ Becoming a member of an employer or business organization, and engaging in social dialogue and the formulation of collective bargaining agreements that proactively address inequalities, can be an effective mechanism for closing gender wage gaps.¹⁴ Ensuring that a collective agreement covers workers in the lowest-paid categories can also help to narrow the gender pay gap, particularly in highly feminized occupations or sectors.¹⁵

Establishing and implementing a comprehensive equal pay policy

If well designed, equal pay policies are powerful tools for achieving the equal pay principle. Collaboration between management, workers and their representatives is at the core of such workplace action.¹⁶

In order to be effective, equal pay policies should promote sex-disaggregated pay data collection and adopt job evaluation methods using gender-responsive and objective criteria, as well as estimates of pay gaps between jobs of equal value. They should also provide for the necessary pay adjustments to close gender pay gaps and require regular pay equity reviews. Policies should also provide for the allocation of a special (temporary) budget to eliminate any identified differences in wages between women and men.¹⁷

Equal pay policies should also set out improved recruitment and selection procedures that refrain from requesting an employee's pay history. Basing current wages on previous wages perpetuates the existing gender pay gap. In other words, a woman's (or man's) pay history or past salaries should not determine the level of her or his present or prospective salary, but rather the value of the job itself (as outlined in the preceding section). Governments are increasingly adopting laws and regulations that prohibit employers from requesting salary history information from job applicants.¹⁸

Measuring the gender pay gap and performing gender-neutral job evaluations

Evaluating and comparing the relative value of jobs helps determine whether they are fairly and equally remunerated. Gender-neutral job evaluations help to establish the relative value of jobs and thus determine whether their corresponding pay is just. The process takes into account a variety of factors across different jobs, such as skills, the effort involved, responsibilities and working conditions.¹⁹ Objective job evaluations can be used to compare work performed by men and women in different places or enterprises, or between different employers, and the process achieves greater pay equity when it is systemic, formal and inclusive, particularly in large organizations. It is a highly technical process, with multiple methods available, requiring utmost care to eliminate gender bias during the classification process (please refer to Annex 3 for introductory guides to gender-neutral job evaluations and other resources and tools relating to equal pay).

Once the gender pay gap has been identified, an efficient way to close it is for companies to identify which employees are contributing the most to the gap, then allocate raises as efficiently as possible to close the gap (as opposed to across-the-board equal raises), taking managerial objectives such as fairness and equality into account.

Although determining an overall gender pay gap figure for a company is a good start, an overall figure may obscure more persistent pay inequalities at different levels within the organization. Hence, best practice also includes examining pay disparities across different employee categories, or pay bands, and disclosing this information publicly.²⁰

Promoting pay transparency and reporting

Transparency is particularly important in closing the gender pay gap, as it facilitates discussion, both internally and externally, of what does and does not work and promotes knowledge-sharing. Transparency is central to eliminating pay inequality. It gives employees confidence that their pay is fair and non-discriminatory, which has been shown to provide motivation for greater productivity and team collaboration.

Pay transparency helps both employers and employees obtain the information necessary to assess gender discrimination and rectify pay gaps, as well as negotiate fair remuneration, individually or through collective bargaining. This will also reduce the risk of unequal pay claims being made against companies. Conversely, not disclosing pay can reinforce gender discrimination in business practice and create doubt and mistrust among colleagues or between employees and employers.²¹

A recent study shows that when companies disclose gender pay gaps (in this case as mandated by legislation), gender pay gaps shrink. Moreover, pay transparency also increases the company's gender balance and the number of women promoted to more senior positions, while reducing overall labour costs due to reduced growth of male wages.²²

There are many global partnerships and initiatives available to support companies in achieving equal pay for work of equal value, such as the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC).²³

2.1.3 Illustrative practices

Areva Group (now Orano)

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Utilities, Energy

Headquarters: France

Number of employees: 41,847²⁴

Share of women employees: 21.1 per cent²⁵

A WEPs signatory since 2010, the Areva Group, a multinational company in the energy sector based in France, signed a European framework agreement on equal opportunities in 2006 with the European Works Council and the European Metalworkers' Federation. The agreement included provisions for equal pay, equal access to promotion, training, and non-discrimination during recruitment. The agreement also created a Women's Forum to bring together women in the company from all areas and positions.²⁶

To further progress, in late 2012 the company also signed a group agreement on gender equality, including guarantees in respect of equality in hiring, career paths, compensation and promotions, training, work-life balance, and awareness-raising among employees. The agreement also created a budget specifically for the remediation of any "unjustified compensation gaps at equal levels of responsibility". Furthermore, it allows workers who are on parental leave to continue to contribute to their retirement fund.²⁷

In 2009, 35 per cent of new technical staff hired by the company were women, while only 17 per cent of young engineering graduates in France were women.²⁸ Achieving a better gender balance in the talent pipeline is an important step in overcoming the occupational segregation that keeps the numbers of women in industrial enterprises, such as Areva, at low levels. In 2014, the number of women workers in the company globally was 21.1 per cent, with figures of nearly 22 per cent in management, 16 per cent in executive positions and 33 per cent in board membership.²⁹ These figures show, in relation to 2005 levels, an increase of 17.5 per cent among the general workforce, nearly 16 per cent in management, and about 6 per cent in executive positions.³⁰

Fujitsu

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Technology, IT equipment and services

Headquarters: Japan

Number of employees: 32,969³¹

Share of women employees: 16.7 per cent³²

A WEPs signatory since 2017, the UK & Ireland branch of Fujitsu, a multinational IT equipment and services company based in Japan, has a holistic approach to promoting gender equality and tackling the gender pay gap. This includes gender pay gap analysis and reporting, striving for a better work-family balance and supporting the childcare needs of its workforce, as well as measures to achieve a better gender balance in the talent pipeline and increase the number of women in leadership roles.³³

In Japan, the company's efforts to support the care responsibilities of its workers include a teleworking policy, implemented in 2017, which makes telework available for all 35,000 employees in Japan. Policies are also in place to support employees who are pregnant, have children or are nursing. These include a babysitter subsidy, three in-house childcare

facilities and support groups for new parents. Furthermore, workshops have been held for employees who are nursing, as well as training seminars for managers on how to support employees who are nursing.³⁴

The company has a variety of initiatives to decrease the long working hours that are an endemic issue in Japan, one that hinders career advancement for women, who shoulder disproportionate care responsibilities at home.³⁵ The company also offers 14 weeks' paid paternity leave for new fathers³⁶ and has seen a 40 per cent increase in its take-up between 2015 and 2017.³⁷ Fujitsu has received the "Platinum Kurumin mark" award from the Japanese government in recognition of its work-life balance policies, the highest level of such certification.³⁸

IKEA

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Furniture production

Headquarters: The Netherlands

Number of employees: 208,000³⁹

Share of women employees: 52.5 per cent in the UK⁴⁰

IKEA has been a WEPs signatory since 2018 and is a member of EPIC. It has spent years working to reduce the gender pay gap and, as a member of the UN High Level Panel on women's economic empowerment,⁴¹ has committed to securing equal pay for work of equal value by 2020. On 1 January 2019, an 18-month project was rolled out in all 30 countries of IKEA's franchise⁴² to conduct annual assessments of differences between men and women in IKEA's employment, and of base-pay policies. The company has committed to public reporting of these results in publications such as the IKEA Group Yearly Summary.⁴³ In all countries in which it operates, IKEA is taking part in pay-equity programmes, but many of these programmes differ according to region and country. Some examples include: equalizing pay between part-time and full-time workers in Japan,⁴⁴ especially because women hold 90 per cent of IKEA Japan's part-time positions;⁴⁵ offering childcare services for employees in South Korean facilities;⁴⁶ adopting a gender-inclusive recruitment process and running a childcare programme in India;⁴⁷ and prioritizing equal parental leave for men and women in the United States and India.⁴⁸

In 2010, IKEA focused on pay equality in relation to diversity and intersectionality, developing principles to reduce multiple pay gaps.⁴⁹ Two years later, IKEA analysed gaps in the pay of executive management. Adjustments were made to promote equal pay regardless of gender, nationality and other factors.⁵⁰ Between 2013 and 2014, IKEA focused on five countries, which required greater attention to women's economic empowerment.⁵¹ A supervisory board convened in 2016 to focus on budgeting with a view to closing the pay gap; this group meets annually.⁵² In 2017, it established a task force to create a pay-assessment tool with the help of an external auditor, which is used by IKEA stores worldwide to analyse their internal pay gaps.⁵³

SAP SE

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Technology, Software services

Headquarters: Germany

Number of employees: 96,498⁵⁴

Share of women employees: 33 per cent⁵⁵

Work to assess potential pay inequality at SAP US started in 2016 with an external gap analysis that reviewed all applicable laws and best practices, and analysed the total compensation for employees in the United States beyond base pay. According to Jennifer Morgan, then CEO of SAP North America, the analysis found a 99 per cent rate of equal pay (for equivalent work) and the company immediately addressed the remaining 1 per cent gap by increasing compensation to affected employees, of whom 70 per cent were women and 30 per cent men.⁵⁶ In 2018, SAP further examined the company's gender-equality performance at global level.

Moreover, SAP set a target (and measured progress toward it) of having 25 per cent women in leadership by 2017, enabling women's upward trajectory through leadership acceleration programmes, digital professional development opportunities, and community networks. After meeting the target, SAP extended its commitment by setting an additional milestone of reaching 30 per cent by the end of 2022.⁵⁷ The company has been a WEPs signatory since 2015 and is ranked first for gender equality among the top 10 companies in the technology sector, according to the Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies rankings.⁵⁸

Starbucks

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Restaurants

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 291,000⁵⁹

Share of women employees: Store partners 68 per cent, retail leadership 66 per cent, directors 50 per cent, VPs 49 per cent, senior leadership 40 per cent⁶⁰

In March 2018, Starbucks announced that it had achieved 100 per cent pay parity for employees of all genders and races in the United States, the culmination of a 10-year effort.⁶¹ The company credits this achievement to implementing the following policies and principles:

- ▶ stop asking candidates about their salary history
- ▶ remove any caps on promotional increases
- ▶ be transparent about wages, provide a position's pay range if a candidate asks for it
- ▶ report annually on pay equity progress across the organization

- ▶ conduct comprehensive analyses of compensation
- ▶ analyse all compensation decisions before they are adopted
- ▶ have an accessible pay calculator with transparent standards and calculation methods
- ▶ adopt a policy of no retaliation or discrimination against employees who ask about or discuss wages
- ▶ address unexplained differences in pay between women and men performing similar work.⁶²

These principles were adopted under the umbrella of a company goal to achieve and maintain 100 per cent gender pay equity globally and to maintain 100 per cent pay equity in the United States.

Starbucks has also committed to encouraging other multinational companies to work towards pay equity by sharing their knowledge and tools with the support of the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative (BJKLI) and leading national women's organizations, such as the National Partnership for Women and Families (National Partnership) and the American Association of University Women (AAUW).⁶³

Swedbank⁶⁴

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Financial services, Banking

Headquarters: Sweden

Number of employees: 16,430

Share of women employees: 61 per cent⁶⁵

In 2014, Swedbank's leadership team decided to go above and beyond the law, which in Sweden requires companies to perform an equal-pay analysis and work towards eradicating the equal pay gap. A new plan was adopted to tackle the gender pay gap in the four countries in which it operates (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden). It set an ambitious target: to reduce the pay gap to zero by 2017 for all employees in every part of the Bank, and to maintain that figure. One of the measures taken was to put in place a job evaluation system to map out, evaluate and compare each job in the organization. This was a significant step forward for the bank, moving from simply looking at job titles towards a more comprehensive exercise that took into account each job's complexity and level of responsibility. This job evaluation exercise is now performed regularly.

The next step was to ensure that employees doing work of equal value were receiving the same salary. If gaps were found, immediate corrective measures were taken with the help of a special budget set aside for this purpose. Although not all companies can allocate additional funds to close the gender pay gap, for Swedbank it was an option and a conscious decision. Prioritizing spending on closing the gap was a useful exercise in itself

and demonstrated that the leadership team recognized and were serious about tackling the problem.

The Bank's HR Compensations and Benefits team conducts a pay gap assessment of each part of the organization three times a year and shares the findings with each business area to make sure that no pay gap has been created. This assessment prevents pay gaps from reappearing once they have been eradicated. HR also works with managers throughout the annual salary review process, making sure that equal pay is considered at every step. It again provides a checkpoint, calculating the impact on equal pay if salaries are raised as proposed by managers. If the calculation reveals that a gap will be created, managers are asked to modify their salary review proposals.

Education and training for HR professionals, who are leading the drive for equal pay, was crucial to the programme's success. This allowed them to effectively support managers and competently tackle questions on equal pay raised by staff. Induction and periodic training for managers, starting at the highest levels, on both equal pay and on broader topics of gender equality and diversity, also played a key role. Over time, equal pay has become a deeply embedded norm in the culture of the organization. It is part of the Bank's scorecard and a key performance indicator for the whole organization.

By 2017, the overall gender pay gap for all four countries was approximately 0.4 per cent. The zero pay gap target has been achieved in Sweden, with work ongoing in the other countries. Close monitoring and reporting of the programme means producing reports on a regular basis and distributing them to the management teams. This allows for early intervention if a gap starts to emerge. In 2019, Swedbank signed the WEPs and was ranked among the top three companies in Sweden for gender equality, according to the Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies rankings.⁶⁶

2.2 Preventing and ending gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work

Gender-based violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, are incompatible with decent work yet remain pervasive around the world, irrespective of sector or income. Over a third of Canadian women reported that they experienced sexual harassment at work, while 12 per cent of men reported the same in a 2018 survey.¹ In the European Union (EU), between 40 and 50 per cent of women reported that they had experienced a form of sexual harassment in the workplace.² Unfortunately, the experiences of many victims go unheard, as four out of five women do not report instances of harassment to their employers.³

Violence and harassment negatively impact the organization of work, workplace relations, worker engagement, enterprise reputation, and productivity. Those experiencing violence and harassment at work can suffer harm to their psychological, physical and sexual health, including physical injuries, anxiety, depression, stress and other lasting impacts of trauma, as well as harm to their dignity and their family and social environment.

Women's economic empowerment is also affected, as research has found that victims are more likely to change jobs, and therefore suffer financial stress, rather than report incidents to escape an abusive situation. Such desperate job changes can negatively impact women's career success and companies' turnover⁴ and may prevent persons, particularly women, from accessing, remaining and advancing in the labour market.⁵ Women may also be reluctant to move or have greater difficulty in moving into leadership roles due to high levels of sexual harassment. EU research shows that over 70 per cent of women in leadership roles have experienced sexual harassment.⁶ Sexual harassment results in an unsafe and hostile work environment, undermines equality at work and reinforces stereotypes about women's abilities and aspirations.⁷ Domestic violence also can affect employment, productivity and the health and safety of workers.

Companies can take proactive measures to combat harassment and violence in the world of work. The think-tank Business Fights Poverty (BFP) has produced a five-step framework that businesses can implement in daily company functioning: raise prevention awareness; commit to all aspects of women's empowerment; implement supportive and destigmatizing policies; collaborate with other sectors; and ensure transparency and accountability.⁸ These steps, when combined, optimize the workplace as a safe haven for all individuals and can have positive social and cultural impacts. BFP has also produced a diagnostic tool for assessing the strength of company policies to combat harassment and violence.⁹

In addition, the ILO and UN Women have jointly developed a [handbook](#) on addressing violence and harassment against women (see Annex 3).¹⁰

2.2.1 Key International Labour Standards and other instruments

The Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the accompanying Recommendation No. 206 recognize that violence and harassment take a huge toll on individuals, businesses, society and governments. Women are disproportionately impacted.

The concept of "violence and harassment" in the world of work is defined as "unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment".¹¹ It includes sexual harassment and covers work-related communications (including email and online platforms), work-related social events, commuting to and from work, and domestic violence¹² within private homes when they are a place of work.¹³ Protection should cover all sectors, occupations and types of

work arrangements, including job-seekers, interns and volunteers, and persons exercising the duties of an employer.

Employers should commit to eliminating violence and harassment at work and adopt a policy to:

- ▶ affirm that violence and harassment will not be tolerated;
- ▶ establish violence and harassment prevention programmes with, if appropriate, measurable objectives;
- ▶ specify the rights and responsibilities of the workers and the employer, including the right of the worker to remove her or himself from a situation involving violence or harassment without fear of retaliation;
- ▶ establish complaint and investigation procedures;
- ▶ ensure that all internal and external communications related to incidents of violence and harassment will be duly considered, and acted upon as appropriate;
- ▶ specify the right to privacy of individuals and confidentiality, while balancing the right of workers to be made aware of all hazards;
- ▶ include measures to address domestic violence: awareness-raising, leave for victims, flexible work arrangements, temporary protection against dismissal for victims of domestic violence and referral to public mitigation measures; and
- ▶ institute measures to protect complainants, victims, witnesses and whistle-blowers against victimization or retaliation.¹⁴

Workers and their representatives should take part in the design, implementation and monitoring of workplace policies on violence and harassment. Associated psycho-social risks should be incorporated into the management of occupational safety and health. Workplace risk assessments should take into account factors that increase the likelihood of violence and harassment, including psycho-social hazards and risks. Particular attention should be paid to the hazards and risks that:

- ▶ arise from working conditions and arrangements, work organization and human resource management, as appropriate;
- ▶ involve third parties such as clients, customers, service providers, users, patients and members of the public; and
- ▶ arise from discrimination, abuse of power relations, and gender, cultural and social norms that support violence and harassment.¹⁵

So far as is reasonably practicable, employers should provide workers and other persons concerned with information, tools and training, in accessible formats as appropriate, on the identified hazards and risks of violence and harassment, and the associated prevention and protection measures, including rights and responsibilities.

There are other international and regional instruments that address violence and harassment at work. In interpreting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW), the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) considers workplace sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence that can reduce gender equality in the workplace and result in health and safety issues.¹⁶ The European Social Charter (revised) of 1996, the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (known as the Istanbul Convention), 2011, and several EU Directives also seek to prevent and prohibit various forms of violence and harassment.¹⁷

Principle 3 of the WEPs calls for actions by its signatories to establish a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of violence and harassment at work.¹⁸

2.2.2 Guiding principles for companies

Enterprises – both directly and through their employers' organizations – can play, and are already playing, a key role in ending violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, by helping to shape public policies, calling on governments to ratify ILO Convention No. 190 and participating in social dialogue.¹⁹ Individual enterprises have the ability to influence societal norms and behaviours on gender-based violence and harassment through advertising and campaigning, particularly when the issues align with core business aims and include culturally relevant reference points or actors.²⁰ Company policies that have proved successful include plans that:

1. Demonstrate leadership commitment to a company culture of zero-tolerance
2. Adopt, implement and monitor a comprehensive and effective workplace policy on violence and harassment
3. Promote occupational safety and health and systematic workplace assessment
4. Foster guidance, training and awareness-raising
5. Mitigate the impact of domestic violence in the world of work
6. Address unequal gender-based power relations

Leadership and commitment to a company culture of zero-tolerance

Organizational culture is one of the leading factors in the occurrence of sexual harassment.²¹ Leadership shapes that culture. When leaders take sexual harassment seriously and make prevention a high-priority, it impacts the way employees see the issue.²² As a U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace expressed it: "... leadership and commitment to a diverse, inclusive, and respectful workplace in which harassment is simply not acceptable is paramount", and "this leadership must come from the very top of the organization".²³

“Clear and consistent” anti-harassment messaging from organizational leadership is “essential” to combating sexual harassment.²⁴ Company leadership should communicate strongly and frequently the tenets of the company’s policies, implement accountability measures at all levels of leadership, reiterate zero-tolerance for violence and harassment, prevent and protect against retaliation, and create a climate of civility and respect.

Management commitment indirectly encourages victims to report, particularly those who fear reprisals. One of the recommendations of the EEOC Task Force was to implement a system that rewards managers for an increased rate of harassment reporting, at least in the short-term, in order to incentivize the creation of a climate in which employees feel safe to report misconduct.²⁵

Adopt, implement and monitor a workplace policy on violence and harassment

To eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, robust and comprehensive workplace policies on violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, are key. The recommended elements of an effective workplace policy include: a definition of what is considered violence and harassment illustrated by examples, a commitment to zero-tolerance, prevention, access to an effective complaint and investigation procedure, access to remedies and assistance (including support and services for victims, counselling and information, 24-hour hotlines, emergency services, medical care and psychological support) and appropriate provisions to protect privacy and confidentiality.²⁶

The system established by the policy should foster trust in the complaints procedures. Measures include providing clear information about the complaints process, ensuring anonymity through a variety of reporting platforms²⁷ and protecting against retaliation.²⁸

The workplace policy should establish an integrated approach addressing all related aspects of the phenomenon (health, safety, equality, discrimination, sanctions and so on). It should be drafted in consultation with workers and their representatives, using culturally appropriate language,²⁹ and should be available in accessible formats. It should also be reflected in broader policies such as equality policies, collective agreements or codes of conduct.

Promote occupational safety and health and systematic workplace assessment

Ending violence and harassment in the world of work is inextricably linked to the promotion of occupational safety and health (OSH). Certain factors may increase the risk of violence and harassment: working at night in isolation, in contact with the public or working in intimate spaces and private homes;³⁰ contract work;³¹ intersectional factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age and HIV status.³²

OSH programmes and risk assessments are key tools for integrating these issues into prevention and mitigation strategies.³³ An honest and thorough qualitative and quantitative

assessment of policies, hazards and risks, enforcement mechanisms, and the prevalence and nature of complaints about violence and harassment helps to identify gaps in protection and remediation mechanisms.³⁴ Information on any complaints made should also be meticulously and confidentially recorded. It is good practice to track numbers of complaints by department, gender, outcomes and remediation options.³⁵ This data can then be analysed to identify patterns and better understand where more proactive measures may be needed.

Foster guidance, training and awareness-raising

Training is important in improving understanding of what constitutes violence and harassment, and ensuring that measures to prevent and address it are enforced.³⁶ Frequent, in-person, interactive training seem to be the best approach,³⁷ particularly when it features content that is tailored to a specific department, company or cohort of employees.³⁸ Various approaches may be required to transform the workplace culture, including implicit (or unconscious) bias training, bystander intervention training, training to change stereotypes and social norms, and peer-to-peer training, which empowers employees to help each other disseminate information and change harmful practices.³⁹ Training should be evaluated to assess its short- and long-term effects and ensure that the best methods are implemented, based on staff characteristics and composition, and feedback.

Mitigate the impact of domestic violence in the world of work

The world of work can play an important role in mitigating the effects of domestic violence on individuals and workplaces. Companies are encouraged to take a number of measures, including leave for victims of domestic violence, flexible working arrangements, and the incorporation of domestic violence into workplace risk assessments and workplace policies on all forms of violence and harassment in the world of work.⁴⁰ They can also provide safety and support for survivors of domestic violence, for example by referring a worker to local counselling support.⁴¹ Companies can also refer to the effects of domestic violence on individuals and the workplace when disseminating information to raise awareness on violence in the workplace.⁴²

Address unequal gender-based power relations

Gender imbalances in an occupation or industry tend to increase the risk of sexual harassment.⁴³ A male-dominated and hierarchical workplace culture poses risks,⁴⁴ as do female-dominated occupations with gender stereotypical roles of care and service, in which women are viewed as subservient.⁴⁵ Taking steps to increase gender diversity at all levels and address unequal power balances would help to reduce this vulnerability. These efforts will also involve engaging men as allies in proactive measures for equal gender representation.

2.2.3 Illustrative practices

Carrefour Hypermarkets

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Supermarkets

Headquarters: France

Number of employees: 360, 930⁴⁶

Share of women employees: 58 per cent⁴⁷

In 2012, the retailer Carrefour set up “Psyra”, an active listening and psychological support service for victims of sexual harassment. The service is free and anonymous, and can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by telephone.

Carrefour signed the WEPs in 2013 and collaborated with UN Women in 2017 to publish “Tackling violence against women in the workplace”, which explains how violence is manifested and how to actively listen to people affected. Copies were distributed not only to managers but also to all employees in order to raise their awareness, keep them informed and support them. It will also direct victims of violence to appropriate bodies in both the charity and public sectors. Carrefour employees in leadership positions based in non-G7 nations have received training on reducing bystander effects and on victim support.⁴⁸

Carrefour has signed the WEPs and works with UN Women and a number of other local NGOs on awareness-raising and prevention campaigns in Italy, Romania and Spain. A campaign in Argentina resulted in the establishment of a “gender-based violence committee”, and 200 store managers and directors have been trained so they can identify instances of violence and provide the victims with support.⁴⁹

Diageo

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Beverages

Headquarters: United Kingdom

Number of employees: 29,917⁵⁰

Share of women employees: 31.8 per cent (34 per cent in leadership positions, 40 per cent at executive level and 50 per cent of board members)⁵¹

As part of a partnership with CARE International, a UK-based charity, Diageo performed an assessment across its entire business to find out to what extent the company was tackling violence and harassment, including sexual harassment. The analysis compared Diageo’s current violence and harassment mechanisms with the – at that time – proposed text of ILO

Convention No. 190, as well as CARE’s best practice recommendations. This benchmarking exercise was then validated by Diageo’s global team across multiple countries and business functions, and the results were used to strengthen its global Dignity at Work policy.⁵²

Additionally, as a result of extensive human rights impact assessments in 12 markets, Diageo identified the risks of sexual harassment faced by workers in the hospitality sector, implemented initiatives aimed at preventing harassment, and developed contractor standards in line with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.⁵³ Diageo has been a WEPs signatory since 2013 and was ranked #1 in Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies for gender equality.⁵⁴

Endesa

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Utilities, Electricity

Headquarters: Spain

Number of employees: 1,295⁵⁵

Share of women employees: 65.9 per cent⁵⁶

Endesa, a Spanish multi-national electricity company, has been a WEPs signatory since 2010. It includes a commitment to tackling gender-based violence in its Plan for Equal Opportunities and has taken action accordingly.⁵⁷ Employees who are victims of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, are eligible for psychological support, medical care and legal aid. They can also receive support to manage the multidimensional effects of violence, including flexible work arrangements, childcare, and financial assistance with the costs of relocating to ensure safety, such as the rent of a new home and the fees involved in a child changing schools.⁵⁸

Fortalice Solutions

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Technology, Cybersecurity

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 11–50⁵⁹

Share of female employees: 44 per cent⁶⁰

Fortalice Solutions investigates cybersecurity breaches and provides prevention systems for businesses, governments and individuals.⁶¹ Fortalice also does pro-bono work for victims of sex crimes and human trafficking, and to combat violence against women and girls in and outside the digital world.⁶²

Fortalice created #HelpASisterUp to increase the number of women in cybersecurity, who account for only 10 per cent of the industry workforce.⁶³ The LinkedIn group allows women and girls to contact Fortalice professionals to set up potential mentorships. Women wanting to embark on a cyber-career can utilize the #HelpASisterUp programme to find resources and discuss industry prospects, whether this is their first career track or a change in labour force status.⁶⁴ Increasing the presence of women in the heavily male-dominated cybersecurity industry can lead to innovative company policies, especially to protect the privacy of women and girls, who are at high-risk of online harassment in cyberspace.⁶⁵

Gap Inc.

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Apparel

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 135,000⁶⁶

Share of women employees: 76 per cent⁶⁷

Gap has been a WEPs signatory since 2015. Its “Zero Means Zero” sexual harassment policy demands zero-tolerance for sexual harassment, emphasizing that every complaint will be quickly and thoroughly investigated, and that the company strictly prohibits retaliation. The policy stresses that it is “everyone’s responsibility” to voice any concern about potential discrimination or harassment, whether as a target or a bystander.⁶⁸

The global policy applies to all employees and business partners, including directors, managers, applicants, customers, contractors, vendors and suppliers.⁶⁹ Gap has established a 24-hour Code of Business Conduct (COBC) hotline, which is managed by an independent, third-party vendor and provides interpretation. The hotline access page stresses that individuals submitting a complaint are protected by the company’s “strict enforcement of the company’s zero tolerance for retaliation”.⁷⁰

2.3 Promoting work–family balance and equal sharing of care responsibilities

According to the ILO’s Care Work and Care Jobs report: “In no country in the world do men and women perform an equal share of unpaid care work”.¹ The burden falls disproportionately on women. In developed countries, women spend a daily average of 4 hours and 20 minutes on unpaid care work, as against a daily average of 2 hours and 16 minutes spent by men.² In most countries, this divergence begins during a woman’s child-rearing years and persists throughout her lifetime.³

The disparity between women and men in care responsibilities has significant ramifications for women’s economic empowerment. In every country around the world, women’s labour market participation is lower than that of men, largely due to the unequal distribution of hours of unpaid work in the household.⁴

When women do work, “they tend to have more limited access than men to high-quality employment opportunities”, in large part due to the disproportionate burden of unpaid work in the household.⁵ The need for more flexibility to fulfil their care responsibilities prompts many women to take up paid work that is part-time or in the informal economy, where wages are usually lower, perpetuating the gender pay gap.⁶

Pregnant women are more likely to be discriminated against in hiring and firing. They are also more likely to be denied the right to return to work once their maternity leave is finished. Maternity discrimination pushes more women into gig employment or the informal economy, where wages are low and hours less stable.⁷

Gender equality and women’s economic empowerment are intimately intertwined with achieving work–family balance, ensuring a more balanced sharing of family responsibilities and investing in the care economy, as called for by the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. Moreover, family-friendly policies, such as supporting breastfeeding at work, positively impact broader social well-being since they are correlated with lower mortality rates and healthier mothers and babies, and hence lower healthcare costs.

2.3.1 Key International Labour Standards and other instruments

The ILO’s first maternity convention (Maternity Convention, 1919 (No. 3)) was adopted soon after the organization’s founding in 1919, pointing to its centrality in advancing gender equality at work and social justice. International labour standards on maternity protection have two main goals: to “preserve the health of the mother and her newborn” and to “provide a measure of job and income security: protection from dismissal and discrimination, the right to resume work after leave, and maintenance of wages and incomes during maternity”.⁸

The more recent Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) applies to all women, including those in atypical forms of dependent work. It focuses on providing adequate financial and other support; protecting pregnant workers and those with newborns from discrimination; and supporting workers (both women and men) with family responsibilities.

The minimum length of maternity leave should be 14 weeks. Recommendation No. 191 recommends 18 weeks. The mother should receive financial support equal to at least two thirds of previous earnings provided through compulsory social insurance or public funds, with no more than one third to be provided through employer liability, so as not to incentivize employers to avoid hiring pregnant workers or women of child-bearing age.⁹

Health protection in the workplace should be provided for pregnant and nursing workers. This includes time off for medical examinations, workplace risk assessments, and prevention and protection measures. It also encompasses accommodating and supporting workers who are breastfeeding, allowing them time off to feed or pump and an appropriate space to do so. These elements should be incorporated into the occupational safety and health management system.¹⁰

The ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165) and the Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191) call for parental leave and leave for adoptive parents. This serves both to expand the opportunity for all parents to bond with their new-born or newly adopted child and to destigmatize maternity leave.

Actions deemed discriminatory include: refusal to hire; dismissal or denial of the opportunity to return to work following maternity leave; the use of temporary contracts or non-standard forms of employment to discriminate against pregnant women; and mandatory pregnancy testing.¹¹

Recommendation No. 165 also encourages measures to enable workers to reconcile their work and family life. These include adequate and appropriate childcare and family services and facilities; more flexible work schedules, rest periods and holidays; and vocational guidance and training to enable workers with family responsibilities to become and remain integrated in the labour force, as well as to re-enter the labour force after an absence due to such responsibilities.

Many workers with family responsibilities work from home, where they often lack legal protections and bargaining power. The Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177) and Recommendation No. 184 promote equality of treatment between home workers and other workers.

Other international and regional instruments

Maternity protection is also enshrined in key human rights treaties, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966, and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979.¹² The WEPs include indicators on paid maternity and parental leave.

In 2019, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted a [Directive](#) to support a healthy work–life balance for parents and carers.¹³ It introduces at least ten days’ paid leave for a baby’s second parent, five days’ paid leave per year for workers who need to care for a sick or dependent family member, and the right to request flexible working arrangements.¹⁴ Furthermore, the Directive includes guidance to ensure protection against discrimination for workers with family obligations and pregnant women; promote a more gender-balanced use of family-related leave and flexible work arrangements; and improve long-term and childcare services.¹⁵ This legislation means that parents and carers will be better able to reconcile their professional and private lives, and companies will benefit from more motivated workers.

Women’s Empowerment Principle 2 calls on its signatories to offer flexible working arrangements, gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices, and leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status, and to support women and men’s access to child and dependent care through services, resources and information.¹⁶

2.3.2 Guiding principles for companies

Effective company policies that can promote a better work-life balance for all include:

1. Providing maternity protection in line with or over and above international labour standards
2. Preventing discrimination against pregnant women and workers with family responsibilities in hiring, job assignment, training, conditions of work and firing
3. Providing paid paternity leave and encouraging uptake
4. Facilitating a smooth return to work after leave
5. Supporting breastfeeding in the workplace
6. Assisting with on- or near-site subsidized childcare
7. Supporting other care responsibilities
8. Providing flexible working arrangements
9. Extending coverage to all workers and families

Providing maternity protection in line with or over and above international labour standards

To promote the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men, maternity leave should be part of a comprehensive and integrated care-leave policy, as a minimum guaranteeing maternity protection to all women in line with ILO international labour standards (see Section 2.3.1). A review of research on maternity leave duration by New America's Better Life Lab found that periods of leave shorter than 12 weeks were associated with negative health and well-being outcomes for mothers and infants, and that longer paid leaves had long-term benefits.¹⁷ Research shows that periods of leave of less than one year are optimal, to avoid long-term negative impacts on women's labour market participation and career development.¹⁸

Preventing discrimination against pregnant women and workers with family responsibilities

Workers are often discriminated against in hiring, job assignment, access to training and promotion because of actual or expected maternity and family responsibilities. Enterprises should avoid direct and indirect discrimination against pregnant and nursing women and workers with family responsibilities. While having regard to operational needs, enterprises are encouraged to guarantee healthy and safe environments and working conditions for pregnant and nursing women. They should avoid excessively long hours and unpredictable overtime, which makes it difficult to plan for care of family members, and scheduling work on traditional days of rest.¹⁹

Providing paid paternity leave and encouraging uptake

Paternity leave recognizes a father's right and responsibility to care for his new child. Studies show that there is a direct positive relationship between the duration of a father's leave and his ongoing involvement in household chores and childcare.²⁰ Easing of the burden on women helps them to more fully integrate into the labour market. It also benefits child development and well-being, and contributes positively to children's future attitudes to more equal gender norms.²¹ The ILO Global Wage Report finds that paternity leave can reduce the gender wage gap by countering "...the perception held by employers – both women and men – of women wage employees as mothers."²²

Some companies are going beyond the maternity and paternity divide and offering generous parental leave for all parents. This is very helpful in further reducing unconscious or conscious bias against women during recruitment and in challenging gender stereotypes. However, the particular needs of mothers to recover from childbirth should be factored into the formulation of such policies.

Facilitating a smooth return to work after leave

Facilitating a parent's return to work after leave is crucial for both employer and employee. Return-to-work policies can differ, depending on an organization's structure. They may include gradual change from a part-time to a full-time schedule, flexible hours, working from home, coaching and online communications. The integration of technology into daily work tasks can support a fluid return to work, while not sacrificing any skills during the period of leave. However, safeguards should be put in place to avoid pressuring the employee to work during maternity, paternity or other types of leave for carers.

Supporting breastfeeding in the workplace

Support for breastfeeding workers is important for both the worker and her baby and should at least include permitting breast pumping or feeding in or near the workplace, and paid lactation breaks.²³ Other important means of support include educating staff to decrease stigma and discrimination in respect of breastfeeding, and providing a lactation space or paid breaks. These measures can be adopted with relatively low cost, so they are feasible for all sizes of enterprise.²⁴

A basic and appropriate breast feeding/lactation space should have a door that can be locked from the inside, a flat surface other than the floor on which to place supplies, proper lighting and ventilation, cleaning wipes and paper towels, and an electrical socket. It should also be accessible to individuals with disabilities.²⁵ Many companies go beyond these basics and include a sink with soap and running hot and cold water, a breastmilk-designated refrigerator, a microwave to sterilize supplies and a comfortable chair.²⁶

Assisting with on- or near-site childcare

The needs of employees who are parents go beyond the first few months of their child's life. Smart, secure and good-quality childcare helps parents to return to the workplace with peace of mind that their child is being taken care of. Employer-supported childcare can allow fathers to share the role of caretaker equally if their business offers this service, which can help "remove stigma against men who embrace their roles as fathers".²⁷

The quality of childcare services is linked to the qualifications and working conditions of childcare workers. The ILO has adopted Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel.²⁸ Employer-supported childcare is not intended to replace the primary role of the public sector. There are multiple workplace solutions to support working parents that can be adapted to the characteristics and size of each company at zero or low cost.²⁹

Providing flexible working arrangements for a healthy work–life balance

Flexible working arrangements, such as adjusting working hours or working from home, can be beneficial for both workers and employers. They are valuable in enabling workers to balance their work and personal life. Flexibility is especially important to women's economic empowerment, in that it enables workers to balance their care and career commitments, and allows men to be more involved in caring for their children or other family members. However, gender stereotypes will be reinforced, rather than challenged, if workplace cultures continue to favour working on site and working long hours, and if women disproportionately utilize flexible working arrangements. Moreover, workers need to be confident that they will not be penalized for making use of such accommodations: research by the European Commission shows that 27 per cent of Europeans express this concern, and thus leaders and managers must play a key role in decreasing this pressure.³⁰ A company culture that encourages and enables all employees to make use of such arrangements without detriment to their career is therefore an important element of any such policies.

Extending coverage to all workers and families

Ensuring broad coverage of employee categories, such as part-time workers and those in low-skilled and low-paid occupations, is very important, given that women are more prevalent in these job categories.³¹ An increasing number of companies are extending leave benefits and family-friendly policies to part-time and hourly employees.³² It is also essential to ensure that coverage supports all family types (single parents, parents who adopt or use surrogacy, same-sex couples and so on), so none is left behind.

2.3.3 Illustrative practices

Adidas

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Sportswear,

Headquarters: Germany

Number of employees: 57,016³³

Share of women employees: 57 per cent³⁴

Adidas, a worldwide sportswear company based in Germany, signed the WEPs in 2020 and helps its employees to achieve a healthy work–life balance through its multiple flexible working arrangement options. Measures in support of new mothers and parents include parental leave, activity camps when children are not in school, back-up childcare, lactation rooms (in select branches) and subsidies for childcare if no on-site facility is available.³⁵

Adidas has also implemented programmes for all employees, regardless of whether or not they are parents, ensuring that all employees are accommodated and parents are not stigmatized. Measures include individualized working hours and days, part-time hourly models, work-from-home, and “myTime” (a salary-conversion option at their headquarters for sabbaticals, early retirement and other needs).³⁶ Women staff can advance themselves educationally, socially and financially through this programme. Adidas makes sure employees’ voices are heard by establishing a “People Pulse” employee satisfaction database, which over 90 per cent of employees have used,³⁷ empowering workers to help create an optimal work environment.

BMO Financial Group

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Financial, Banking

Headquarters: Canada

Number of employees: 45,454³⁸

Share of women employees: 54 per cent³⁹

BMO Financial Group, a WEPs signatory since 2019, offers a wide range of work–family benefits. Broadly open to all staff with any sort of family responsibilities, the programme encourages both women and men to make use of the benefits. Employees who give birth receive up to 17 weeks of maternity leave and an additional 61 weeks of parental leave, making a combined total of 78 weeks’ leave, while fathers and parents of a newborn or adopted child benefit from 61 weeks of parental leave. Employees also receive a top-up of public payments for six weeks from the date a child is born or comes into the care of the adoptive parent(s), bringing their total net pay to 100% of their pre-leave earnings.

Parents can access up to 10 days of paid back-up childcare services, and paid and unpaid leave is available for a wide range of family needs. Employees also receive paid time off to address personal matters that cannot be scheduled outside of working hours and can request flexible working arrangements (working offsite, working a shortened week and/or sharing jobs). Employees can take up to 28 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death; and paid time off to help cope with the loss of an immediate family member or close friend. Moreover, they can request extended unpaid leave of absence for a wide variety of purposes, including family responsibilities.

In addition to these programmes, the LifeWorks-administered Employee Assistance Program offers a variety of resources, such as blogs, online toolkits, videos, podcasts, articles, self-assessments and interactive programmes, as well as confidential counselling services to employees and their eligible dependents.⁴⁰

Danone Nutricia ELN

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Food processing

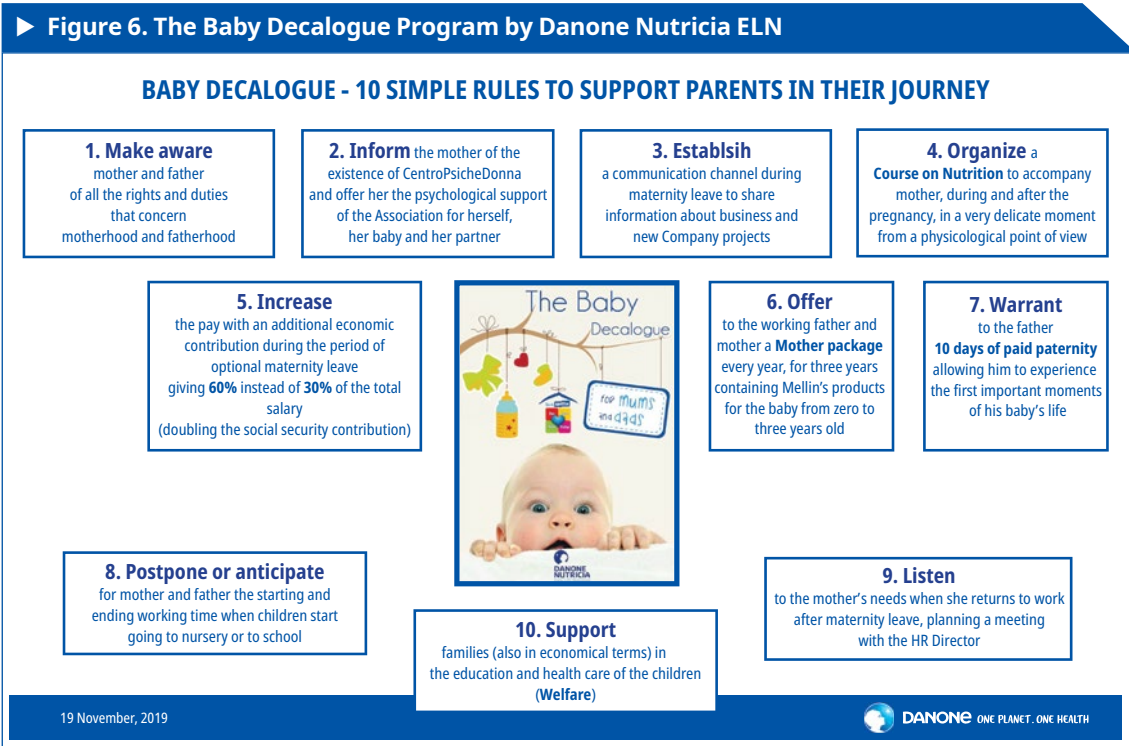
Headquarters: Italy

Number of Employees: Over 100,000 for the whole Danone Group⁴¹

Share of female employees: 30 per cent of the entire Danone corporation⁴²

Danone Nutricia ELN is an Italian-based subsidiary of a larger corporation, Danone, a WEPS signatory. In 2011, Danone Nutricia ELN introduced a Baby Decalogue Program for its employees, which later inspired the family welfare legislation adopted by the Italian government in 2015. This initiative was conceived in response to the low rate of women's labour-force participation in Italy, which is 10 percentage points lower than in other OECD countries.⁴³

The Baby Decalogue Program aims to support both maternity and paternity in the workplace through an awareness-raising campaign informing parents of their rights as caretakers at work (see Figure 6). The programme increases maternity leave pay and offers paternity leave. Leave for a primary caregiver in all subsidiaries of Danone extends to 18 weeks for a birth parent and 14 weeks for an adoptive parent.⁴⁴ When a parent returns from leave, Danone Nutricia ELN streamlines the return-to-work process by providing counselling. Once the child enters childcare, the company offers flexible working hours to parents and an annual contribution for any childcare needs.⁴⁵



Source: Danone, slide presented at the [ILO-EU Maternity Protection Centenary Event](#), November 2019.

During parental leave, parents can undertake skills training through the “Maternity as a Master” (MAAM) programme on a PC or mobile device. The low-cost programme has 12 different training modules that can be completed remotely to improve soft skills for the world of work.⁴⁶ These skills have had positive effects for new parents and for Danone, in and outside the workplace: 76 per cent of parents on leave use the programme; 83 per cent state that their skills have improved; 75 per cent feel more engaged in Danone’s work; 79 per cent feel more energized. Other skills that have been developed include empathy (with an increase of 35 per cent), the ability to delegate (35 per cent), better time management (35 per cent), decision-making (15 per cent), intellectual agility (20 per cent) and the ability to manage complex tasks or situations (10 per cent).⁴⁷

The long-term effects of Danone’s programmes have been outstanding in terms of parental take-up, returns to work, rates of promotion for returning mothers and reduced absenteeism; 51% of the company’s managers, executives and directors are women.⁴⁸ The company received Italy’s Best Workplace Award each year from 2013 to 2017.⁴⁹

Deloitte

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Professional services, Consulting

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 286,214⁵⁰

Share of women employees: 44 per cent⁵¹

In 2016, Deloitte, a WEPs signatory since 2010, initiated family leave of 16 weeks for all employees at full pay. Leave covers care of a child or an ailing loved one (significant other, parent, sibling or grandparent). The leave is also flexible, so it can be taken in its entirety or in fragments. The gender-neutral nature of the policy aims at “relieving some of the often-seen cultural pressure on women to be the default caregiver”.⁵²

Deloitte reports that over 5,000 workers made use of the programme in the first two years and there has been an increase in the number of male employees taking family leave, and for longer periods of time.⁵³

EY (formerly Ernst & Young)

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Professional services, Accounting

Headquarters: United Kingdom

Number of employees: 261,559⁵⁴

Share of women employees: 47.6⁵⁵

The consulting firm EY has been a WEPs signatory since 2010. In 2016, it announced a revamped leave policy for its employees in the United States. The company provides 16 weeks of paid parental leave for all employees who are welcoming a child through birth, adoption, surrogacy, foster care or legal guardianship. This gender-neutral parental leave replaced its previous 12-week maternity leave provision and 6-week leave for new fathers and adoptive parents.⁵⁶ The expansion of leave benefits was accompanied by an effort to encourage fathers to make use of the leave that included supportive messaging by men in leadership positions.⁵⁷

The policy has thus far successfully increased the proportion of men taking leave to welcome a child. Whereas 19 per cent of eligible fathers took paternity leave prior to the expansion, a year after the policy went into effect the take-up rate by fathers taking 6 weeks or more increased to 38 per cent.⁵⁸ The company's Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Karyn Twaronite, also credited the expansion and increase in fathers' take-up of paternity leave to increasing gender diversity in company leadership.⁵⁹

L'Oréal

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Household and personal products⁶⁰

Headquarters: France

Number of employees: 82,606⁶¹

Share of women employees: 69 per cent⁶²

L'Oréal operates in 130 countries, employing 50,500 people.⁶³ L'Oréal runs a "Share & Care" programme, which provides a minimum set of social benefits for all the company's permanent employees and encourages local subsidiaries to launch additional initiatives.⁶⁴ The company provides a minimum of 14 weeks' maternity leave, paid at 100 per cent of previous remuneration, and six weeks of paternity leave on full pay.⁶⁵ Additionally, the company ensures that women on maternity leave are entitled to all of the salary increases that they would have received, had they not been on leave.⁶⁶ Employees also have access to major medical treatments, with 75 per cent of the costs reimbursed and 24 months fully paid in the event of death or incapacitation of the mother.⁶⁷ The benefits also include flexible working arrangements.⁶⁸

The global programme serves as a basic platform upon which local operations can build, depending on the needs of employees in different regions. For instance, Canadian employees receive flexible health benefits; company branches in Central America and Argentina partake in L'Oréal Mamá (which includes longer maternity leave, a shortened working week and subsidized childcare); while working conditions in Indonesia have been improved, with new lactation rooms made available through office relocation.⁶⁹ The company has been a WEPs signatory since 2013. In 2016, it received the WEPs Benchmarking for Change CEO Leadership Award and was ranked #4 in Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies on gender equality.⁷⁰

Martur Fompok International

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Automotive manufacturing

Headquarters: Turkey

Number of Employees: 5,700 total, 918 in Kütahya plant⁷¹

Share of female employees: 57 per cent (Kütahya plant)⁷²

Martur Fompok has made a strong commitment to supporting workers with families and in this respect has become a national leader. In addition to complying fully with the labour law provisions concerning maternity leave and paid breastfeeding breaks, all Martur plants have lactation rooms with amenities such as armchairs, blinds, air conditioning and a refrigerator for milk storage.⁷³ To ensure women's safety, Martur provides free transportation home if a mother needs to leave to breastfeed.⁷⁴

Martur learned from exit interviews that childcare would be beneficial to the company and thus decided to provide a free summer camp for children when school is closed.⁷⁵ One branch of Martur, the Martur Kütahya plant, pays the fees for near-site childcare and transportation.⁷⁶ The results of these policies are striking: 84 per cent of women who took leave in 2015 and 2016 returned to work and were still employed a year later,⁷⁷ while absenteeism fell from 4.15 per cent in 2013 to 1.9 per cent in 2016.⁷⁸ Since more and more women are returning to work, staff turnover fell by over 3 per cent between 2013 and 2017.⁷⁹

Novartis

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Pharmaceuticals

Headquarters: Switzerland (policy is for France)

Number of employees: 1,800 in France⁸⁰

Share of women employees: 60 per cent⁸¹

In 2006, Novartis France launched an internal survey to analyse the influence of care work on its employees. It found that 40 per cent of employees had care responsibilities. Three years later, the company published a “Guide for Informal Carers” to provide information and resources to employees with a broad range of care responsibilities, including care for children, older persons and sick relatives. Multimedia applications were also developed to provide more advice on care.

Novartis France offers 27 days of annual leave and 14 days of reduced working time (up to 50 per cent). Employees have access to a time-credit scheme and those with care responsibilities benefit from a “credit-hours scheme” to allow for an extra two-hours of paid leave per month for care activities. Carers can receive an extra stipend by way of financial support.

To reduce stigma, Novartis France provides training for individuals in leadership positions on how to better support employees with care responsibilities.⁸² The Novartis Foundation has gone even further in educating the public and policy-makers where care is concerned. In 2008, it created an Observatory of the Family Circle to inform health policy-makers about the challenges faced by workers with family responsibilities and propose policy solutions.⁸³ Novartis has been a WEPs signatory since 2010 and has recently joined EPIC.

Patagonia

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Sportswear

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 1,728⁸⁴

Share of women employees: 50.1 per cent⁸⁵

Patagonia has instilled a family-friendly culture into its workplace since 1983. It provides 16 weeks of paid maternity leave and 12 weeks of paid paternity leave.⁸⁶ To facilitate the return to work and promote a healthy work-life balance, Patagonia provides a subsidized childcare centre, which can welcome about 100 children ranging in age from new-borns to 9 years old.

Patagonia has also made a strong commitment to supporting workers who breastfeed their infants. What started as colleagues using a caravan for nursing breaks and childcare needs⁸⁷ has evolved into the Great Pacific Child Development Center at its corporate headquarters and the Truckee River Child Development Center at its national distribution centre.⁸⁸ The company distributes information on prenatal and breastfeeding health⁸⁹ and provides paid nursing breaks. Breaks can be taken in a private space in the childcare centre, where trained staff are available to assist. Mothers can nurse while working, including during meetings,⁹⁰ and they can make use of a travel-support programme.⁹¹

This combination of policies has been very successful: 100 per cent of mothers return from leave after having a child. Moreover, Patagonia's turnover of employees who are parents is 25 per cent less than for employees without children. The company estimates that these retention rates have offset the annual costs of the facilities by about 91 per cent.⁹² It may also be helping with recruitment. When Patagonia published a book entitled *Family Business*, which discusses Patagonia's family-friendly policies, traffic to the company's recruitment website increased by 40 per cent.⁹³

RELX

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Professional services, Analytics

Headquarters: United Kingdom

Number of employees: approximately 30,000⁹⁴

Share of women employees: 51 per cent⁹⁵

The RELX Group, which is a member of the UN Global Compact and signed the WEPs in 2014, began the process of implementing a flexible working policy by mapping existing workplace measures across the business.⁹⁶ The company then explicitly endorsed the value of flexible working as part of its global flexible-working principles and created an enabling environment where “work-life integration is encouraged and supported”.⁹⁷

Flexible working arrangements include flexitime, part-time working, job sharing, teleworking, time off for care responsibilities for children and other family members, and career breaks.⁹⁸ This option is available to employees all around the world in their Scientific, Technical & Medical segment, one of the four parts of the company.⁹⁹

The use of these options is supported by positive messaging from company leadership, and the company has profiled female and male employees who have made use of these arrangements on the company intranet and website. The case studies feature men's and women's stories of how they work flexibly, the practical realities of using these flexible working options, and the impact this has had on their careers and well-being.¹⁰⁰

Sumitomo Chemical

Basic Characteristics

Sector: Chemical production, Sales¹⁰¹

Headquarters: Japan

Number of Employees: 9,012¹⁰²

Share of female employees: 16 per cent¹⁰³

To support its workers with parental responsibilities, Sumitomo Chemical offers 98 days of paid maternity leave and 5 days of paid paternity leave. It also allots 28 paid childcare leave days per child to each parent, days that can be used either in one long period or in separate short periods until the child is three years old.¹⁰⁴

It also subsidizes six on- and near-site childcare facilities, which are managed by a third party. There are spaces for up to 180 children.¹⁰⁵ These childcare facilities allow parents to spend time with their children and know they are safe nearby. The company particularly encourages fathers to use these facilities, to stimulate greater balance in care responsibilities. Although users are charged a small fee, it is less costly for parents than the fees of public, government-run childcare initiatives.¹⁰⁶

The combination of a convenient and high-quality childcare facility together with financially supportive leave policies has had a large impact on recruitment, retention and the advancement of women in this STEM-field company. The proportion of women employed rose from 11.8 per cent in 2009 to 13.6 per cent in 2016.¹⁰⁷ Between 2004 and 2016 (the facilities have been open for 8 of those 12 years), 90 per cent of women who went on maternity leave returned to work.¹⁰⁸ The company has been a WEPs signatory since 2013 and received the Kurumin Mark in 2008, 2012 and 2015 from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Platinum Certification in 2015).¹⁰⁹

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Ltd.

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Financial services, Banking

Headquarters: Japan

Number of Employees: 117,321 (May 2019)¹¹⁰

The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi runs a variety of programmes to promote a healthy work-life balance. These include paid parental leave, encouragement to fathers to be involved in their children's lives, a subsidized childcare programme and "Bring Your Child to Work Day".¹¹¹

The Bank has also set up a childcare portal for its employees, inspired by The Act on Promotion of Women’s Participation and Advancement in the Workforce, which came into effect in 2016 with the aim of improving women’s employment rates and supporting a work–life balance for both male and female employees.¹¹² It finances the programme, which is managed by an outside company. The online portal enables mothers to keep in touch with the workplace while they are on maternity leave. A mother can communicate with her managers and employers and work remotely on skills development and maintenance to ensure a fluid return to work.¹¹³

The Bank’s work–life balance programmes appear to have positively impacted recruitment, retention and the promotion rates of women. Women are recruited at higher rates and are now more likely to return to the Bank from leave, ensuring their own career success; the Bank estimates that it has saved US\$45 million by retaining staff in this way.¹¹⁴ Women are more likely to attain leadership roles: the percentage of women middle and senior managers grew from 5 per cent in 2006 to 19 per cent in 2016.¹¹⁵

Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, Real estate,

Headquarters: France

Number of employees: 2,000¹¹⁶

Share of women employees: 51.5 per cent¹¹⁷

Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield, a commercial real-estate company based in France, has won recognition for its proactive support of fathers’ care responsibilities and work–life balance.¹¹⁸ This includes four weeks of fully paid paternity leave and shared parental leave of three months at full pay, which can be taken flexibly and is available from day one. The company also offers three months at half pay and flexible working arrangements.

Furthermore, the company has initiatives in place to support fathers in maintaining a healthy work–family balance. Its Family Buddy programme brings together new parents with a colleague who already has children and is able to provide advice and support on their new role before, during, and after their leave. The company also hosts workshops specifically for fathers and partners, thus providing a further space where they can share and gain insights.¹¹⁹

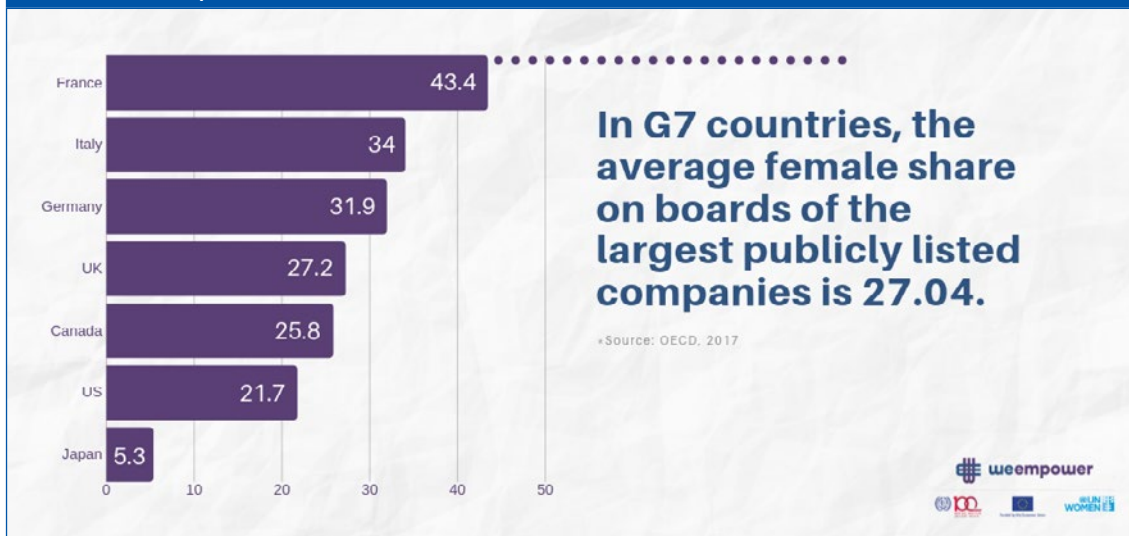
These efforts seem to have paid off: the take-up of paternity leave by “relevant staff” was reported to be 100 per cent, and a further 40 per cent of eligible fathers made use of the shared parental leave in 2017.¹²⁰ All requests for flexible work arrangements were granted.¹²¹

2.4 Supporting women in business and management

Achieving gender equality and women's economic empowerment in business and management requires improving the gender balance at all levels of company leadership, as well as increasing the numbers of women who are business owners and entrepreneurs. Women represent more than 50 per cent of the population worldwide, but contribute only 37 per cent of global GDP and represent only 39 per cent of the global labour force.¹

Globally, women occupy only 27.1 per cent of managerial positions, a proportion that has not changed significantly in nearly three decades.² Only 25.1 per cent of managers with children under 6 years of age are women, whereas the figure for women without young children is 31.4 per cent. However, where men share unpaid care work more equally with women, more women are found in managerial positions.³ The highest levels of leadership remain resistant to gender diversity. Women accounted for less than 4 per cent of board chairs across nearly 7,000 companies in 44 countries in 2017⁴ and globally only 15 per cent of board seats are held by women.⁵ In G7 countries, the average proportion of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies in 2017 was 27.04 per cent. France, Germany and Italy are the countries where women are best represented on company boards. These are also the only G7 countries that have established a quota system for women's representation on company boards.⁶

► **Figure 7. Share of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies, G7 countries, 2017**



Source: WE EMPOWER – G7, based on OECD, 2017.

At the very highest level, the picture is not much brighter. Globally, 22 per of all employers are women and 21.7 per cent of enterprises reported that they have a female CEO, although there is a great deal of variance across regions, countries, and sizes of enterprise.⁷ In many cases, women-run businesses are very small or micro-enterprises with little opportunity

for growth. According to the ILO Women in Business and Management report, “the under-representation of women in management positions becomes more distinct at the highest echelons”.⁸ Despite some progress in recent years, women’s under-representation in decision-making positions in European business and industry persists.⁹

Empowering women in the workforce also means giving them the opportunity to thrive as investors and entrepreneurs; yet women investors and entrepreneurs remain a small minority.¹⁰ Globally, only 1 in 10 decision-makers at venture-capital and private-equity firms are women, while private funds identified as operating with a gender-equality approach report 72 per cent women partners. In Europe, all-men founding teams receive almost 92 per cent of all capital invested.¹¹

2.4.1 Key International Labour Standards and other instruments

The ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) and Recommendation No. 111 cover discrimination in relation to access to education and vocational training, access to employment and to particular occupations, as well as terms and conditions of employment. Gender-equality policies and measures should be concrete and specific, and may require treating certain groups differently.¹² They should be continually assessed and reviewed in order to ensure that they remain appropriate and effective in a constantly changing context.¹³ Public procurement policies that give preference to businesses owned by women and to women entrepreneurs have been identified as particularly effective.¹⁴

The ILO MNE Declaration calls on multinationals and other enterprises to make qualifications, skills and experience the basis for the recruitment, placement, training and advancement of their staff at all levels. They should ensure that relevant training is provided for women and men employed by them at all levels in the host country, as appropriate, to meet the needs of the enterprise, as well as the development policies of the country concerned. Such training should, as far as possible, develop generally useful skills and promote career opportunities and lifelong learning. This responsibility should be carried out, where appropriate, in cooperation with the authorities of the country, employers’ and workers’ organizations and the competent local, national and international institutions.¹⁵

The WEPs are particularly relevant in guiding companies to contribute to gender equality at all levels of company operations, including women-owned and women-led businesses.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 is focused on improving the gender balance on corporate boards by introducing a Directive to require a minimum of 40 per cent of non-executive members of the under-represented sex on the boards of listed companies in Europe.¹⁶ Companies would be required to demonstrate the application of clear and gender-neutral criteria in their selection processes.¹⁷

The EU cohesion policy supports women's entrepreneurship, women's (re)integration into the labour market, and gender equality in traditionally male-dominated sectors. The Horizon Europe European Innovation Council (EIC) will develop measures promoting the participation of women in start-ups and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises in 2020.¹⁸ The European Commission will also promote the presence of women in decision-making positions in private-equity and venture-capital funds, and support funds investing with gender-diversified portfolios through the InvestEU programme, which aims to mobilize private and public investment in Europe for more sustainable, inclusive and innovative growth.¹⁹

2.4.2 Guiding principles for companies

Companies committed to gender equality should drive change and action that fosters diversity and inclusion across all levels, and thus contribute to transforming business culture more generally. Some strategies for empowering women to enter and remain in business and management roles include:

1. Demonstrating commitment and action on the part of company leadership
2. Diversifying company talent and the executive pipeline
3. Adopting a continuous improvement approach
4. Focusing on communication and transparency
5. Promoting women's entrepreneurship and closing the gender finance gap.

Demonstrating commitment and action on the part of company leadership

As with any other endeavour to achieve gender equality, the agenda needs to be set from the top. To truly succeed, it requires commitment, engagement and meaningful action on the part of company leadership to ensure that women are equally represented and valued in executive and leadership positions and on boards. This high-level commitment fosters a gender-inclusive enterprise culture and paves the way for policies to enact change.²⁰

Diversifying company talent and the executive pipeline

Increasing women's presence – at all levels, but particularly in the middle and senior ranks of management and on boards – necessitates greater diversity in talent pipelines. Companies should invest in gender-sensitive hiring processes and in promotion and succession planning.

Offering opportunities adapted to the needs of workers with family responsibilities in areas such as skills development and executive training is a good example of effective human resources management. Programmes that provide tailored mentorship, sponsorship and other career development support particularly focused on women can be invaluable in giving them the tools and resources to attain leadership roles.

Adopting a continuous improvement approach

Company leadership should frequently revisit current policies and practices to identify possible areas for improvement. Identifying and addressing areas for further progress, and addressing any structural barriers, can help companies to fully realize gender equality across the entire organization.

Focusing on communication and transparency

Implementing an effective policy and specific programmes for promoting gender equality at all levels requires consultation, particularly with women employees. Ensuring that women's voices are heard and valued requires action on the part of company leadership to create an open line of communication that is itself free of gender bias. Companies can create opportunities for women to communicate, set goals and discuss challenges with the support of human resources. In addition, giving visibility to role models helps to shape and reinforce a culture of gender inclusivity.

Transparency is also important for organizational learning. Enabling women to communicate not only their successes, but also setbacks impacting their goals and progress is crucial. Successes, setbacks and challenges should be shared to strengthen good practices and eliminate less useful or counterproductive ones.

Promoting women's entrepreneurship and closing the gender financing gap

Finally, businesses can also support female entrepreneurs and women-owned enterprises, for instance by lending support to community organizations and business associations that support women's entrepreneurship development, or seeking out women-led enterprises to do business with. When women employees leave a company, in particular during lay-offs, those who are interested in starting their own businesses can be supported by, for example, helping them to access finance, providing business development resources, lending or donating equipment, and so on.

2.4.3 Illustrative practices

AT&T

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Communication, Telecommunication services

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: Over 254,000²¹

Share of women employees: 31 per cent²²

The telecommunications company AT&T has adopted several initiatives to increase gender diversity at various levels. This starts with the new talent pipeline: in 2017, the intern programme included 45 per cent women.²³

Several leadership tracks have been developed that are either geared specifically towards fostering women's leadership or are comprised on average of more than 40 per cent female participants. To increase the representation of women and people of colour at higher levels, an Accelerated Development Program (ADP) speeds up the professional development and growth of mid-level managers, while an Executive Advocate Program targets the executive and officer levels. The Executive Women's Leadership Experience programme invests in 20 mid- and senior-level women leaders with potential to reach the executive level.²⁴ Additionally, 54 per cent of participants in the Leadership Development Program, which provides career opportunities, hands-on training and mentorship for recently hired college graduates, have been women.²⁵

AT&T has diversity councils at several levels of the company, including the Chairman's Diversity Council, headed by the Chairman and CEO, Randall Stephenson, and comprised of a team that reports directly to him. This council meets quarterly to review diversity and inclusion measures and to monitor the status of initiatives.²⁶

As of the end of 2017, women accounted for 35 per cent of the management at AT&T. However, the trend towards greater representation of women in leadership has not significantly strengthened, and recently there has been a slight decline (women's representation in management declined from 37 per cent to 35 per cent between 2013 and 2017).²⁷ A number of factors may be involved, but this highlights the particular challenge of increasing the representation of women in STEM fields, as well as the long-term vision required for pipeline diversity initiatives. AT&T has been ranked third for three consecutive years in the Diversity MBA "Best Places for Women & Diverse Managers to Work".²⁸

A.T. Kearney

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Professional services, Consulting

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 3,600²⁹

Share of women employees: 38 per cent³⁰

A.T. Kearney has adopted several initiatives to provide women with the resources and guidance to enable them to reach leadership positions. Among these is a sponsorship programme that pairs female workers of diverse talent who have demonstrated strong potential for leadership with senior executives who "help these women think through their career paths and serve as advocates for their interests, supporting their advancement and development within the firm".³¹ The sponsors also provide professional feedback,

facilitate skills development, provide network-expanding opportunities, and increase the participants' visibility to the company leadership.³² Exceptional participants may also be eligible for a fully-paid MBA degree from a top university, such as Columbia or Harvard.³³ The programme has been successful in improving the advancement and retention rates of women: 40 per cent of the female participants have attained leadership roles.³⁴

A.T. Kearney's "Encore Program" aims to speed the career development of women who re-enter the workforce after a long career break.³⁵ The programme tools include a structured internship plan, training, personal mentoring and access to senior leadership.³⁶ The firm also has several initiatives to improve the work-life balance of employees, including part-time or alternative-schedule working and innovative ways of enabling teams to accommodate each other's work-life balance needs while traveling.³⁷ A.T. Kearney also has a robust Women's Network that provides career development opportunities, hosts forums and runs mentoring programmes.³⁸

The company claims that it has "increased the firm's diversity profile, particularly global gender diversity". Progress is slower, however, where more balanced representation in leadership positions is concerned: women account for only 22 per cent of the managing partner leadership team and 11 per cent of the board of directors.³⁹

Deutsche Post DHL Group

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Postal and courier services, Industrials, Mail and Logistics

Headquarters: Germany

Number of employees: 519,544⁴⁰

Share of women employees: 35 per cent⁴¹

In the company's own words, the logistics industry remains a male-dominated sector, with only one third of DHL employees being women. Remedying this imbalance is a top priority for the company.⁴² To begin with, the company performed extensive research to identify challenges to women's advancement in management. The results informed policies focused on creating a gender-equal culture and mind-set, as well as providing flexible working arrangements, women's career support, and monitoring.

These priorities were translated into the *Women in Management* programme, which includes initiatives such as training courses, high-profile events to promote diversity and women's leadership, gender-sensitive talent management systems and flexible working arrangements to accommodate workers with family responsibilities without penalizing them.⁴³ The programme is tracked and evaluated using data monitoring.

The initiative has been successful in helping DHL to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions, with growth of 4 per cent at the managerial level and 40 per cent

representation on the company's supervisory board.⁴⁴ The company was a winner of the Catalyst 2019 Award.⁴⁵

DNB Group

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Financial services, Banking

Headquarters: Norway

Number of employees: 9,638⁴⁶

Share of women employees: 48.1 per cent⁴⁷

DNB, a Norwegian bank, set itself a target for women's representation at the top four management levels of at least 40 per cent. To reach this target, DNB has implemented several policies to prioritize gender equality and diversity in their hiring and promotion processes.⁴⁸ For every management position, the recruiters must identify the best-qualified male and female candidates prior to final selection. All internal management-development and talent programmes are required to have a minimum of 50 per cent female representation. Additionally, all lists of candidates in succession planning must include a minimum of 40 per cent women. Restructuring processes also provide opportunities to improve the gender balance of management teams.

This prioritization also extends to the selection of suppliers. Gender balance at the management level is a criterion for selecting vendors, and DNB pushes for greater representation of women at the partnership level when engaging providers of legal services.⁴⁹

DNB's efforts seem to have paid off. Between 2014 and 2018, the percentage of women at the bank's top four management levels has steadily increased from 30.5 per cent to 38.1 per cent. Women's representation in the Group's general management category stands at 46.2 per cent.⁵⁰ The company signed the WEPs in 2020 and was ranked #8 in Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies on gender equality.⁵¹

Eli Lilly and Company

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Pharmaceuticals and Biotechnology

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 38,682⁵²

Share of women employees: 47 per cent⁵³

In 2015, Dave Ricks, then president of Eli Lilly's largest business units and currently CEO, commissioned a workforce analysis that revealed a significant under-representation of women in leadership positions (20 per cent). To address this, the company completed an

external in-depth perceptions survey of 5,000 employees in the United States at all levels and functions.⁵⁴ The study showed that many women “did not feel supported or recognized for their work”.⁵⁵ Initiatives to overcome the problem included the implementation of accountability measures, training for managers to recognize and overcome biases, and a review of job promotion and talent management practices.⁵⁶

As CEO, Dave Ricks has also supported the development of policies to promote women’s leadership, ensuring that senior leadership, the human resources department and the Lilly Women’s Network (an employee resource group) are also involved.⁵⁷

Commitment from the top to improve gender equality in the company seems to have paid off. Women’s representation in the company’s senior-level bands has increased despite a decrease in the overall size of Lilly’s workforce. Women’s representation has increased from 29 per cent to 40 per cent in the C-suite; from 26 per cent to 29 per cent among senior vice-presidents and vice-presidents; and from 34 per cent to 42 per cent among senior directors. In the United States section of the company, representation of women of colour at the senior director level has increased from 6 per cent to 11 per cent. Additionally, women account for 36 per cent of the board of directors.⁵⁸ The company was a winner of the Catalyst 2019 Award.⁵⁹

Intesa Sanpaolo

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Financial services, Banking

Headquarters: Italy

Number of employees: 94,032⁶⁰

Share of women employees: 54 per cent⁶¹

The Italian banking group Intesa Sanpaolo decided to establish a “Business Gemma” programme to provide tailored loans to women who own or run a business, or are self-employed.⁶² The programme also includes an insurance policy, which covers areas such as health, maternity and “help and legal protection in times of difficulty in the private life of the businesswoman”.⁶³ Participants in the initiative who head small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can also participate in the “SMEs Guarantee Fund”, which allows women to suspend repayments for up to one year in certain circumstances, such as maternity leave, illness or care responsibilities for a child, spouse or other relatives.⁶⁴ The programme also offers participating women access to training courses that support business management and development.⁶⁵ Between 2014 and 2017, the programme provided €600 million in loans. In 2017 alone, 420 loans were granted, worth a total of €16.3 million.⁶⁶

Intesa Sanpaolo, in partnership with several other banks, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), has established a “Women in Business” programme, which supports micro, small, and medium-sized businesses run by women in

the Western Balkan region. The programme provides female entrepreneurs with subsidized loans, technical advice from the EBRD and informational workshops. The initiative granted loans to 408 participants in 2017.⁶⁷

The company also aims to spur greater women's labour market participation in Italy, particularly in women-led businesses, through its "Women Value Company - Intesa Sanpaolo" award, created in collaboration with the Marisa Bellisario Foundation. The award is for small and medium-sized businesses that not only have great business potential, but also implement innovative "policies that value women's work and gender diversity management".⁶⁸ In 2019, two hundred and twenty-one finalists were short-listed from approximately 1,000 businesses and multiple events were sponsored to provide them with opportunities to network and share their knowledge.⁶⁹

Aside from these noteworthy initiatives, the company has a suite of policies to promote gender equality and women's representation in leadership. Women comprise 54 per cent of Intesa Sanpaolo's workforce, with 40 per cent at the upper management level and 25 per cent of the executive.⁷⁰ The company has been a WEPs signatory since 2019 and was one of the few Italian businesses featured in Equileap's 2018 Gender Equality Global Report & Ranking, as the top Italian company on the list.⁷¹

Salesforce

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Technology, Software services

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: Approximately 30,000⁷²

Share of women employees: 30.9 per cent⁷³

The CEO of Salesforce, Marc Benioff, has been very outspoken on issues surrounding gender equality and the need to increase the gender balance of management and executive leadership. In an interview for *60 Minutes*, Benioff shared the experience of uncovering a gender pay gap in the company, frankly admitting his initial reluctance to believe in its existence before he understood that it was "everywhere" in the company, in "every department, every division, every geography".⁷⁴

Consequently, in addition to allocating over \$6 million to addressing pay inequality, the company decided that a broader approach to gender equality was needed. Benioff introduced a rule whereby he would not participate in company meetings with less than 30 per cent women present, his aim being to improve women's access to company leadership, and ultimately increase their numbers within it.⁷⁵

The company is also committed to transparency in respect of progress on equality, with a stand-alone website on the topic and an annual update, in addition to the annual

Stakeholder Impact Report.⁷⁶ According to these sources, the proportion of women in company leadership has increased from 19.4 per cent in 2017⁷⁷ to 22.3 per cent currently.⁷⁸

Salesforce has also taken meaningful steps to encourage other businesses to make gender diversity and equality a priority. In 2017, it launched a \$50 million “Impact Fund” to invest in companies that contribute to positive change by improving diversity, equity and inclusion through tools that promote “equal opportunity and economic empowerment for women and under-represented groups”. Thus far, \$9.5 million from the Fund has been deployed to companies, 70 per cent of which are led by women or representatives of ethnic minorities, with 27 per cent of that sum directed towards the diversity, equity and inclusion category.⁷⁹ Salesforce has been a WEPs signatory since 2019 and also adheres to the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion initiative, the largest CEO-driven organization committed to advancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.⁸⁰

TD Bank Group (The Toronto-Dominion Bank)

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Financial services, Banking

Headquarters: Canada

Number of employees: 87,665⁸¹

Share of women employees: 58.1 per cent in Canada⁸² and 63.5 per cent in the USA⁸³

TD Bank group has committed to diversity and inclusion through internal and external communication. Diversity and equality actions are also formulated in consultation with employee representatives during the quarterly meetings of TD’s Employee Council on Employment Equity (ECEE).⁸⁴ The annual “Pulse” survey includes questions on potential gaps in the experience of employees based on their gender or other demographic. Concerns raised in the survey by employees trigger action planning to address the issue.⁸⁵

The Bank’s internal website contains an “Employment Equity” section, which gives employees access to the Bank’s employment equity policy, surveys, annual reporting and current equity strategy. The intranet also integrates social media features that are used by employees and Bank leadership “to provide role models and practical tips on career development, leadership, flexibility, and work/life balance”.⁸⁶ It supports blogs related to diversity and inclusion, which are highly popular and stimulate much discussion.⁸⁷ To provide further visibility to role models in the company, TD has helped to enhance the LinkedIn profiles of individuals in leadership roles “to strengthen their social media presence so they can act as ambassadors and role models in their communities”.⁸⁸ The featured role models are also encouraged to become diversity champions and are provided with a “key messages” guide to increase their visibility and impact in internal and external communications.⁸⁹

The Bank has also adopted a number of accountability measures. To increase their awareness and accountability for progress, the senior executive team and their businesses are required to provide regular reports on diversity in hiring, promotions, departures and their workforces generally. The Bank's Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Council (IDLC) manages the measurement and monitoring of diversity and inclusion. The Council focuses on five priority areas, one of which is women in leadership.⁹⁰

TD Bank also focuses on transparency. It makes its annual Corporate Social Responsibility report available to its employees and the public, providing transparent reporting on diversity governance and diversity on the board, in the general workforce and among suppliers.⁹¹

TD Bank has made great strides towards gender balance in leadership. In Canada, women accounted for 39.8 per cent of senior management in 2017, a marked increase on the 2016 level of 37.3 per cent,⁹² and for 44.2 per cent of staff at middle and other management levels. In the United States, women comprised 53.2 per cent of the bank's lower and mid-level management, and 25.8 per cent of its executive category, in 2017.⁹³

2.5 Building a future of work that works for women

Rapid technological changes, such as automation, artificial intelligence and the digital economy, have already significantly affected the world of work, with mixed implications for the future of gender equality. Transformative changes that bring economic growth and create jobs also risk deepening inequalities.¹ Persistent occupational segregation means that women and men are likely to be impacted differently by automation. The McKinsey Global Institute elaborates:

In the automation age, women face new challenges overlaid on long-established ones. Technology adoption could displace millions from their jobs; many others will need to change the way they work. Globally, 40 million to 160 million women may need to transition between occupations by 2030, often into higher-skilled roles. If they make these transitions, women could find more productive, better paid work; if they don't, they could face a growing wage gap or leaving the labor market.²

Nearly 40 per cent of jobs held by men are in routine physical roles, such as machine operators and craft workers, which could potentially be lost to automation. Where women are concerned, clerical support and service work are feminized occupations at high risk of automation, and could give rise to job losses of up to 52 per cent (as compared with 27 per cent of male job losses).³

Women are significantly under-represented in the STEM fields, which generate higher-paying jobs, such as software developers, mathematicians, engineers, IT managers and biochemists. It is here that the future of work is being shaped, with serious impacts on gender equality. Women are less likely to have digital skills,⁴ and the digital skills they do have generate lower returns than for their male counterparts.⁵ Between 2000 and 2016, women's representation in the top three IT occupations actually declined in the United States, especially in its largest tech hubs, despite gains in overall numbers of women, "making the field even more male-dominated than it used to be".⁶ In EU countries, women comprise only 17 per cent of people in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) studies and careers,⁷ and only 36 per cent of STEM graduates, although girls outpace boys in digital literacy.⁸ Lifelong learning policies that encourage young women to expand their skills into STEM fields can also help prepare women to meet the challenges associated with the changing world of work.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is particularly likely to transform the future of work. In the AI sector globally, only 22 per cent of professionals are female, compared with 78 per cent who are male, amounting to a 72 per cent gender gap.⁹ Women who work in AI tend to be concentrated in areas such as text analytics and mining, speech recognition and natural language processing. They are much less involved in the development of technology, such as deep learning, artificial neural networks and machine learning, which are more strategic, higher skilled and better paid.¹⁰ The relative absence of women in jobs in these transformative fields may also risk perpetuating gender stereotypes. Therefore, government policies should encourage women to enter STEM fields and support them in developing skills sets and preparedness for success in this field, in particular focusing on reskilling programmes.

Other tech innovations, such as mobile banking and Blockchain, can also help to support women's entrepreneurship.¹¹ Women are about as likely as men to participate in gig work, and digital platforms have "opened new opportunities for women entrepreneurs".¹² However, the gig economy risks perpetuating gender inequality and trapping women in low-paid and insecure employment if women do not have the necessary skills to obtain higher-paying gigs or are forced into lower-paying areas because of caregiving responsibilities.¹³

Technology also poses psychological, emotional and physical safety risks for women. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, women in the United States are twice as likely to have been targeted for gender-based harassment, and more than twice as likely to have been sexually harassed online.¹⁴ American women are also more likely to experience the most severe forms of online harassment, including cyberstalking and physical threats.¹⁵ These types of harassment cause harm and also reduce women's voice and presence online, as they self-censor to avoid becoming targets.¹⁶

2.5.1 Key International Labour Standards and other instruments

The ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work commits to the empowerment of individuals, especially women, at all stages of life, to work with technological advances without sacrificing their economic and social rights. The Declaration calls on governments and social partners to promote workers' qualifications and skills by addressing current and anticipated social, cultural and economic gaps; ensuring that education and training systems are responsive to market needs, taking into account the evolution of work; enhancing workers' capacity to make use of the opportunities available for decent work and increasing accessible opportunities for decent work; and investing in the care economy.¹⁷

The MNE Declaration calls on companies to provide relevant training and lifelong learning for all levels of workers in their employ in order to meet the needs of the enterprise, as well as the development policies of the host country. Such training should develop generally useful skills and promote career opportunities. This responsibility should be discharged, where appropriate, in cooperation with the authorities of the country, employers' and workers' organizations and the competent local, national and international institutions.¹⁸

The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-25 aims to address gender gaps in STEM-related occupations through the "[Updated Digital Education Action Plan](#)" and the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration of commitment on "[Women in Digital](#)".¹⁹ The goal of the Declaration is to encourage women to play an active and prominent role in the digital and technology sectors. EU countries and Norway will work closely with the public and private sectors and civil society to achieve equality in tech.²⁰

In addition, the "Updated Skills Agenda for Europe" will help address horizontal segregation, stereotyping and gender gaps in education and training. The European Commission has put forward a proposal for an "EU Council recommendation on vocational education and training". It will aim to improve the gender balance in traditionally male or female-dominated occupations and address gender stereotypes. The reinforced "Youth Guarantee" will also specifically address women who are not in education, employment or training, with a view to ensuring equal opportunities.²¹

2.5.2 Guiding principles for companies

The longer employees are with a company, the more productive they become. Companies need to make sure each employee is completely engaged with and part of the company's ongoing success and development. Companies can play a key role in supporting older women employees by optimizing their decent work conditions and active education up to and through retirement. And they can help to promote education and training for decent work for future generations of women.²²

Companies can help to empower women for the future of work in a variety of ways:

1. Providing gender-sensitive training with a focus on skilling, reskilling and upskilling
2. Supporting the entry of women and girls into STEM fields and the tech sector
3. Ensuring that new technology does not perpetuate gender stereotypes
4. Supporting women entrepreneurs in the gig economy
5. Promoting the privacy and safety of women and girls in cyberspace.

Providing gender-sensitive training with a focus on skilling, reskilling and upskilling

Companies can play an important role by providing lifelong learning opportunities for workers, especially women, to prepare them for change.²³ These opportunities should be offered to all employees and be responsive to the needs of workers with family responsibilities. In particular, they should seek to close the digital skills gap between men and women to ensure that the jobs of the future are more gender balanced.²⁴

Company initiatives might include internships and career advice, awareness-raising and job fairs on STEM careers for women, competitive grant programmes, financial and in-kind support for STEM programmes, and summer camps to encourage female students to enrol in STEM secondary and tertiary education. They could also reach out to young girls, for instance by running programmes which provide childcare and exposing girls to STEM learning from as early as 3 to 5 years of age.²⁵

Supporting the entry of women and girls into STEM fields

Companies should also proactively encourage greater numbers of girls and women to study and enter STEM fields. Companies in the forefront of the future of work can play a crucial role in ensuring that a better gender balance is achieved at all levels, so that women's voices are included in shaping a more gender-equal tomorrow. To this end, technology companies will have to engage with their wider communities to encourage women and girls to study and gain STEM skills and so ensure that there is available talent for a more gender-diverse talent pipeline. Through their employers' organizations, they need to work with governments to ensure gender-responsive educational curricula that counteract gendered occupational segregation. This is key to promoting the presence of women in such fields.

Ensuring that new technology does not perpetuate gender stereotypes

Emerging technologies, particularly AI algorithms, are increasingly used by companies to make decisions in areas such as job candidate selection and mortgage eligibility.²⁶ Although AI is relied on for its accuracy and impartiality, it has become apparent that its algorithms may reflect the gender bias of their authors. In one high profile case, it was discovered that Amazon's AI recruiting tool showed bias against women applying for software developer jobs and other technical roles. This prejudice seemed to stem from the historical occupational

segregation of the field, which was baked into the new algorithm.²⁷ As a growing number of companies use AI, diversity and gender-responsiveness will become even more important in ICT, and technology must not be allowed to reflect and perpetuate the devaluation of women and other minorities.

Supporting women entrepreneurs in the gig economy

As companies transform their internal make-up, they can continue to implement decent work principles in their contractual relationships with service providers in the gig economy. Contracts should take into consideration the costs associated with decent wages, good health and safety conditions, and social protection contributions.

Promoting the privacy and safety of women and girls in cyberspace

The dangers associated with new technologies that have a negative impact on women have received extensive news coverage, yet few tech companies are proactively working to address these problems. A recent review of nearly 500 online articles on the topic of technology and women's safety showed that the vast majority of the literature discussed how women could use technology to protect themselves, while only 5.9 per cent discussed policy solutions or company responsibility to protect women – a situation which “perhaps inadvertently is reinforcing norms that hold women accountable for their victimization”.²⁸

Companies should anticipate these risks and design technologies and platforms with prevention measures already in place to protect individuals, particularly women, at high risk of cyber violence and harassment.²⁹

2.5.3 Illustrative practices

Accenture

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Technology, IT services

Headquarters: Ireland

Number of employees: 459,000³⁰

Share of women employees: 42 per cent³¹

Accenture, a WEPs signatory since 2010, has a variety of initiatives to support greater representation of women in the ICT industry. Through its “Women in Technology” programme, the company runs a variety of events and resources to support the careers of women in ICT, and also gives students and recent graduates an opportunity to interact with women who are established in the field.³² The company also maintains a webpage featuring female tech role models and their views as a way of attracting women and girls to STEM.³³

The company also supports the career development of women tech professionals through its “High-Tech Women” programme. This programme grants female professionals a “tech architect” certification, enabling them to become a part of Accenture’s “technology leadership”. The initiative has been extended to women outside the company who are professionals in the ICT field, partly by creating a LinkedIn group to facilitate networking and exchange.³⁴

To help make up for the serious lack of women of colour in STEM careers, Accenture also launched a series of events as part of its “Hidden Figures” campaign. The initiative included events in several cities that gave new recruits the opportunity to meet leading women in the field, and to hear about their career journeys and the challenges they had to overcome.³⁵

Accenture has achieved a notable level of gender diversity at all levels: 47 per cent of its new hires are women, and women account for 40 per cent of the external members of the board of directors.³⁶ The company has won many accolades for its gender equality efforts, including ranking in the Top 10 Working Mother 100 Best Companies for 16 consecutive years.³⁷

Cogeco Communications

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Communications, Telecommunication services

Headquarters: Canada

Number of employees: 5,200³⁸

Share of women employees: 40 per cent³⁹

Cogeco Communications, a Canadian telecoms company, provides training and education to give workers the necessary “knowledge and skills in current roles while preparing for future roles”.⁴⁰ Employees and supervisors together curate an appropriate training programme to achieve their agreed performance objectives. Cogeco Communications fully funds the training, which takes place during working hours. At least 1 per cent of the company’s annual payroll costs are invested in training. Subsidized continuing education assistance programmes are also available for employees outside of working hours.⁴¹

Cogeco Communications has achieved a high level of gender balance at the top level of company leadership, with women accounting for 44 per cent of board membership.⁴² It is ranked among the top 10 companies in Canada in Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies on gender equality.⁴³

Enagás

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Utilities, Energy

Headquarters: Spain

Number of employees: 1,449⁴⁴

Share of women employees: 27 per cent⁴⁵

For the Spanish energy company Enagás, a WEP signatory since 2019, workforce training is one of its top priorities. Providing the appropriate training begins with an assessment of employees' competencies and skills, which then informs the individualization of professional development programmes and training. Training is provided to employees throughout their time with the company, with over 2,721 courses delivered online, in person, and even through VR technology.⁴⁶

The company collaborates with academic institutions, such as the Energy Delta Institute, to offer their workers high quality training. It also offers online English language learning through its "English Campus" project. Recent graduates are awarded scholarships to participate in vocational training programmes at company facilities.⁴⁷ Through its "Women with Talent" programme, the company provides participating women employees with training to enhance the skills they need to succeed in the company, as well as professional development guidance.⁴⁸

The company reports gender-disaggregated data on training expenditures and hours of training per employee, broken down by occupational category.⁴⁹ The data shows that a larger proportion of women in management and operational roles benefit from training, while male employees in the technician and administrative categories receive slightly more training than their female counterparts.⁵⁰ Such reporting and transparency are key to ensuring that women have equal access.

Enagás has seen significant improvements in organizational gender diversity, overall and at the leadership level, though more progress is needed to reach parity. Women's representation on the board has nearly doubled, from 13.4 per cent in 2011 to 23 per cent in 2016, while female representation in senior management roles has shown a similar rate of growth.⁵¹

Etsy

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Retail, E-commerce

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 800+⁵²

Share of women employees: 55.8 per cent⁵³

Number of sellers: 2.1 million⁵⁴

Share of women sellers: 86 per cent⁵⁵ as of 2015

Etsy is an online marketplace, enabling individuals to start up their own businesses and sell items such as handicrafts; it is a crucial player in the rise of the platform economy. About 30 per cent of Etsy sellers have no other occupation⁵⁶ and over three quarters of them are women. This exemplifies the pro-con balance of the gig economy and its effect on women: women are able to become entrepreneurs and enjoy workplace flexibility, but at the same time this type of marketplace provides no social protection for sellers, rendering many women susceptible to economic inequity or financial dependency on others. Etsy plans to combat this insecurity by using its influence as a major company and stakeholder in the gig economy to advocate for policy reform on the part of the US government with regard to self-employment protection.

Etsy has conducted economic impact studies of the contribution it makes to the national economy and employment,⁵⁷ revealing a crying need to protect gig workers. In 2015, Etsy, with other gig economy companies such as Lyft and Handy, worked with academics, union leaders and others on an open letter to the US government advocating for portable benefits.⁵⁸ The following year, Etsy published “Economic Security for the Gig Economy: A Social Safety Net that Works for Everyone Who Works”, a white paper of policy proposals to protect micro-business owners.⁵⁹ These consist of a Federal Benefits Portal to enable individuals to view all their benefits, including universal tax withholding, and the creation of a MyFlex account for pre-taxed savings to manage income volatility arising from the lack of social protections. The account also provides 10 days of paid leave for any need.⁶⁰

Pymetrics

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Technology, Business services

Headquarters: United States

Number of employees: 51–100 (estimated)⁶¹

Share of women employees: Not available

Pymetrics is a tech start-up that develops recruitment tools, including AI applications designed to avoid potential bias.⁶² Rather than reviewing CVs, the start-up uses algorithms in conjunction with neuroscience games to evaluate job candidates, seeking to effectively match jobs to candidates while avoiding bias and discrimination in the recruitment process.

Companies that have used Pymetrics for their hiring processes include Accenture, Unilever, Randstad and Mercer. Pymetrics estimates that the use of its technology can help clients to increase the diversity of hires by between 20 and 100 per cent.⁶³ In the case of Unilever, a company that used Pymetrics to complete the initial screening of 250,000 candidates, the company hired its “most diverse class to date”, with gender parity and greater diversity in racial and ethnic background.⁶⁴ Over half of the leadership at Pymetrics is composed of women, including its CEO and founder.⁶⁵

Tele2

Basic Characteristics

Sector, Industry: Communication , Telecommunication services

Headquarters: Sweden

Number of employees: 5,184⁶⁶

Share of women employees: 40 per cent⁶⁷

The Swedish tech company Tele2, a WEP signatory since 2019, is working to challenge the male-dominated nature of the technology industry, not only within its own business, but also in its wider community. Tele2 launched its #GirlsMakeITHappen initiative in Latvia “to inspire an industry that has always been looked at as masculine”.⁶⁸ The campaign outreach efforts targeted students and young professionals, as well as their families and teachers, aiming to encourage more girls and women to study, and ultimately enter, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. It included a “Girls Make IT Happen” conference, a scholarship programme in collaboration with the “Learn IT” initiative to enable girls to learn coding at a young age, and an “Hour of Code” initiative. The campaign was distributed across a wide variety of platforms, including media outlets and girls’ magazines, to highlight that programming is a skill that girls can master.⁶⁹

The campaign has reportedly been very popular in Latvia, and has also gained growing global visibility. Tele2 reported that its subsidiary in Latvia (Shared Service Center (SSC)) saw a 29 per cent increase in its workforce, of which 42 per cent were women. The initiative earned the company the TOP Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative of the Year award in the Central & Eastern Europe (CCE) region from the Latvian Investment and Development Agency.⁷⁰

While not yet at full parity, the company has achieved a high degree of gender diversity across the entire business, a particularly commendable feat for a tech company. Women in Tele2 comprise 40 per cent of the overall workforce, 32 per cent of management, 39 per cent of senior executives and 32 per cent of board members.⁷¹ The company was ranked among the top three companies in Sweden according to Equileap 2019, Top 100 Companies on gender equality.⁷²

Conclusions

This report has presented an overview of instruments, guidance and practices shaping gender equality commitments and actions on the part of the private sector. It has reviewed specific provisions of international labour standards and other normative frameworks and initiatives across five key areas, in particular from the Women's Empowerment Principles and relevant European Union directives, the better to understand what is expected of companies in contributing to gender equality. It has also provided a breakdown of the principles of gender equality as they apply to companies, giving concrete suggestions of steps companies can take to boost their contribution, explaining the benefits to companies, and providing illustrative examples from companies in North America, Europe and Asia, focusing in particular on companies operating in G7 and EU countries.

This report demonstrates the range of actions companies can take, which often work in synergy and have compounding benefits for women employees, men employees and the company, and for society as a whole.

The business case for companies to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community is clear: achieving full equality and equity is beneficial on the individual and collective levels, leading to more opportunities and greater profitability. The companies included in this report, and many other enterprises taking measures in this area, have demonstrated the ability to lead the way in complying with and going beyond international labour and gender-equality standards and national law. The findings presented in this document exhibit both successes and areas where greater attention is needed from companies. Some points for consideration:

Social dialogue and consultation with workers and their representatives

Social dialogue – consultation and collaboration among workers and employers and their representatives – is of significance in transforming workplaces so they become gender-responsive. Social dialogue can take the form of collective bargaining agreements (also known as enterprise agreements, collective labour agreements or workplace agreements) and can be the first step in creating policies to foster a culture of trust, respect, diversity and equality in an organization. Engaging in dialogue and consulting workers and their representatives across groups of diverse characteristics can help companies accurately identify the needs of their staff and respond to them effectively. Accounting for staff needs and employers' responsibilities in line with international labour standards ensures that both employers and workers are promoting transparency and accountability in their current and future actions on gender equality at work. Social dialogue enables organizations to address gender-based inequalities and create a truly gender-equal workplace, which can have a positive impact on society at large.

Public reporting of the effectiveness of gender equity in the workplace

Public reporting of company initiatives to empower women in the workplace, especially the progress of these initiatives, is crucial for accountability and lasting change. Transparency is in itself an awareness-raising initiative. A company can analyse which solutions do or do not work, and other enterprises can follow the company's example in their own policies. Sometimes transparency is problematic due to confidentiality considerations, but for the most part transparency is proven to work. For example, the wage gap between women and men has decreased in companies that are more transparent about the gap.¹ If this policy transparency is applied to all aspects of women's economic empowerment (leave and childcare policies, technology, equal pay and so on), it may lead to a considerable improvement in a business's efficacy in achieving these goals.

Universal policies for women's economic empowerment in all regions of company operation

The commitment to women's economic empowerment should be universal if good company policies are to have a lasting social effect around the world. Companies that model good practices in their headquarters or a particular country of operations should strive to export those practices to the other countries in which they operate.

Shift to a more egalitarian and inclusive company culture and commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals

Company policies to promote gender equality should start with a change in company culture at all levels. A change in culture to cultivate a holistic respect for women coincides with progress on the Sustainable Developmental Goals. Gender equality, according to the ILO's report *A Quantum Leap for Gender Equality*, is the "nexus of all the interconnected and interdependent SDGs, as decent work for all women contributes not only to making poverty history but also to achieving education, peace, and safety".²

The United Nations system and the European Union will continue to encourage companies to implement policies for greater women's economic empowerment. This report demonstrates that gender equality at work is both possible and profitable.

As a concluding snapshot, the following table summarizes the workplace guidance on empowering women at work as set forth in the company policies and practices reviewed in this document.

► Table 3. Workplace guidance on empowering women at work	
Key theme	Guiding actions
Achieving equal pay for work of equal value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure commitment and leadership from the top • Promote social dialogue and collective bargaining • Establish and implement a comprehensive equal-pay policy • Measure the gender pay gap and perform gender-neutral job evaluations • Achieve pay transparency and reporting
Preventing and ending gender-based violence and harassment in the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate leadership commitment to creating a company culture of zero-tolerance • Adopt, implement and monitor a comprehensive and effective workplace policy on violence and harassment • Promote occupational safety and health and systematic workplace assessment • Foster guidance, training and awareness-raising • Mitigate the impact of domestic violence in the world of work • Address unequal gender-based power relations
Promoting work–life balance and equal sharing of care responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide maternity protection in line with or over and above international standards • Prevent discrimination against pregnant women and workers with family responsibilities • Provide paid paternity leave and encourage uptake • Provide paid, gender-neutral parental leave • Support care responsibilities for other family members • Facilitate a smooth return to work after leave • Provide flexible working arrangements • Support breastfeeding in the workplace • Assist with on- or near-site subsidized childcare • Extend coverage to include all workers and family types
Women in business and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate commitment and action by company leadership • Diversify company talent and the executive pipeline • Adopt a continuous improvement approach • Focus on communication and transparency • Promote women’s entrepreneurship and closing the gender finance gap
Building a future of work that works for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gender-sensitive training with a focus on skilling, reskilling and upskilling • Support the entry of women and girls into STEM fields and the tech sector • Ensure that new technology does not perpetuate gender stereotypes • Support women entrepreneurs in the gig economy • Promote the privacy and safety of women and girls in cyberspace



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Principles of the ILO MNE Declaration

	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO GOVERNMENTS	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO ENTERPRISES
General Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further the aim of the Declaration by adopting appropriate laws and policies, measures and actions, including in the fields of labour administration and public labour inspection [paragraph 3] • Ensure equal treatment between multinational and national enterprises [paragraph 5] • Ratify all the Fundamental Conventions [paragraph 9] • Promote good social practice in accordance with the MNE Declaration among MNEs operating in their territories and their MNEs operating abroad [paragraph 12] • Be prepared to have consultations with other governments whenever the need arises [paragraph 12] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the sovereign rights of the state and obey national laws and respect international standards [paragraph 8] • Contribute to the realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work [paragraph 9] • Carry out due diligence, taking account of the central role of freedom of association and collective bargaining, industrial relations and social dialogue [paragraph 10] • Consult with government, employers' and workers' organizations to ensure that operations are consistent with national development priorities [paragraph 11]
Employment	<p>Declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment, and decent work [paragraph 13]</p> <p>Develop and implement an integrated policy framework to facilitate the transition to the formal economy [paragraph 21]</p> <p>Establish and maintain, as appropriate, social protection floors within a strategy to progressively ensure higher levels of social security [paragraph 22]</p> <p>Take effective measures to prevent and eliminate forced labour, provide victims with access to an appropriate remedy, develop a national policy and action plan, and provide guidance and support to employers [paragraphs 23-24]</p>	<p>Endeavour to increase employment opportunities and standards, taking the employment policies and objectives of governments into account [paragraph 16]</p> <p>Before starting operations, consult the competent authorities and the national employers' and workers' organizations in order to keep employment plans, as far as practicable, in harmony with national social development policies [paragraph 17]</p> <p>Give priority to the employment, occupational development, promotion and advancement of nationals of the host country [paragraph 18]</p> <p>Use technologies which generate employment, both directly and indirectly; and take part in the development of appropriate technology and adapt technologies to the needs of and characteristics of the host country [paragraph 19]</p>

	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO GOVERNMENTS	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO ENTERPRISES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national policy designed to ensure the affective abolition of child labour, take immediate measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency, and progressively raise the minimum age of admission to employment [paragraph 26] • Pursue policies designed to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment, with a view to eliminating any discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin [paragraph 28] • Promote equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value [paragraph 29] • Never require or encourage multinational enterprises to discriminate and provide guidance, where appropriate, on the avoidance of discrimination [paragraph 31] • Study the impact of multinational enterprises on employment in different industrial sectors [paragraph 32] • In cooperation with multinational and national enterprises, provide income protection for workers whose employment has been terminated [paragraph 36] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build linkages with local enterprises by sourcing local inputs, promoting the local processing of raw materials and local manufacturing of parts and equipment [paragraph 20] • Contribute to the transition to the formal economy [paragraph 21] • Complement and help to stimulate further development of public social security systems [paragraph 22] • Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of forced labour in their operations [paragraph 25] • Respect the minimum age of admission to employment and take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour [paragraph 27] • Be guided by the principle of non-discrimination and make qualifications, skills and experience the basis for recruitment, placement, training and advancement of staff [paragraph 30] • Endeavor to provide stable employment for workers and observe freely negotiated obligations concerning employment stability and social security, promote security of employment, providing reasonable notice of intended changes in operations and avoiding arbitrary dismissal [paragraphs 33-35]
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop national policies for vocational training and guidance, closely linked with employment, in cooperation with all the parties concerned [paragraph 37] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for all levels of workers employed to meet the needs of the enterprise as well as the development policies of the country [paragraph 38] • Participate in programmes aiming at encouraging skill formation, lifelong training and development, as well as providing vocational training, and make skilled resource personnel available [paragraph 39] • Afford opportunities within the enterprise for local management to broaden their experience [paragraph 40]

	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO GOVERNMENTS	PRINCIPLES DIRECTED TO ENTERPRISES
Conditions of Work and Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endeavour to adopt suitable measures to ensure that lower income groups and less developed areas benefit as much as possible from the activities of multinational enterprises [paragraph 42] • Ensure that both multinational and national enterprises provide adequate safety and health standards and contribute to a preventive safety and health culture, including taking steps to combat violence at work and attention to building safety; and that compensation is provided to workers who have been victims of occupational accidents or diseases [paragraph 43] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across their operations, provide wages, benefits and conditions of work not less favorable than those offered by comparable employers in the country concerned, taking into account the general level of wages, the cost of living, social security benefits, economic factors and levels of productivity [paragraph 41] • Maintain highest standards of safety and health at work, make known special hazards and related protective measures associated with new products and processes, provide information on good practice observed in other countries, and play a leading role in the examination of causes of industrial safety and health hazards. [paragraph 44] • Cooperate with international and national safety and health organizations, national authorities, workers and their organizations, and incorporate matters of safety and health in agreements with representatives of workers [paragraphs 45-46]
Industrial Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the principles of Convention No. 87, Article 5, in view of the importance, in relation to multinational enterprises, of permitting organizations representing such enterprises or the workers in their employment to affiliate with international organizations of employers and workers of their own choosing [paragraph 51] • Not include in their incentives to attract foreign investment any limitation of the workers' freedom of association or the right to organize and bargain collectively [paragraph 52] • Ensure through judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate means that workers whose rights have been violated have access to effective remedy [paragraph 64] • Ensure that voluntary conciliation and arbitration machinery is available free of charge to assist in the prevention and settlement of industrial disputes [paragraph 67] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout their operations, observe standards of industrial relations [paragraph 47] • Respect freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, provide the facilities and information required for meaningful negotiations [paragraphs 48, 57 and 61] • Support representative employers' organizations [paragraph 50] • Provide for regular consultation on matters of mutual concern [paragraph 63] • Use leverage to encourage business partners to provide effective remediation [paragraph 65] • Examine the grievances of worker(s), pursuant to an appropriate procedure [paragraph 66] • Seek to establish voluntary conciliation machinery jointly with representatives and organizations of workers [paragraph 68]

ANNEX 2: The women’s empowerment principles and targets

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

- ▶ Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights.
- ▶ Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and include progress as a factor in managers’ performance reviews.
- ▶ Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality.
- ▶ Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion.

Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

- ▶ Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men.
- ▶ Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination.
- ▶ Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.
- ▶ Assure sufficient participation of women – 30 per cent or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas.
- ▶ Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status.
- ▶ Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men.

Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

- ▶ Taking into account differential impacts on women and men, provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health.

- ▶ Establish a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical abuse, and prevent sexual harassment.
- ▶ Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services – including for survivors of domestic violence – and ensure equal access for all employees.
- ▶ Respect women and men workers' rights to time off for medical care and counselling for themselves and their dependents.
- ▶ In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women traveling to and from work and on company-related business.
- ▶ Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation.

Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women

- ▶ Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas, and encourage women to enter non-traditional job fields.
- ▶ Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes, vocational and information technology training.
- ▶ Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring.
- ▶ Articulate the company's business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women.

Principle 5: Implement enterprise-development, supply-chain and marketing practices that empower women

- ▶ Expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises, including small businesses, and women entrepreneurs; and implement gender-sensitive procurement.
- ▶ Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers.
- ▶ Ask business partners and peers to respect the company's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion.
- ▶ Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials.
- ▶ Ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.

Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

- ▶ Lead by example – showcase company commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- ▶ Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion.
- ▶ Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls.
- ▶ Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure sufficient representation of women in any community consultation.
- ▶ Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights.

Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

- ▶ Make public the company policies and implementation plan for promoting gender equality.
- ▶ Establish benchmarks that quantify inclusion of women at all levels.
- ▶ Measure and report on progress, both internally and externally, using data disaggregated by sex.
- ▶ Incorporate gender markers into ongoing reporting obligations.

As of 17 June 2020, over 3,200 companies had endorsed and committed to the principles, signalling a commitment to action in all seven areas.³ Working together, the UN Global Compact, UN Women, the Multilateral Investment Fund of the IDB and the Inter-American Investment Corporation created the [WEPs Gender Gaps Analysis Tool](#) to guide companies through the implementation of the WEPs.

The [WE EMPOWER](#) – G7 programme has elaborated the WEPs into a collection of indicators to aid companies in their implementation, monitoring and measurement of progress on women's economic empowerment. This document focuses on Principles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 and utilizes the WEPs indicators, accompanied by examples of good practice, to help distil key action points for companies.

One of the most effective ways of promoting companies' commitment to gender equality and accountability for achieving it is to encourage enterprises to go beyond compliance with national laws, following the guidance of international and regional frameworks (see Section 1.3), measuring progress and publicly reporting on their commitments and the results achieved. Transparency and public reporting allow for clearer analysis of progress and provide resources for companies around the world. These resources include tools such as the "WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool", the "WEPs Implementation Guide", the "Trainers Manual for Gender Equality in the Private Sector", "The Power of Procurement: how to source from women-owned businesses" and the newly launched [Empowering Women at Work Capacity Development Platform](#).⁴

In line with their commitments to transparency, a growing number of companies in G7 countries are signing up to the WEPs. Since the launch of the Principles in 2010, more than 3,212 CEOs globally have signed the CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles.⁵ Within the G7, Japan is the country with the highest number of WEPs signatory companies (254 signatories), followed by the United States (134) and Canada (60).⁶ Public commitment to women's economic empowerment that translates into concrete actions and transformative workplace policies can further progress in achieving gender equality in all areas of the WEPs.

ANNEX 3: Helpful resources

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ILO, *Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards*,

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UN Global Compact and UN Women, *Women's Economic Empowerment Principles (WEPs)*,

<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/womens-principles>

ILO-ITC, Empowering Women at Work Capacity Building Platform,

<http://ewaw.itcilo.org/>

Empower Women,

www.empowerwomen.org

European Commission, *Gender Equality Strategy 2020-25*,

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025_en.pdf

WEPs Equality Means Business – Using our principles as a multiplier for action and progress,

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Equal pay

ILO, *Equal Pay: Introductory Guide*,

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The Women's Economic Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool,

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Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE) Certification,

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Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC),
www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.com

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WEPS Equal Pay Guidance Note,
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Business Fights Poverty, *How can business tackle gender-based violence in the world of work: A Toolkit for Action*,
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United Nations, *UN Code of Conduct*,

<http://un.org/codeofconduct>

Alteristic, *“Green Dot” Bystander intervention training*,

<https://alteristic.org/services/green-dot/>

Eversafe, *Online Workplace Violence Training*,

<https://eversafe.ca/online-workplace-violence-training/>

Work–family balance and childcare

IFC, *Guide for Employer-Supported Childcare*,

https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/gender+at+ifc/resources/guide+for+employer-supported+childcare

ILO, *International Labour Standards on Work–Life Balance*,

https://www.ilo.org/travail/areasofwork/WCMS_249047/lang--en/index.htm

ILO, *Work and family: Creating a family-friendly workplace*,

https://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/Publications/WCMS_410189/lang--en/index.htm

ILO, *Maternity Protection Resource Package*,

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Women in business and management

ILO, *Women in Business and Management*,

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International Organization of Employers (IOE), *Policy Priorities: Diversity*,

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McKinsey & Company, *A CEO's guide to gender equality*,

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World Economic Forum, *Accelerating Gender Parity: A Toolkit*,

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Women at work and the future of work

ILO Portal: *The Future of Work*,

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PART 1: GUIDING FRAMEWORKS FOR COMPANY POLICIES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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