



UN Global Compact: Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presents an historic opportunity for the UN Global Compact and the corporate sustainability movement writ large. As the outcome document makes clear, it will be essential to engage the international business community in the pursuit of the 17 global goals. From building more inclusive value chains to developing sustainable technologies and solutions, business organizations can make essential contributions to towards the realization of true global sustainable development.

As the main interface between the United Nations and business, the UN Global Compact is uniquely positioned to strengthen business engagement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. During the past 15 years the UN Global Compact has developed deep insights and experience with respect to maximizing business contributions for sustainable development. With over 8000 business participants spanning more than 160 countries, combined with an array of SDG-relevant issue work and partnership capabilities, the UN Global Compact is capable of unlocking the full potential of responsible (and accountable) business towards a better world.

At a time when Member States are discussing how non-governmental actors – including business and civil society more broadly – can engage in various inter-governmental processes, the UN Global Compact wishes to present an overview of activities that the initiative believes will effectively and sustainably support the United Nations and Member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. These activities – organized around three areas – are presented below.

I. Mobilizing Business Action

- The UN Global Compact will accelerate its efforts to translate the Sustainable Development Goals for the private sector – making the business case for the 2030 Agenda and equipping companies (large and small) to contribute to global implementation efforts to realize the SDGs. New products such as the SDG Compass (jointly developed with WBCSD, and GRI) and the Industry Matrix (jointly developed with KPMG) explain how each of the SDGs is relevant to business, and guide companies in setting ambitious goals to advance the SDGs and measure progress.
- The UN Global Compact’s considerable issue portfolio – including the four principal areas (human rights, labour, environment, anti-corruption) as well as major issue platforms (including climate, water, women, peace) – are being oriented to maximize alignment and synergies with the corresponding SDGs. Efforts include updating mission statements, aligning program work and related goals with specific SDG targets, and broadening partnership activities. The UN Global Compact’s issue work covers virtually all of the 17 SDGs, with partnership arrangements that can fill the few missing spaces. Indeed, the UNGC can be seen as a one-stop-destination for business action on the SDGs.
- The UN Global Compact sees its 80+ Local (Country) Networks as presenting an enormous opportunity with respect to activating the SDG agenda within national processes and the “local context”. Local Networks will be encouraged to actively pursue impact-oriented plans that incorporate the SDGs, including the UNGC’s relevant issue work, frameworks, and tools. The Local Networks are indeed a unique asset of the UN Global Compact and will be leveraged to their fullest extent in the new era.
- The UN Global Compact will continue to collaborate with a range of relevant groups, including sustainability organizations and trade associations, to align strategies and, in the process, disseminate the UN Global Compact ten principles as a baseline for action.

II. UN-Business Engagement and Partnerships

- As Chair of the UN Private Sector Focal Points Network, the UN Global Compact will continue to help the UN system better partner with business on SDG implementation. The UN-Business Guidelines – issued by the Secretary-General in August 2015 – offer a critical common framework for upholding the integrity and independence of the Organization in all partnership activities with the private sector.
- To contribute the full implementation of the UN-Business Guidelines, the UN Global Compact will continue to facilitate year-round knowledge sharing and capacity-building for UN staff to address such issues related to partnerships and integrity.
- To galvanize impact-oriented collaboration and partnerships with UN Agencies, the UN Global Compact will actively promote and utilize its new UN-Business Action Hub. This innovative on-line platform will help facilitate specific partnerships between UN entities and private-sector organizations – along specific SDG thematic areas.
- UN Global Compact Local Networks will be encouraged to partner with UN agencies within the country context to jointly develop plans and approaches to SDG implementation. In this regard, the UN-Business Action Hub will also be a highly valuable tool, enabling project match-making at the local level.

III. Broader Business Engagement in Key Intergovernmental Processes

- Background Point: In the lead up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the UN Global Compact worked closely with a range of organizations – including the Global Business Alliance, and the Business Steering Group of International Conference on Financing for Development – to support business engagement in inter-governmental processes. Similarly, with relevant UN partners, the UN Global Compact has supported private sector engagement in inter-governmental events such as the annual Partnership Forum (see below) organized by the ECOSOC Presidency and DESA. With the UNIDO, the UN Global Compact co-led the UN Development Group’s dialogue on the means of implementation and the private sector.
- With respect to the annual Partnership Forum, specifically, the UN Global Compact wishes to continue to play an active role in upcoming fora and is prepared to present views and perspectives on a number of issues, including how to enhance integrity in relation to the new partnership agenda. This is an area that the UN Global Compact has been leading and developing for several years. In addition, the UN Global Compact could present to the Forum, on a regular basis, the outcomes and learnings from multi-stakeholder partnerships taking place within the umbrella of the UN Global Compact. Many of the UN Global Compact’s issue areas have developed path-breaking approaches to sustainable and impactful partnerships.
- In collaboration with relevant UN partners as well as business associations such as the Global Business Alliance, the UN Global Compact will continue to support Member States as they engage with the private sector in relation to the 2030 Agenda implementation. More specifically, the UNGC supports the Global Business Alliance’s recent proposal in relation to the High-Level Political Forum as this can be an effective mechanism to enhance business engagement in the HLPF. As well, the UN Global Compact is fully prepared to work closely with the Business Coordinating Group and DESA and Presidency of ECOSOC to identify the most effective ways to engage businesses at HLPF gatherings.
- The UN Global Compact will launch an international program to activate business leaders and innovators as “ambassadors” for the SDGs. Through important and exciting encounters with these business leaders and innovators (especially from small business), Member States and other stakeholders will learn how business action based upon universal principles and UN values can contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The UN Global Compact’s signature events such as Global Compact triennial Leaders Summit (June 2016) and the annual Private Sector Forum (September 2016) will focus on the 2030 Agenda, and the discussions and outcomes that emerge from these events can be featured in relevant inter-governmental fora.
- The UN Global Compact has a deep repository of information on corporate sustainability and business action in support of UN goals and issues. Since 2007, the initiative has been conducting the world’s largest annual corporate survey examining how businesses engage in sustainability worldwide. Similarly, we are promoting

bottom-up approaches to collect relevant information from our over 80-plus country networks on business engagement in relation to sustainable development. As Chair of the UN Private Sector Focal Point, we have also conducted the biennial UN system survey on business engagement and partnerships. As suggested, the findings of these surveys can be presented at the annual High-Level Political Forum, Partnership Forum, and other appropriate inter-governmental processes to inform Member States and the UN System. For example, a special side event featuring the annual findings could be organized during the High-Level Political Forum to enhance business participation in the Forum.

As outlined, the UN Global Compact is seriously committed to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the global business community – and will continue to work closely with UN partners and Member States to understand how business efforts are contributing to the 2030 Agenda on an ongoing basis.

We are enclosing a brief summary of the UN Global Compact’s response to the four specific questions outlined in the questionnaire that colleagues in DESA sent to UN agencies and major stakeholder groups. Our responses rephrase some of the key points outlined above in a survey format. The remaining 20 questions that the enclosed document does not address are being communicated by the Global Business Alliance of which the UN Global Compact is part.

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<Enclosure>

UN Global Compact: Select Answers to Questionnaire

13. How can platforms and processes outside the UN system, including those run by other international, or regional organizations and by non-state actors, contribute to thematic reviews at the HLPF?

- At the global level, the UN Global Compact has considerable issue portfolio – including the four principal areas (i.e. human rights, labour, environment, anti-corruption) as well as major issue platform (including climate, water, women, peace) to provide a principle-based engagement framework for businesses. Notable efforts identified through these issue streams can complement to the Global Compact’s annual survey which showcases how businesses are contributing to sustainable development priorities.
- For regional efforts, the UN Global Compact’s 80-plus Local Networks will undertake a range of efforts to mobilize businesses on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – from awareness-raising to actions and impact-oriented partnerships. Such efforts – facilitated by the UN Global Compact’s Local Networks and its key partners – can be profiled to understand regional-level contribution by the private sector.

19. How can national reviews give adequate attention to the means of implementation? How can they help to mobilize new support and partnerships?

- Global Compact Local Networks, together with relevant local business organizations and key partners, have been engaging businesses around the world to gather business perspectives on sustainable development priorities during the past three years. Local Networks will be encouraged to actively pursue impact-oriented plans that incorporate the SDGs, including the UNGC’s relevant issue work, frameworks, and tools.

22. How can the HLPF support the participation by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the follow-up and review processes conducted at the global level including the thematic and country reviews? What are possible options to seek their contributions to the reviews at the HLPF, (building on the modalities for the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders defined by General Assembly resolution 67/290 and the practices of the General Assembly open working group on SDGs)?

- The UN Global Compact will work closely with the Global Business Alliance as well as UN colleagues to share insights and learnings stemming from our range of activities – including issue platforms, the UN-Business Action Hub, and actions undertaken by our Local Networks.

23. The 2030 Agenda calls on major groups and other stakeholders to report on their contribution to the implementation of 2030 Agenda. How can such reviews be prepared and conducted at the HLPF? How can these actors be encouraged to engage in such reviews?

- Since 2007, the UN Global Compact has been conducting the world's largest annual corporate survey examining how businesses engage in sustainability worldwide. Similarly, we are enhancing our efforts to collect relevant information from our over 80-plus country networks on business engagement in relation to sustainable development. As Chair of the UN Private Sector Focal Point, we have also conducted the biennial UN system survey on business engagement and partnerships. The findings of these surveys can be presented at the annual High-Level Political Forum, Partnership Forum, and other appropriate inter-governmental processes to inform Member States and the UN System. A side event featuring the annual findings in depth can be organized during the High-Level Political Forum to enhance business participation in the Forum.