



PRESS RELEASE

Women corporate leaders urge businesses to act on climate change

(New York City, 19 September 2013) – Women’s full participation is crucial if efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development, including corporate efforts, are to reach their intended mark. Speaking at a special event organized in conjunction with the United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit this morning, a group of influential women corporate leaders highlighted women as agents of change and the value of investing in women’s empowerment – from the factory floor to the boardroom – in order to maximize impact on key sustainability issues.

The special event, co-organized by the United Nations Climate Change secretariat, UN Global Compact, UN Women and The Rockefeller Foundation, paid particular attention to the role of leadership in addressing the challenge of climate change and how women business leaders are stepping up to the challenge through sustainable business practices that are good for the planet and profits.

“Women business leaders are playing a critical role in the transition toward low-emission and high-resilient economic growth,” said keynote speaker Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Climate Change secretariat. “They are using a variety of tactics – from creating corporate sustainability initiatives to looking at climate change risks and opportunities when investing to cutting emissions from daily operations – that have the potential to accelerate green growth while maintaining the bottom line.”

Held every three years and chaired by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, the Leaders Summit brings chief executives together with leaders from civil society, government and the United Nations to unveil a new global architecture for corporate sustainability. The Summit, held today and tomorrow in New York City, will put forward a framework for unprecedented levels of business contribution to global priorities such as climate change, water, food, women’s empowerment, children’s rights, decent jobs and education.

The special event featured two initiatives aimed at promoting women’s empowerment and leadership as a key component and driver of corporate sustainability and sustainable development. The first, Momentum for Change: Women for Results, is a United Nations Climate Change secretariat-led initiative that highlights broad-ranging climate change actions led by women that are already achieving tangible results on the ground. Women for Results helps governments, international development agencies, civil society and the public at large to understand that women-led action on the ground is happening, and act as a catalyst to encourage others to take action to address climate change.

The second initiative, the Women’s Empowerment Principles, offers guidance on how businesses can empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. The principles are the result of collaboration between the UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact. To date, more than 600 CEOs from over 40 countries have signed a CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs signaling their support for gender equality and the guidance provided by the Principles.

“The private sector can be the seed of innovation for bold actions and initiatives that could make a difference for our common future,” said Lakshmi Puri, Deputy Executive Director, UN Women. “Let me leave you with a challenge and a call for creating and seizing opportunities for adaptation and mitigation of climate change, and to make it gender-responsive and gender sensitive. Great dividends will come from engaging women as beneficiaries and contributors to climate change responses.”



The discussion panel was moderated by Heather Grady, the Rockefeller Foundation's Vice President for Foundation Initiatives, and focused on steps companies are taking to address climate change and ways in which women's participation and leadership is advancing this commitment. The Event featured three corporate leaders:

- **Okşan Atilla Sanön**, Vice President of Corporate Communications and Sustainable Development with Eczacıbasi Group, a Turkish group of companies with core sectors in building products, pharmaceuticals and consumer products.
- **Martha Tilaar**, Founder and Chairwoman of the Martha Tilaar Group, an Indonesian beauty-product company.
- **Bennett Freeman**, Senior Vice President, Sustainability Research and Policy, Calvert Investments Inc.

Speakers represented companies that are signatories to the Women's Empowerment Principles as well as Caring for Climate (C4C), an initiative of the UN Global Compact, UN Environment Programme and UNFCCC aimed at advancing the role of business in addressing climate change. C4C is endorsed by over 350 companies from more than 65 countries. The Event provided a key opportunity to demonstrate commitment to both women's empowerment and climate action and highlight the linkages.

Key findings from today's event – which include encouraging companies to report on climate change and gender and supporting women business leaders to act on climate change – will feed into the inaugural [Caring for Climate Business Forum](#) on 19-20 November 2013 during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP19/CMP9) in Warsaw, Poland. The Forum aims to bring greater scale to business innovation on climate change; give further encouragement to business and governments to raise ambition on climate policies; and encourage collaboration among business, the UN, governments and other stakeholders.

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Learn more:

United Nations Climate Change secretariat: www.unfccc.int

Momentum for Change initiative: www.unfccc.int/m4c

UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org/>

UN Global Compact Leaders Summit: <http://www.leaderssummit2013.org>

Women's Empowerment Principles: <http://www.weprinciples.org>

Caring for Climate: <http://caringforclimate.org/>