

What Leaders are Saying in Support of the Women's Empowerment Principles



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"Aitken Spence PLC [Est. 1868], is a Sri Lanka-based diversified conglomerate with operations in South Asia, the Middle East and South Africa. It has significant interest in hotels, travel, shipping, logistics and power generation.

Aitken Spence has embraced the Women's Empowerment Principles, in an effort to strengthen our commitment towards internationally proclaimed human rights. We believe that concerted action on these principles would help businesses perform better by facilitating the development of a stronger human resource. We commend UNIFEM and the UN Global Compact for spearheading this initiative".

- **J M S Brito, Deputy Chairman/Managing Director, Aitken Spence PLC**

"We are now living in a world of massive change and of diversity. We can't afford to squander the capabilities of half of our population because of old customs. We need to embrace new thinking, new ways of rebuilding our societies, economies and businesses. This takes innovation and the energy of all people. For that reason I was quick to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles on behalf of Alcatel-Lucent, and I encourage other leaders to join us in this commitment. We endorse these principles and are committed to living up to them. Our employees – women and men -- expect it, and our customers and investors depend on it."

- **Ben Verwaayen, CEO, Alcatel-Lucent**

"With more than six million independent Sales Representatives in 100 countries – largely women-- and women in 55% of management positions, Avon is committed to leading on women's issues. The company's mission statement is to be *the* company for women. We are therefore very proud to be an initial signatory in support of the Women's Economic Principles, which are critical to driving the rightful advancement of women around the world."

- **Andrea Jung, Chairman and CEO, Avon Products, Inc.**

"For Calvert, gender equality is an important aspiration for our own business as well as the companies in which we invest. In order for companies to reach their full potential, they must create an environment in which women are treated equally, where they hold key leadership positions, and are full participants in decision making. For this reason we created the Calvert Women's Principles on which the Women's Empowerment Principles are based. The WEP provide a road-map to help any company realize the opportunity associated with fully empowering women through inclusion, nondiscrimination, safety, education, and training-- from the board room down through the supply chain."

- **Barbara J. Krumsiek, President, CEO and Chair, Calvert Group, Ltd.**

[more...]

"In the Australia / Pacific region empowering women is key to economic sustainability. In the Pacific it is also key to lifting living standards for all countries".

- **Ann Sherry AO, Chief Executive Officer, Carnival Australia**

"The success of any work aimed at change, is totally decided upon the acceptance with which the change is met by the organization and the degree of quality. Change does not happen overnight. It requires time and patience from higher management. They will then reap the benefits of their patience. We have always practiced the equal opportunities concept, it is the proper framework that we lacked and we are happy to have one provided to us"

- **Adel Abdel Halim, CEO, Chemical Industries - CID**

"Copel's official commitment to the Global Compact in 2001 was really a turning point in the company's efforts to promote Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability. And we consider that signing and committing to the Women's Empowerment Principles will represent another huge stride on this path of constant evolution."

- **Ronald Thadeu Ravedutti, CEO, Copel – Companhia Paranaense de Energia**

"Diversity and inclusion initiatives are core to Deloitte's business strategy. Harnessing strength from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives allows Deloitte member firm professionals to bring a more diverse perspective to their client engagements, as well as create a culture that is a magnet for talent. The Women's Empowerment Principles are a means to further underscore our commitment to promote gender equality throughout the Deloitte organization and to our communities worldwide."

- **James H. Quigley, CEO, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu**

"We are strong supporters of the Women's Empowerment Principles and hope they will drive further change among private sector companies. The Principles are a reminder that leveling the playing field and advancing gender equity requires a pro-active and deliberate effort.

Businesses that believe they are supporting women's advancement should take a hard look at these Principles and challenge themselves to do more – it will benefit their companies, their employees, and their communities."

- **James S. Turley, Chairman and CEO, Ernst & Young**

"We have pledged to include at least one woman on each slate of candidates that we present for boardroom assignments. The business case has been made to demonstrate the value a diverse board brings to the company and its constituents. We will not rest until the boards of directors we serve have the look and composition of the society in which we all live. For this reason we are pleased to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles, and honoured to be asked to add Heidrick & Struggles' name to this commitment."

- **L. Kevin Kelly, Chief Executive Officer, Heidrick & Struggles**

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“Infosys has made a deliberate effort to work towards developing a work environment that is barrier free and based on meritocracy. We have invested in attracting and retaining women talent and have made a concerted effort to develop women leaders in our organization. This effort has resulted in a significant increase in the number of women in the Infosys workforce, up from 17% (4,350 approx) women employees in 2003 to 34% (38,960 approx) women employees today. As we work towards sustaining a work environment that encourages women to pursue careers in our organization, we believe the Women’s Empowerment Principles capture and reiterate many areas that we are currently focusing on.”

- **Senapathy Gopalakrishnan, CEO, Infosys Technologies Limited**

"Throughout our long history, Levi Strauss & Co. has been proud to take pioneering actions to promote equality. As one of the first companies to sign onto the CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles, we remain dedicated to the advancement of women globally. Women comprise a significant portion of apparel sector workers. By investing in access to proper health care, a safe, nondiscriminatory work environment and opportunities for asset building targeted to women, we're not only investing in our workers, we're investing in a healthy and sustainable workplace for all."

- **John Anderson, President and CEO, Levi Strauss & Co.**

“Pax World strongly endorses the Women’s Empowerment Principles because we believe that businesses need to be key drivers in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. The business case is clear: when women are at the table, the discussion is richer, the decision-making process is better and the organization is stronger. Gender equality is not only a moral imperative but a strategic business – and investment – imperative. We are committed to integrating the Women’s Empowerment Principles into our business model and will encourage other companies to do the same.”

- **Joseph F. Keefe, President and CEO, Pax World Mangement, LLC**

“In 2003, when we joined the UN's Global Compact, we had 4,406 women on our own staff. In December 2009, that figure had risen to 8,296 female employees, growing women's participation in the Company's workforce from 12% to 14%. And the best part of this is that women are present in all business and service areas and in all of the Company's operational units nationwide.

With the greater integration of women in the company, we are putting into practice one of the values expressed in Petrobras' Strategic Plan for 2020, which is respect for human and cultural diversity, based on three principles: non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and respect for differences. To achieve these goals, Petrobras is part of the Pro-Gender Equality Action Plan. Coordinated by the Brazilian Government with support from UNIFEM and the ILO, this Plan aims to achieve gender equality in the labor market and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

[more...]

“Among the initiatives Petrobras has already implemented under this plan, we can mention the installation of breastfeeding support rooms in Company units and the extension of the maternity leave period to 180 days. Petrobras also participates in the National Pact to Combat Violence against Women, disseminating information on combating domestic and family violence across the country. These are examples of actions that underpin the Company’s commitment to the UN Global Compact and to the Women’s Empowerment Principles.”

- **José Sergio Gabrielli, CEO, Petrobras**

“The Egyptian economy is in desperate need of qualified personnel – to compete in the global economy, we need to develop the best talents both male and female. If we continue to neglect the potential of our 49% female population, this means we miss out on 49% of our nation’s best people.”

- **Helmy Abouleish, Chief Executive Officer, SEKEM Group**

“Leadership methods between men and women are different. Both styles of leadership are valid and can work together for optimal company performance, in my opinion. Women offer different, value-added leadership. Men tend to excel in industries such as manufacturing. Women often excel in intangible asset-building, such as building a fashion brand like MCM. We often use our intuition in our dealings with team members and many of us have finely honed customer service skills. Women frequently perform well in fields such as marketing, design and merchandising.

Cultural issues particularly affect my global business. Speaking from personal experience, and thanks to years of experience attending meetings and events with business partners and colleagues, I have become super-sensitive to things like cultural language. Women are good at embracing these cultural differences.

SMEs become dominated by women. Most of the advanced economies have an SME-led economic structure due to the diversified knowledge economy brought about by the internet revolution. It’s a brain game. That is why women’s intelligence is excelling in this new environment.”

- **Sungjoo Kim, Chairperson and CEO, Sungjoo Group/MCM**

“As a technology company, Symantec’s business success is dependent on a constant stream of innovation, and women provide a unique and invaluable perspective that fosters innovation and strengthens our business. Our endorsement of the Women’s Empowerment Principles is the natural extension of our longstanding commitment to advancing and empowering women in the workplace. The Principles provide us with a framework to ensure that Symantec remains a place where innovative ideas can flourish, and where both women and men can have productive and satisfying careers.”

- **Enrique Salem, President and CEO, Symantec Corporation**

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“Yves Saint Laurent is proud to be among the first organizations to support the 'Women's Empowerment Principles', asserting a cultural imperative to advance equality between women and men. We are dedicated to the empowerment and respect of women in the workplace, and YSL's corporate gender makeup - in which women form the majority - stands as testament to this. Through our commitment to the UNIFEM and UN Global Compact to launch 'Women's Empowerment Principles - *Equality Means Business*', we underline our own promise to create within Yves Saint Laurent an accurate reflection of the society we would like for our employees and families, and in so doing hope also to encourage and influence our colleagues to embrace the Principles.”

- **Valérie Hermann, Chief Executive Officer, Yves Saint Laurent**

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