



UN GLOBAL COMPACT STRATEGY

2026 – 2030



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01 FOREWORD FROM THE ASG

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Accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals is a moral, economic, and strategic imperative. The UN Global Compact Strategy 2026-2030 provides a bold, actionable plan for transformation. Businesses everywhere must seize these opportunities and deliver for people and planet.

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

UN Secretary-General
Board Chair, UN Global Compact

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Our purpose is clear. Our principles are firm. And our belief is unwavering: when businesses lead with integrity and ambition in sustainable business practices, real change is not only possible, it becomes inevitable. The time is now. Let us turn ambition into action together.

SANDA OJIAMBO

UN Assistant Secretary-General
Executive Director & CEO, UN Global Compact



This is a pivotal moment for business, one defined not just by global challenges, but also by the remarkable opportunity to shape a better and more sustainable future while strengthening long-term performance. Today's global landscape is being reshaped by climate disruption, widening inequality, geopolitical instability and a crisis of trust — all challenges that neither the private sector nor governments can solve alone. It is only through aligned incentives and shared commitment that we can build resilient, thriving societies.

Many companies are already leading the way — often in the absence of enabling policy environments — by advancing climate action, social equity and principled governance. But ambition alone isn't enough. Businesses continue to face structural barriers that can limit progress, from regulatory divergence to litigation exposure and the rising cost of capital. In this context, the UN Global Compact works with businesses to help them navigate uncertainty, manage risks and unlock opportunities by supporting them in integrating sustainability into their core strategies.

For 25 years, the UN Global Compact has united thousands of companies committed to responsible business practices. Together, we have built a global foundation rooted in universal principles. These principles have never been more relevant, but the moment we face now calls for more than alignment and commitment. It calls for bold, collective action to drive responsible business and accelerate progress on global development. At a time when sustainability efforts face political pushback and regulatory uncertainty in many markets, the UN Global Compact's enduring, principle-based approach has become even more vital — offering trusted, values-driven leadership in an increasingly

fragmented landscape. The UN Global Compact remains a steadfast and vital global community, one that translates UN norms into board-ready, market-relevant action across 65+ Global Compact Country Networks.

Looking ahead, the UN Global Compact Strategy 2026–2030 is ambitious and grounded in the needs of our global society. It builds on lessons from the past four years, including the need for continued global expansion, strengthening support for SMEs, the launch of a digital Communication on Progress and the Forward Faster campaign.

This strategy is a call to action. It challenges us to:

- Mobilize business action to address the world's most urgent challenges
- Enable companies of all sizes in every sector to turn their commitments into progress
- Drive systemic change through collective action
- Demonstrate that responsibility and business value go hand in hand

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Sanda Ojiambo

UN Assistant Secretary-General
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UN Global Compact



02 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Earth from above. Photo: NASA

The UN Global Compact Strategy 2026–2030 is a call to businesses to lead with integrity, deliver measurable results and help shape a more sustainable global economy.

**OUR VISION IS TO
MOBILIZE BUSINESSES TO
TRANSFORM SUSTAINABLE
BUSINESS AMBITION INTO
ACTION AT THE SCALE THE
WORLD DEMANDS.**



The strategy builds on two decades of experience working with over 23,000 companies in 160+ countries. It reflects what we've learned in that time, which is that sustainability and business performance aren't just compatible: they are inseparable. But for this potential to be realized at scale, the systems around business must also change. This strategy sets out how we will support companies, shift systems and grow impact over the next five years.

OUR STRATEGY IS BUILT AROUND THREE STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

1 EQUIP companies to act

We will equip companies of all sizes and sectors — including SMEs and those in emerging or developing markets — with a tailored, digitally-enabled learning journey. This includes recommendations for tools, guidance and accountability mechanisms to help businesses align their strategies and operations with the Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Our Country Networks and Regional Hubs will ensure this support is locally relevant, responsive to market maturity and delivered in partnership with key stakeholders. As a result, participants will strengthen responsible business practices while building long-term bottom-line growth, unlocking new funding opportunities and reducing cost and complexity of compliance.

2 CATALYZE collective action

We will mobilize business-led coalitions to address barriers no single company can overcome alone, such as policy fragmentation, financing gaps and supply chain complexity. These efforts will focus on four high-impact areas where private sector leadership is essential: climate and nature, decent work and living wages, gender equality and sustainable finance. Participation in these coalitions offers leading companies a platform to extend their influence, collaborate with peers and gain recognition for their sustainability leadership while helping shape a more stable, financeable and supportive environment for responsible business. Country Networks will support these efforts at the national level.

3 ADVANCE the business case

We will showcase what ambitious and effective sustainable business leadership looks like by highlighting how it creates long-term value for both business and society. Responsible business practices in alignment with the Ten Principles and supporting the achievement of the SDGs are increasingly recognized as drivers of innovation, resilience and competitive advantage. By curating data, research and CEO perspectives, we will sharpen the business case for sustainability, helping companies strengthen investor confidence, expand market access and build enterprise resilience in a rapidly-changing world.

These strategic focus areas support our theory of change: that by connecting companies to global networks and mobilizing them in collective efforts, the UN Global Compact will help unlock the systemic change that sustainability requires. This means transforming the underlying structures, policies and norms across business, financial and regulatory systems through coordinated, multi-stakeholder action. Building on years of advancing sustainability as a core business imperative, our approach supports companies in deepening integration across their strategies and operations, driving long-term value creation and measurable progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

To deliver against these three focus areas, we are strengthening our internal capacity, digital infrastructure and regional presence. With a renewed emphasis on progress measurement, the strategy introduces global impact metrics and a modernized Communication on Progress that enables transparency and action. Activated through digital enablement, the UN Global Compact will retool to establish an efficient, effective and participant-centric operating model. Meanwhile, our five Regional Hubs and growing Country Network ecosystem will serve as engines for contextualized programming as needed, scalable partnerships and national systems-level interventions.

This is a moment for bold, credible and coordinated business action — and the UN Global Compact is ready to lead with our participants and partners in every region of the world.

03 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT



Illustration: Shutterstock

Over the past five years, corporate sustainability has been tested by a rapidly shifting global landscape. A global pandemic, economic instability and rising geopolitical tensions underscored the urgent need for principled and resilient business leadership. In this context, the UN Global Compact set out to accelerate and scale the collective impact of the private sector. We adapted quickly, expanded our reach and strengthened our capacity to support companies in embedding sustainability more deeply into their strategies and operations. What emerged was growth, depth and a global movement gaining real momentum.

Between 2020 and 2025, the UN Global Compact nearly doubled its footprint. We expanded from 13,000 participating companies to more than 23,000 and extended our presence to over 100 countries. Building on our strong historical bases in Europe and North America, today 44 percent of our participants come from fast-growing developing and emerging economies within Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. We have also advanced market penetration, with participants in some countries representing up to 20 percent of national businesses. Despite impressive growth in participation from the Global South, many businesses — particularly SMEs — continue to face barriers such as limited financing, policy fragmentation and infrastructure gaps that hinder deeper sustainability integration. Future efforts must more directly address these asymmetries to unlock impact.

This expansion also marked a shift toward deeper regional relevance powered by five regional hubs and active Country Networks that play a critical role in building agility and relevance. Across Africa, Asia & Oceania, Europe, the Middle East and North America, Country Networks have adapted and translated programmatic offerings to support companies in aligning with the SDGs and navigate geopolitical and regulatory shifts. Localized initiatives focused on areas such as tailored SME support, national policy dialogues, driving sustainability innovation and high-impact events in more than 90 countries highlight the unique value of locally-rooted interventions. They have helped expand the Compact's presence and engagement in previously underrepresented regions.

In parallel, we significantly strengthened corporate accountability. The redesigned Communication on Progress (CoP)

Markets increasingly reward sustainability leadership. Companies that lead with integrity, transparency and a long-term vision are not only better equipped to navigate uncertainty, but are also helping to define the new rules of the global economy.

introduced a streamlined digital platform to boost participation — reaching nearly 15,000 submissions in 2024 — and also to enhance the value companies derive from the process. CoP now provides organizations with structured self-assessment, benchmarking against peers and data-driven insights to inform strategy, track impact and strengthen stakeholder trust.

Meanwhile, the Forward Faster initiative has mobilized thousands of companies to publicly commit to time-bound targets across priority issue areas including gender equality, climate action, living wages, water stewardship and sustainable finance. These focused commitments, coupled with standardized progress tracking, are driving a new era of measurable accountability and accelerated action.

As we look ahead, the global operating environment for business is evolving in complex and profound ways. Geopolitical shifts are increasingly affecting trade, investment and regulatory landscapes. In particular, a growing landscape of

tariffs and trade barriers is dramatically impacting company revenues and profits, forcing difficult decisions about budgets, investments and sustainability resourcing. Large companies, particularly those in developed markets, must now balance rising compliance costs with the need to maintain credible sustainability efforts. This tension underscores the need to position sustainability not as a reporting or regulatory burden, but as a strategic imperative.

These shifts are compounded by economic realignments: trade is becoming more regionalized, supply chains are being reconfigured for resilience amidst rising tariffs and emerging technologies — particularly artificial intelligence and digital platforms — are transforming how companies innovate, operate and engage with stakeholders. Together, these dynamics are reshaping company profits, strategies and sustainability priorities.

At the same time, the frequency and severity of climate-related disasters — from floods in Pakistan to wildfires in Canada — are disrupting economies and exposing the costs of inaction. Armed conflicts in various parts of the world continue to affect global supply chains, food security and energy markets. Meanwhile social and gender inequalities, political polarization and widespread misinformation are eroding public trust in institutions, complicating regulatory efforts, civic dialogue and efforts to uphold fundamental rights. In some markets, such as Brazil, India and South Africa, ESG regulations are expanding. In others, ESG policy and investment is facing resistance, postponement and scaling back. Recently adopted policies, like the EU's Corporate Sustainability

Reporting Directive (CSRD), are prone to backsliding. The reporting landscape remains fragmented and challenging to navigate due to differences in scope, enforcement and data quality. Multilateral institutions face increasing scrutiny and resource constraints, limiting their ability to respond to these challenges with agility.

Yet within this complexity lies significant progress: 96 percent of G250 and 79 percent of N100 companies globally now report on environmental, social and governance factors, signaling a shift from voluntary action to baseline expectation.¹ Capital is increasingly flowing into sustainable assets, with notable momentum in high-growth regions such as Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. This reflects growing recognition of the strategic importance of these regions in climate adaptation, renewable energy and inclusive economic development despite historical underinvestment. Investor behavior is reinforcing this trend globally as markets increasingly reward sustainability leadership through greater access to capital, growing demand for ESG-linked instruments and rising interest in SDG-aligned investment vehicles. Companies that lead with integrity, transparency and a long-term vision are not only better equipped to navigate uncertainty, but are also helping to define the new rules of the global economy.

This evolving context has reinforced the urgent need for principled business leadership. The priorities set in the 2021–2025 strategy — expanding our base, contextualizing our work, raising corporate ambition, transparency and accountability — positioned us to respond to a world in transition.



ESG Initiatives. Photo: Shutterstock

As we look toward 2030, our focus turns from laying foundations to driving transformative action. This next phase is about catalyzing the potential of our global and local networks through three focus areas: 1) Equipping Companies to Act, 2) Catalyzing Collective Action and 3) Advancing the Business Case. The UN Global Compact will remain a steady, trusted platform amid uncertainty, offering companies not only clarity and direction, but also a dynamic space for continued progress, innovation and leadership to drive sustainable and enduring growth.

1 The move to mandatory reporting. The N100 considers the largest 100 companies in each of 58 countries, territories and jurisdictions: 5,800 companies in total. The G250 represents the 250 largest companies globally by revenue, based on the 2023 Fortune Global 500 ranking. While the majority of these companies are also part of one of the 58 N100 country samples, 38 of them are headquartered in countries, territories or jurisdictions not covered by those N100 samples.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



The UN Global Compact Strategy 2026–2030 was developed through a comprehensive consultation process including a thorough assessment of the 2021–2025 strategy. The process examined the UN Global Compact’s past achievements, challenges and lessons learned as well as its role in a changing global landscape.

From the assessment, it was clear that the UN Global Compact’s strength and differentiation come from its broad participant base with companies of all sizes and from all regions. The UNGC is a respected source for tools and support, including peer network, as well as science-based frameworks to drive accountability. Paired with its global brand recognition, the UNGC is uniquely positioned to drive transformative collective impact. We also recognized the importance of adapting support based on company maturity — from first-time reporters to advanced leaders — and leveraging existing platforms such as the UNGC Academy to offer tailored, modular learning and engagement packages.

Nearly 1,500 stakeholders contributed to shaping the strategy, including over 1,200 company participants through a global survey. Additional insights were gathered through targeted interviews, focus groups and workshops with business participants, the UN Global Compact advisory board, representatives from the UN system, the government group, peer organizations and Global Compact teams across global, regional and country levels. Contributions from Country Networks highlighted the need for the strategy to reflect diverse market dynamics, regulatory readiness and capacity asymmetries among businesses.

This inclusive process shaped a forward-looking strategy grounded in practical business realities and global needs. Stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of strengthening capacity, recognizing leadership, supporting collective action and demonstrating evidence of impact. These priorities directly informed the three pillars of our 2030 vision.

The green tram in Hong Kong. Photo: Shutterstock



04 OUR VISION



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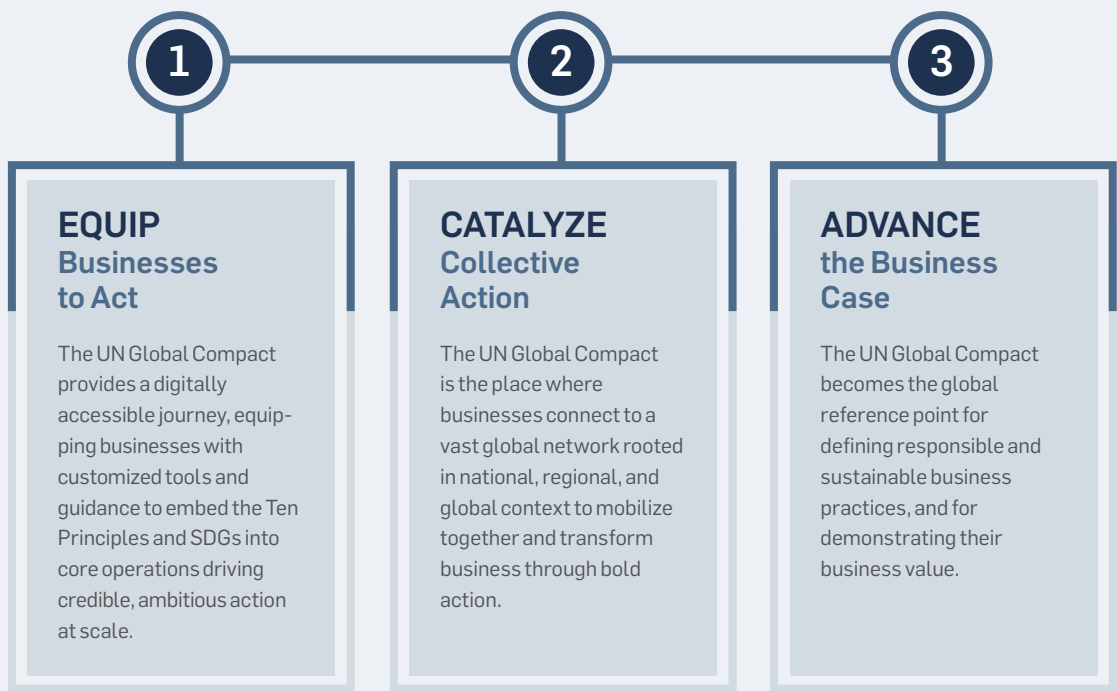
OUR VISION

WE MOBILIZE BUSINESS TO TRANSFORM SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS AMBITION INTO ACTION AT THE SCALE THE WORLD DEMANDS.

The strategic ambition for 2030 builds upon 25 years of uniting businesses for sustainability. We began by convening companies around the universal values enshrined in the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact; today, we go further by equipping them to lead bold action. As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the UN Global Compact operates with a mandate rooted in the support of UN Member States, as affirmed in the Towards Global Partnerships resolution. We are a multi-stakeholder initiative, uniquely positioned to align business ambition with the priorities of governments and the shared goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We also recognize that the transformative change the world needs can only be advanced through collaboration with business, the UN, governments, civil society and academia. This strategy is both a call to leadership and a practical roadmap. It is anchored in the conviction that sustainability is at the core of responsible business practice and a driver of long-term value and competitive advantage.

THREE STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



OUR 2030 STRATEGY

Our theory of change is that by connecting companies to global networks and mobilizing them in collective efforts, the UN Global Compact will aim to help unlock the systemic change that sustainability requires. This means transforming the underlying structures, policies and norms across business, financial and regulatory systems through coordinated, multi-stakeholder action. Building on years of advancing sustainability as a core business

imperative, our approach supports companies in deepening integration across their strategies and operations, driving long-term value creation and measurable, transparent progress, in alignment with the Pact of the Future and toward achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the next five years, we will build upon our recent progress to focus on **three strategic focus areas**. This strategy is both a call for bold, ambitious and accelerated leadership action and a practical commitment to transformative action.

1 EQUIP companies to act

The UN Global Compact provides a digitally-accessible learning journey, equipping businesses with customized tools and guidance to embed the Ten Principles into core operations and contribute to the SDGs, driving credible, ambitious action at scale.

To help companies set and achieve ambitious goals, we are reimagining the way we build capacity by developing a tailored, digitally-accessible participant experience. Our goal is to deliver curated, high-quality content that is responsive, scalable and impactful while also amplifying the work of UN agencies and strategic partners to ensure broad and effective knowledge access.

The path from commitment to action is unique for each organization. As such, tools and resources must be tailored to a company's sector, size, location and sustainability maturity. Through a digitally-enabled learning journey, our participants will receive tailored recommendations for resources that enable businesses to take meaningful action to uphold the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, advancing respect for human rights, ensuring fair labour practices, safeguarding the environment and combating corruption worldwide.

This platform will leverage data from the Communication on Progress to identify relevant topics and learning formats across our multiple delivery channels, connect companies to tools and suggest

programming and partnerships that fit their profile. Engagements will continue to provide participants with the value of in-person formats, peer-to-peer exchanges and knowledge-sharing. The digital journey is designed to make all formats, digital and in-person, more accessible, usable and scalable.

Country Networks and regional hubs will play a central role in localizing learning, guidance and engagement. Regional and national programming ranging from in-person workshops to locally relevant accelerator programs ensures that our support is not only accessible, but contextually grounded. These efforts allow companies to navigate region-specific challenges, align with national regulatory trends and connect with local implementation partners. By aligning global ambition with local action, we enhance both relevance and results.

In equipping businesses to act, participants receive focused guidance to strengthen responsible business practices while building long-term bottom-line growth, unlocking new funding opportunities and reducing cost and complexity of compliance.



The path from commitment to action is unique for each organization. As such, tools and resources must be tailored to a company's sector, size, location and sustainability maturity.

2 CATALYZE Collective Action

The UN Global Compact is where companies mobilize together to transform business and operating environments through bold action.

As companies have strengthened internal capacity and sustainability expertise, they now face challenges that extend beyond their direct operations. Misaligned policy environments, fragmented supply chains, financing gaps and inconsistent standards are slowing progress toward a resilient and equitable global economy aligned with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. These are systemic challenges which require systemic solutions.

With a growing participant base of more than 20,000 companies across 160+ countries — spanning sizes, sectors and geographies — the UN Global Compact is uniquely positioned to coordinate collective action that strengthens the incentives for sustainable practices and removes systemic barriers.

With a growing participant base of more than 20,000 companies across 160+ countries—spanning sizes, sectors and geographies—the UN Global Compact is uniquely positioned to coordinate collective action that strengthens the incentives for sustainable practices and removes systemic barriers. Our global reach, anchored in a robust network of Country Networks, enables alignment across borders, supply chains and industries allowing us to drive coordinated action at scale and deliver the kind of cross-market progress that business leaders are seeking.

As such, we will expand our role as a convener of business-led, multi-stakeholder efforts aimed at shifting the underlying structures, incentives and norms that govern corporate behavior. These interventions go beyond individual company actions to address constraints such as policy misalignment, supply chain fragmentation, cost structures and innovation gaps. We will work with participants to identify the most impactful levers (e.g. policy advocacy, supply chain interventions and CEO-led initiatives) to reduce barriers.

In mature markets with strong Country Networks and committed companies, more system-level work is possible and expected. In markets where the business case is weak, system-level interventions may be necessary to make meaningful change viable.

Our focus will remain on a prioritized set of global high-impact areas, driving progress where it matters most. To deliver this in a flexible, context-specific way, UN Global Compact will leverage several mechanisms for collective action:

- **Mobilizing corporate leadership advocacy** by bring together CEO and C-suite executives to be collective advocates to set shared ambitions, build market incentive solutions and inspire further action within their regions or sectors.
- **Transforming supply chains** by mobilizing industries or sectors to embed sustainability expectations across their value chain, from procurement to onboarding processes.
- **Catalyzing innovation** by fostering multi-stakeholder platforms to co-create, test and scale innovative solutions that drive sustainability and responsible business practices. This includes examples such as joint initiatives to advance ambitious supplier standards, align sustainability reporting disclosure practices and drive innovation through shared data or digital tools.
- **Encouraging public policy engagement** by convening dialogue and leveraging business knowledge to advance public policies that support sustainable business. We will help companies to become active partners in strengthening institutions and policy frameworks. The UN Global Compact is well-positioned to convene business leaders at the intersection of global policy making and corporate expertise, bridging governments with leading national and international companies.² Our approach will remain values-driven, aligned with our principles and focused on forward-looking policy change that addresses systemic barriers to sustainability.

- **Driving sustainable investment** by raising ambition in sustainable finance through tools, guidance and collaboration between corporates and financial institutions. In some contexts, shifting investment flows is the highest-impact system intervention.

In all cases, the UN Global Compact will engage leading companies in each context to identify systemic barriers, align on positions that reflect global principles and local realities and coordinate advocacy (as a group or individually) through agreed channels. The choice of mechanisms will be guided by the specific issues at hand, the barriers identified and the most effective path to addressing the root causes of sustainability challenges.

Building on these mechanisms, we will scope and develop a transformative project that demonstrates systems change from a cross-cutting perspective, addressing the nexus of social, environmental and governance impact. This CEO-backed initiative will go beyond sector-specific or issue-specific interventions to showcase how integrated, multi-dimensional solutions can unlock systemic progress. The selection of cross-cutting themes, business opportunities and strategic partners will be informed by the situational analysis and scoping phase.

² Importantly, the UN Global Compact does not substitute for the role of representative employers' organizations in national policy formulation. We recognize and respect their formal mandate in public policy dialogue and economic governance, and see our role as complementary—supporting companies in aligning their operations with global principles and advancing collective sustainability goals.

THE GLOBAL IMPACT AREAS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Over the next five years, the UN Global Compact will amplify its efforts to catalyze collective action across a focused set of high-impact areas where private sector leadership is essential and where we are uniquely positioned to drive progress and enhance business value. These priorities are firmly grounded in the Ten Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In each of these areas, the role of business is both clear and critical: the expectations for ambitious action are well-defined and the UN Global Compact offers a distinct value-add alongside other global initiatives. These impact areas have been shaped by extensive consultations, CEO input and current and emerging market conditions. Our impact areas include:

Climate and nature



This area includes ensuring a credible net-zero pathway through just transition and building nature positive resilience. The world remains far off track from the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement, while biodiversity loss continues to intensify across regions and industries. Companies are called to set science-based targets, adopt nature-positive practices and invest in climate resilience throughout their operations and value chains. **Business has a critical role to play in shifting markets, enabling a just transition and advancing bold, measurable action on both climate and nature.**

Decent work and living wage



This area includes advancing decent work and improving living standards for all workers across global supply chains, helping reduce inequality and foster resilient, inclusive economies. Despite economic growth in many regions, hundreds of millions of workers remain trapped in informal, underpaid or unsafe employment. Companies are called upon to respect labour rights, ensuring decent work throughout their operations and supply chains and to actively contribute to fair and inclusive labour markets. **Upholding decent work is not only a human rights responsibility: it's also essential for long-term economic and social stability, enhanced productivity and greater equity in the global economy.**

Gender equality



This area includes advancing equal representation, participation and leadership opportunities at all levels as well as advancing equal pay for work of equal value. Despite some progress, women remain drastically underrepresented in leadership and management roles, overrepresented in insecure or unpaid work and disproportionately affected by economic and climate-related shocks. Businesses are called upon to take measurable, data-driven action to advance gender equality across the workplace, marketplace and community, spearheaded by executive-level commitment and leveraging clear targets and transparent reporting to accelerate progress. **Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right: it is a proven catalyst for innovation, enhanced performance and sustainable growth.**

Sustainable finance



This area includes driving sustainability-linked corporate investments and SDG-aligned financing. Today's global financial system remains misaligned with sustainability goals, with insufficient investment in climate solutions, social equity and long-term value creation. Companies are called to integrate sustainability into capital allocation, engage with investors on ESG risks and opportunities and contribute to the development of transparent, credible financial standards. **Finance is a powerful lever to accelerate sustainable development, and responsible businesses can help reshape financial flows to support a thriving, low-carbon and inclusive economy.**



These topics offer tangible opportunities for collective business action to accelerate sustainable development and unlock system-level change. They also represent areas where the UN Global Compact has credibility, strong networks, partnerships and growing momentum. Tackling critical global challenges across these impact areas is essential for long-term business resilience and unlocking new market opportunities.

Central to these efforts must be respect for human rights, demonstrated through robust human rights due diligence processes that identify, mitigate and remedy adverse impacts on people throughout global value chains. This is complemented by comprehensive ethics, anti-corruption

and compliance programmes that embed integrity into every aspect of business operations, including responsible business leadership. These foundational elements are key to driving meaningful, systemic change toward a more sustainable future.

We will also actively identify cross-cutting opportunities that make the most of our global reach and broad participant base. At the same time, we remain attuned to emerging issues including artificial intelligence, renewable energy, food systems and circularity, which could significantly reshape the sustainability landscape. We will continue to monitor shifts, new models and investment opportunities that can drive fundamental, systemic transformation.

3 ADVANCE The Business Case

The UN Global Compact serves as the global reference of responsible and sustainable business practices linked to business value across sectors, industries and geographies.

As companies navigate increasingly complex global challenges, there is a growing need to demonstrate how responsible business practices contribute directly to performance, resilience and long-term value creation. The UN Global Compact is well-positioned to systematically collect impact measurements from thousands of global companies around

In collaboration with academic institutions, particularly through our academic initiative the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), we will conduct rigorous, evidence-based research that shows how responsible leadership delivers measurable outcomes.

the world and articulate the business case for sustainability by grounding it in structured analysis, real-world data and practical business insights. This includes both case studies as well as quantitative markers of performance from the CoP and other data, reporting and engagement tools.

In collaboration with academic institutions, particularly through our academic initiative the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), we will conduct rigorous, evidence-based research that shows how responsible leadership delivers measurable outcomes. These insights will inform public reports, advocacy efforts and peer dialogues, helping redefine what success means in the modern economy.

Many of our participating companies are already demonstrating that sustainability and profitability are mutually reinforcing. By convening companies around shared challenges and showcasing data-driven solutions, the UN Global Compact will foster peer learning and highlight scalable strategies that deliver both societal impact and business returns. This, in turn, will help inform investment decisions and growth strategies aligned with responsible business practices.

This three-pronged approach will empower companies to embed responsible business practices, engage in multi-stakeholder action to drive systemic change and unlock investment aligned with national development priorities and the SDGs. Through transparent, public reporting, it will also strengthen accountability and build trust, laying the foundation for long-term growth and shared prosperity.



Photo: iStock

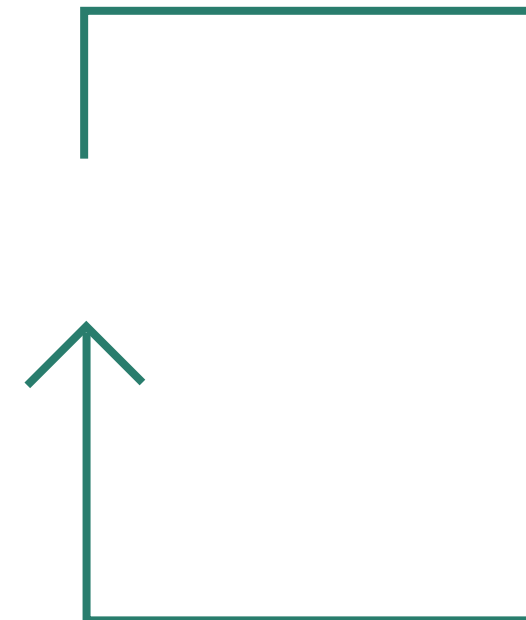
05 REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Dubai, UAE. Photo: Shutterstock

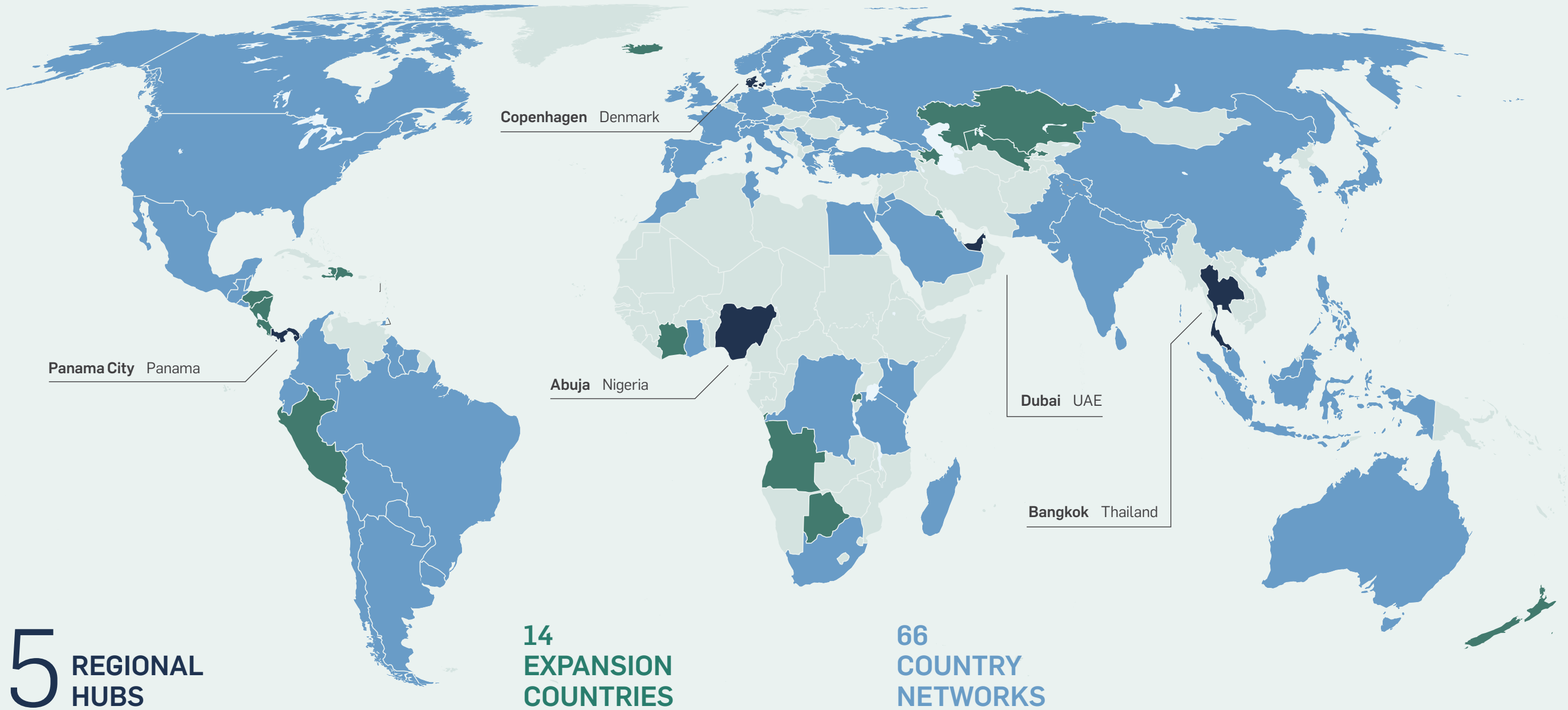
ADVANCING ACTIONS AND IMPACT THROUGH REGIONALIZATION

As global challenges increasingly manifest through regional dynamics (e.g. economic, social, environmental and political), the UN Global Compact will strengthen its ability to deliver meaningful, context-specific impact through a regionalized approach. As a result of the 2021–2025 strategy, we have significantly expanded our global footprint, establishing five regional hubs that enable more tailored and locally-relevant support.



These hubs now serve as strategic connectors, bridging global priorities with Country Networks and supporting them in aligning implementation with the overarching global vision. Our aim is to fully leverage our expanded regional and national presence to deliver our strategy through the lens of regional realities, ensuring it resonates with businesses across diverse contexts. By connecting to local challenges and opportunities, we can then deliver programmes and partnerships that reflect realities of local markets, policy environments and business landscapes. A regional approach also improves effectiveness by communicating with locals in their own language, deeply connecting to local context and capturing best practices through case studies and experts around the world. Throughout, we will act as one coordinated global network maintaining alignment with our global vision and principles.

ENGAGING 23K+ PARTICIPANTS TO ADVANCE ACTION ACROSS REGIONS AND COUNTRIES





Unstoppable Africa 2025. Photo: UN Global Compact

AFRICA

Africa stands at a transformative juncture with nearly half of its countries projected to grow above five per cent in 2025 and 12 of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies. Yet, this momentum is tempered by persistent development challenges. Twenty-one of the 25 lowest-scoring countries on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in Africa, reflecting deep gaps in education, healthcare, gender equality and decent work. These are further compounded by acute climate vulnerabilities, underfunded climate finance and governance complexities that hinder inclusive growth and sustainable business development.

Six megatrends are shaping Africa's trajectory. Geopolitically, the continent is aligning more closely with the Global South and China, now its largest trade partner, while the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents a strategic opportunity to boost intra-African trade amid rising global protectionism. Digitally, Africa is working to bridge infrastructure and skills gaps to harness the potential of generative AI. The green transition is also critical; Africa holds over 30 per cent of the world's critical minerals. Meanwhile, rising public debt — now at \$1.8 trillion — has constrained fiscal space, making private sector engagement essential for sustainable development.

To unlock its demographic dividend, Africa must invest in its youth, who will make up the world's largest population under 20 by 2030. This "Generation Alpha" could drive economic transformation if equipped with education, digital skills and employment opportunities. At the same time, Africa has the potential to move from being a passive recipient to a global influencer in sustainability, particularly in sectors like critical minerals and forest management. With declining aid and increasing global instability, innovation through digital finance, regional integration and private sector leadership will be key to creating jobs, building thriving economies and meeting sustainable business and sustainable development needs.

By elevating its visibility and strategic presence within key African regional institutions — such as the African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB), African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) — as well as within UN bodies focused on Africa, the UN Global Compact can position itself as the leading convener for business sustainability on the continent.

This includes establishing dedicated private sector spaces within major UN forums and launching a flagship annual sustainability event in Africa. These efforts can be significantly strengthened by leveraging existing initiatives of the UN Global Compact such as the Africa Business Leaders Coalition (ABLC) — a pan-African alliance of CEOs and board chairs from leading companies advocating for sustainability and policy reform — and the Global Africa Business Initiative (GABI), a platform that

connects African businesses with global stakeholders to drive investment, trade and inclusive growth. Together, these initiatives will amplify sustainability discourse in influential arenas and foster a culture of responsible business leadership across Africa.

This success builds off the UN Global Compact's 2021–2025 Africa Strategy. The Global Compact's operations on the continent have matured significantly with an increased participant base, an expanded and stronger country network footprint and established platforms like the ABLC and GABI. With this solid foundation, the UN Global Compact can shift its focus from laying the groundwork, to driving even deeper impact in Africa. As a result, we have incorporated our Africa strategy and priorities into the global strategy, elevating the importance of the continent and streamlining the implementation by more closely tying it to the overall UN Global Compact 2026–2030 Strategy, while noting the unique context in this section.

With declining aid and increasing global instability, innovation through digital finance, regional integration and private sector leadership will be key to creating jobs, building thriving economies and meeting sustainable business and sustainable development needs.

UN GLOBAL COMPACT LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

ABLC

Since its inception, this group of 100 leading African CEOs has launched two collective statements (on climate and gender equality). Its influential membership, generating \$165 billion in annual revenues, has already mobilized \$4.8 billion for climate finance.



GABI

Co-convened by the United Nations and African Union, the UN Global Compact continues to advance GABI as the premier platform to reposition Africa as a continent of opportunity and a provider of global solutions.



To drive transformative and lasting impact, the UN Global Compact must scale its reach, targeting Africa's top 500 companies. This growth should be driven through strategic partnerships and collective action facilitated via its Country Networks and multi-stakeholder platforms. The Africa Business Leaders Coalition (ABLC), composed of a select group of influential CEOs, plays a catalytic role by championing responsible business leadership at the highest level. We remain committed to aligning our initiatives and priorities in Africa with the aspirations of Agenda 2063, while continuing to foster meaningful collaboration across the continent to strengthen the capacity and resilience of companies in Africa.

To sustain this momentum, it must also strengthen its operational model by reinforcing its regional Hub in Abuja, Nigeria, and establishing strategic presence in high-activity markets like South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire and Angola. These countries are poised to host robust Country Networks with top business activity that support Country Networks and tailor programming to country needs, under the leadership and coordination of the Regional Hub. By localizing its approach and demonstrating the tangible business value of sustainability, the UN Global Compact can shift the narrative from compliance to strategic opportunity, unlocking Africa's private sector potential to drive business growth, resilient supply chains and progress toward the SDGs.

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Asia & Oceania is the world's fastest-growing region, projected to generate over 40 per cent of global GDP by 2050. In 2024, it surpassed global averages in GDP and trade growth, driven by investments in semiconductors, renewables and information and communication technology. As the most populous and industrially dynamic region, its development trajectory has far-reaching global implications. However, while the region leads in industrial innovation and sustainable finance, accounting for one-third of global green bond issuance, progress toward sustainable development remains uneven. Demographic trends are split: aging populations in East Asia threaten productivity, while youthful populations in South and Southeast Asia present both growth opportunities and development challenges. Environmental pressures, ranging from biodiversity loss to air pollution, are intensifying. ESG regulation is on the rise but remains fragmented, and the need for just transition, especially in coal-reliant Central Asia, is urgent. The UN Global Compact's engagement with C-suite level business leaders will be critical to achieve progress on just transition.

This dynamic context presents a strategic opportunity for the UN Global Compact to serve as a unifying force across socio-economically diverse and regulatory-fragmented markets. The Regional Hub in Bangkok is well-positioned to serve as a connector and convener, enabling tailored engagement across languages, sectors and geographies. Strengthening cross-

Asia & Oceania is the world's fastest-growing region, projected to generate over 40 per cent of global GDP by 2050.

network collaboration and fostering peer learning among national and multinational firms can elevate business leadership and reinforce the value of responsible practices. Engaging C-suite leaders and investors on sustainable finance, scaling SME participation and convening cross-sector dialogue on shared priorities such as climate action, supply chain transformation and inclusive growth will be key to driving impact across the region.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Europe

Europe is leading the global shift toward mandatory sustainability standards, driven by a robust regulatory framework that includes the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), the EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). Anchored in the European Green Deal — Europe's ambition to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 — these measures are reshaping corporate governance and accelerating progress on the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). While the region remains a global leader in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, progress is uneven across goals and slowing down in some areas. Europe is ahead of many regions in SDG implementation, particularly in health, education, energy and innovation. However climate action, inequality, biodiversity and food systems remain critical bottlenecks. As regulatory ambition grows, companies face increasing pressure to integrate ESG considerations into core strategies. The UN Global Compact has a strategic role to play in supporting businesses through policy engagement, practical guidance and peer learning platforms tailored to local contexts.

Despite economic headwinds — including inflation, energy volatility and geopolitical tensions — Europe’s green and digital transitions are driving investment and job stability. However, regional disparities remain, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe, where the sustainability shift is more challenging due to higher unemployment, lower levels of innovation and a reliance on more carbon-intensive industries. In coal-dependent or less diversified economies, the green transition tends to be both more costly and complex. Investor expectations and regulatory momentum are pushing companies to embed climate and nature-related risks into business planning, with growing emphasis on supply chain sustainability, circularity and just transition. Through its hubs in Copenhagen and Dubai, which are respectively in charge of the Western and Eastern part of the continent, the UN Global Compact is well-positioned to help European companies navigate this evolving landscape, build resilience and lead on sustainability across their value chains.

North America

North America’s sustainability landscape is defined by economic strength, geopolitical complexity and a fragmented regulatory environment. While the U.S. and Canada are global leaders in innovation and trade, both face persistent social inequalities and political polarization that influence public trust and corporate ESG expectations. The region’s reliance on global supply chains for critical minerals and clean technologies exposes it to growing sustainability and security risks, particularly amid shifting trade policies and evolving climate commitments. Canada has moved toward regulatory alignment with global ESG standards, while the U.S. remains divided, marked by a patchwork of state-led mandates and fluctuating federal priorities.

Amid these dynamics, North America presents a strong platform for scaling responsible business leadership. With support from HQ and the regional hub based in Copenhagen, the region’s growing network of participants and established initiatives such as the Accelerators offer pathways to deepen impact across sectors. With the U.S. and Canada home to many of the world’s largest buyers and investors, there is significant potential to drive sustainable supply chains globally by engaging corporate leaders and connecting them with smaller players.



UN Global Compact Network Uruguay at Sustainable Expo 2025. Photo: UN Global Compact

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

LAC presents significant opportunities for sustainable business growth, despite persistent economic and social challenges. The region is rich in strategic assets, home to 40 per cent of global biodiversity, over a quarter of the world’s forests and a leading renewable energy mix, with 69 per cent of energy sourced from renewables. LAC is also emerging as a global leader in climate action and nature-based solutions, leveraging its ecological wealth to drive innovative approaches to conservation and resilience. These strengths position LAC as a key player in the global green transition. Yet, despite contributing less than 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, LAC faces some of the

world’s highest climate-related costs, losing over two per cent of its combined annual GDP due to increasingly frequent and severe environmental catastrophes. Access to climate finance remains a major challenge, hindered by systemic barriers such as high investor risk perception and, in some countries, regulatory uncertainty. Moreover, global sustainability frameworks often fail to reflect regional realities, making it harder for LAC to demonstrate progress and attract investment. Advancing region-specific thematic pathways could help unlock financing and accelerate action aligned with national priorities.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up 99.5 per cent of businesses and employ 60 per cent of the workforce, are central to inclusive growth but require greater institutional support and investment.

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Informal employment remains widespread with an average rate of 47.6 per cent in 2024, limiting access to social protections and constraining productivity, particularly among SMEs. Strengthening institutional support for SMEs and integrating informal actors into formal economic systems will be essential for inclusive, climate-resilient growth. Encouragingly, businesses across LAC are increasingly embedding sustainability into their core strategies, especially in sectors like mining, tourism and agroforestry, where innovation and local engagement can drive scalable impact. In parallel, companies are advancing human rights due diligence and contributing to business-peacebuilding efforts, particularly in post-conflict and high-risk areas.

The UN Global Compact, through its regional Hub located in Panama and its coordinating role across country and multi-country networks, can support companies in the region in amplifying their voice on the global stage and bridging technical expertise with policy advocacy. Peer-to-peer collaboration and engagement with trade blocs —

such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR); and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) — can help localize systemic change, particularly in critical sectors like agriculture. Multinational subsidiaries operating in the region should deepen local visibility and engagement, while tailored pilots and localized content can ensure sustainability efforts reflect the region's diversity and unlock transformative business opportunities across both Latin America and the Caribbean.

MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East is undergoing a strategic transformation marked by bold national vision plans, rapid technological advancement and growing ambition to play a global leadership role, particularly among Gulf countries such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar. These countries are driving economic diversification beyond oil through major investments in renewable energy, AI and sustainable finance. Innovation hubs, smart infrastructure and expanding start-up ecosystems — many led by youth and women — are positioning the region as a center for SDG-aligned solutions. While the region faces acute climate vulnerability and uneven progress on the SDGs, efforts such as region-specific ESG frameworks and sovereign wealth fund integration signal growing commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices.



UN Global Compact Network Lebanon launches “Business Integrity Series” to mark 25 years of advancing corporate sustainability.

Photo: UN Global Compact

Amidst this dynamic landscape, the UN Global Compact has a strong opportunity to deepen its impact through strategic public-private collaboration. The Regional Hub in Dubai is well-positioned to engage key Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) governments, drawing on successful models of collaboration such as with KSA. With businesses — especially in the GCC — thriving in sectors such as tech, logistics and finance, and governments increasingly prioritizing inclusive growth and regulatory innovation, the conditions are ripe for piloting transformative initiatives. While expansion beyond the core GCC countries remains limited, a focused, government-aligned approach offers the greatest potential to scale impact, strengthen SDG delivery and elevate the region's role in shaping global sustainability efforts.

06

ENABLING DELIVERY



Data center infrastructure clusters. Photo: Shutterstock

Delivering on our 2030 ambition requires a strong, connected and capable organization behind it. Over the next five years, the UN Global Compact will continue to invest in building the partnerships, systems and infrastructure that make bold action possible.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

To support a growing and diverse network of participants, the UN Global Compact will prioritize operational excellence and financial resilience as core enablers of our strategy. With participant fees as our primary source of funding and growing ambition for diversified income, it is essential that we maintain a sound business model that delivers tangible value and ensures long term organizational sustainability.

Over the next five years, we will pursue strategic, purpose-driven growth to amplify our impact and expand our reach. We will focus on attracting companies committed to driving impact and who have the supply chain leverage and sectoral leadership to drive system-wide change. We will also continue to engage committed businesses of all sizes, especially SMEs and companies in emerging markets. This dual approach, anchored in influence and integrity, ensures that our expanding base not only reflects global diversity but delivers real impact. Growth targets will vary

by revenue tier and by country based on the potential and maturity of each market. Intentional growth will reinforce legitimacy, enable collective action and support the long-term financial sustainability of the UN Global Compact so we can serve our participants better and more equitably across the globe.

We will modernize our Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) and digital platforms to enable better data management, more personalized outreach and real-time performance insights. A refreshed brand identity will further strengthen our visibility and credibility, reinforcing trust and engagement across our global network. We will strengthen financial planning and forecasting processes and identify new pathways for diversified incomes, such as philanthropic grants and sponsorships.

Operational excellence will remain central to improving internal coordination, embedding clear service standards and equipping staff with the tools and training needed to deliver a seamless, high-quality experience. Together, these efforts will build trust, increase responsiveness and ensure that our financial and operational systems are aligned to support strategic goals and deliver sustained value to our participants at every stage of their engagement.

OPERATING MODEL

As we grow, we will continue to evolve our operating model to better serve our participants. The UN Global Compact Office will continue to serve as the strategist and architect for the organization, providing global direction, safeguarding brand integrity and ensuring alignment through shared standards. Our five Regional Hubs will take on clearly defined roles, bridging the strategic vision with implementation realities at the regional and country level. These hubs will facilitate cross-CN collaboration and knowledge exchange, provide resources and context to tailor programmes, convene regional-level events, coordinate adaptive scaling in the region and strengthen regional partnerships. Country Networks will drive implementation, partnership development and driving measurable results on the ground. They will also innovate through local offerings aligned with global priorities, acting as testing grounds for scalable, high-impact approaches.

We will continue to enhance cross-network learning, capacity strengthening, joint performance targets and integrated planning cycles. This model enables our One Global Compact to move with greater speed, focus and agility, responding to regional trends and concentrating resources where they can achieve the greatest impact.

EMBEDDING BUSINESS CENTRICITY

To better serve our participants, the UN Global Compact will strengthen its internal capabilities to work with companies using the language, priorities and mindset of business. We are committed to becoming more responsive and relevant by tailoring support to company size, sector and sustainability maturity. Grounded in continuous feedback and close listening, our approach will ensure that every interaction adds value and drives meaningful progress. At the same time, we will reinforce our unique role as part of the United Nations system, serving as a crucial bridge between the private sector and the UN and ensuring that our work continues to reflect the urgency and integrity of the UN goals, even when business ambition fluctuates. By strengthening both how we work and how we listen, and by connecting business action to the broader goals and principles of the UN, we will ensure the UN Global Compact remains agile, trusted and fit to lead business transformation where it matters most.

DIGITIZING FOR SCALE AND IMPACT

Our digital transformation will center on two goals: enhancing the participant's experience and improving operational efficiency across HQ, regional Hubs and Country Networks of varying sizes and capacities. We will scale up existing digital and online platforms to give broader access to insights from peers, partners and experts. In addition, we will leverage digital tools to deliver quality learning at scale. Participants will engage with content through an integrated platform that provides companies with a tailored onboarding process, dynamic learning journeys, progress tracking tools and benchmark reporting. Internally, we will streamline systems for data management, performance tracking and knowledge sharing to support capacity building across the organization. These tools will allow us to scale personalized support and drive continuous improvement.

Participants will engage with content through an integrated platform that provides companies with a tailored onboarding process, dynamic learning journeys, progress tracking tools and benchmark reporting.

SCALING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The UN Global Compact will deepen formal collaboration with priority partners to scale impact, beginning with a strengthened leadership role within the private sector ecosystem. This includes enhancing our position as a key convener of businesses committed to sustainability and expanding our influence across business associations, academia (through our PRME initiative) and civil society actors. Building on this foundation, we will reinforce our guiding role on business sector engagement within the UN system to deliver transformative partnerships as well as strategic alignment with governments on policy and incentives for sustainable business. We will develop multi-stakeholder coalitions to co-create scalable initiatives in priority impact areas and leverage resources developed by key partners.

07

MONITORING PROGRESS AND MEASURING IMPACT



Field of solar panels in China. Photo: Shutterstock

MONITORING OUTCOMES AND MEASURING IMPACT

The UN Global Compact will monitor outcomes of the strategy through setting and tracking targets across:

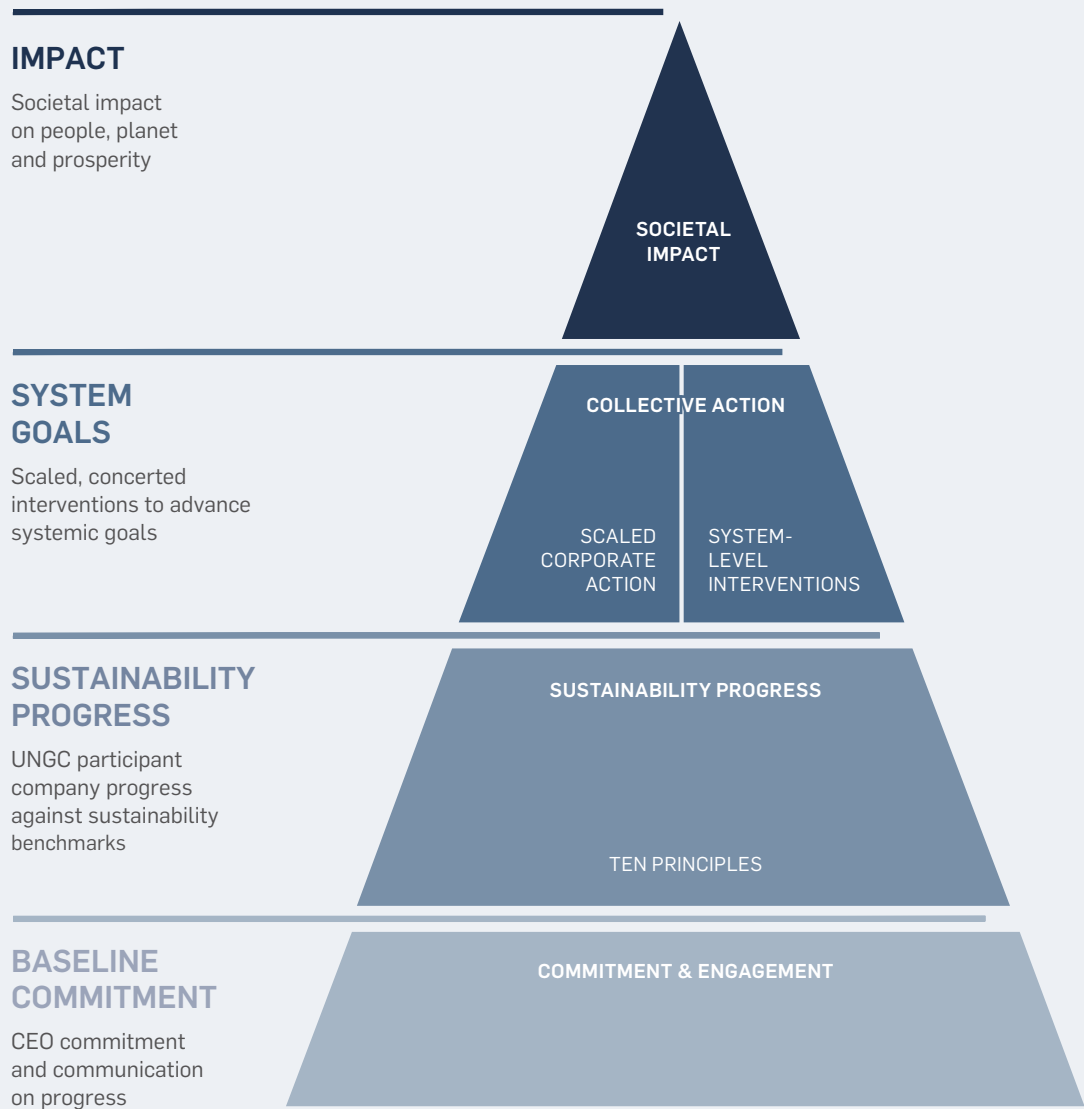
THE ONGOING COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT OF UN GLOBAL COMPACT PARTICIPANTS

UN GLOBAL COMPACT PARTICIPANT PROGRESS ON SUSTAINABILITY OVER TIME, WITH BENCHMARKS ON KEY INDICATORS ACROSS THE AREAS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, LABOUR, ENVIRONMENT AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

COLLECTIVE ACTION OF UN GLOBAL COMPACT PARTICIPANTS THROUGH SCALED CORPORATE ACTION AND INTERVENTIONS TOWARDS SHARED SYSTEMIC OUTCOME GOALS

RESULTING CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS SOCIETAL IMPACT ON PEOPLE, PLANET AND PROSPERITY

UNGC APPROACH TO PROGRESS AND IMPACT



Ensuring commitment and engagement

In joining the UN Global Compact, UN Global Compact participants must establish their commitment to make the Ten Principles part of the strategy, culture and day-to-day operations of the company and to engage in collaborative projects which advance the broader development goals of the United Nations.

The UN Global Compact will continue its 25 year history of advancing responsible business practices and catalyzing measurable progress. Tracking participant engagement as well as data from our Communication on Progress (CoP), we show that companies with longer participation in the Compact demonstrate a deeper commitment to the Ten Principles not just within their own operations, but increasingly

across supply chains and value chains. Comparative analyses also suggest that UN Global Compact participants outperform peers on key environmental, social and governance indicators, affirming the Compact’s role in shaping business leadership globally.

The CoP offers a consistent, structured format for disclosure, making company data publicly available in a credible and comparable way. In line with the Pact for the Future and our role in strengthening corporate accountability, we will continue to provide broad access to CoP data and expand benchmarking capabilities across regions, sectors and company sizes. This data-driven approach not only promotes transparency: it also supports personalized learning, enabling companies to tailor their strategies based on current performance and future goals.

KEY INDICATORS

%

Percent of UN Global Compact participants who submitted **CEO letter of commitment**

%

Percent of UN Global Compact participants who submitted annual **Communication on Progress**

%

Percent of UN Global Compact participants who actively engaged through **programmatic offerings** each year

Longer Tenure as a Participant Correlates with Higher Levels of Commitment, Underscoring the Value of Continued UN Global Compact Engagement



Tracking sustainability progress

The UN Global Compact supports companies on a journey of progress, learning and adaptation by providing tools and insights to assess where they are, where they need to go and how they contribute to global goals. At the heart of our measurement framework is a focus on company-level actions: the investments, commitments and performance improvements that participating in businesses make in alignment with the Ten Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Moreover, we can see where real commitment has been made:

- **90 per cent** of participants made public commitments across all four issue areas of the Ten Principles: human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

- Around **70 per cent** reported having a due diligence process in place for human rights, though less than half of those extended that process to their supply chains.
- In the area of climate and environmental action, approximately **50 per cent** reported setting measurable targets on emissions, resource use or waste reduction.

While these indicators demonstrate progress, they also help identify where more focused support and collaboration are needed. In addition to individual disclosures, we will aggregate data across our network to highlight global and regional trends. These insights will inform programming and strengthen engagement with key partners, including policymakers, investors and civil society by showing where business is making progress and where barriers remain.



KEY INDICATORS



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & ENABLERS

- Percent of participants with an **individual or group responsible** for sustainability topics
- Percent of participants tracking **effectiveness** of sustainability actions
- Percent of participants incorporating sustainability considerations into **core decision-making processes**
- Percent of participants who **set targets, track and report** on the amount and proportion of SDG-aligned investments
- Percent of participants with integrated sustainability **risk management processes**
- Percent of participants establishing a **corporate financing strategy** that is linked to SDG investments and performance

HUMAN RIGHTS & LABOUR

- Percent of participants with a **public human rights commitment**, risk-based and on-going human rights due diligence processes — based on meaningful stakeholder engagement — and mechanisms to support access to remedy
- Percent of participants that **monitor, report and address** decent work risks across their operations and supply chains in line with SDG 8 and ILO standards
- Percent of participants paying a **living wage** to all employees
- Percent of participants with a **public commitment** to paying a living wage across their operations by 2030
- Percent of participants with **action plan(s)** in place to work towards achieving living wages and/or living incomes with measurable and time-bound milestones across their supply chains
- Percent of participants with **gender balance** at all levels of management and leadership
- Percent of participants with **no gender pay gap** (or with public, time-bound action plans to close the gap)

Benchmarks will be tracked as key indicators of sustainability progress and are not exhaustive of all actions that UNGC participants can make



ENVIRONMENT

- Percent of participants who have adopted a **policy commitment** in relation to climate action
- Percent of participants with **public science-based targets aligned with 1.5°C**
- Percent of participants with **public science-based targets on nature**
- Percent of participants with published climate transition plans including interim **milestones for 2030**
- Percent of participants reporting year-on-year **reductions in absolute GHG emissions** (Scope 1, 2 and 3)
- Percent of participants with contextual **water targets** aligned to high-stress basins
- Percent of participants involved in collective action to improve **water security in priority basins**

ANTI-CORRUPTION

- Percent of participants with clear, **visible and accessible policies** on how to address conflict of interest and corruption practices
- Percent of participants whose anti-corruption programmes are **consistent with all applicable laws**
- Percent of participants that carry out **ethics and compliance training** on a regular basis for all employees
- Percent of participants that conduct corruption **risk assessments** on a regular basis
- Percent of participants with effective **whistleblower channels** in place
- Percent of participants that apply **incentives for ethics and compliance** to employees and business partners

Demonstrating collective action

Beyond individual performance, the UN Global Compact also plays a vital role in convening multi-stakeholder coalitions and fostering collective action to address systemic barriers to sustainability. These efforts recognize that some challenges — such as policy fragmentation, supply chain complexity and financing gaps — require coordinated solutions that go beyond the capacity of any single company.

To track progress on collective action, we will track focused interventions and assess impact across the four high-impact areas:

Rather than prescriptive quantitative targets, collective action outcomes will emphasize shared milestones, coalition participation and systems-level outcomes such as:

- The impact from policies interventions by UNGC members and coalition participation
- The adoption of joint supplier standards or procurement frameworks
- Verified improvements in social or environmental outcomes in prioritized geographies or sectors.

These collective initiatives will be documented through annual progress reports and periodic evaluations to capture both the breadth and depth of systemic change.

SHARED OBJECTIVE



CLIMATE & NATURE
Ensure a credible **net-zero pathway** through just transition and building nature-positive resilience.



DECENT WORK & LIVING WAGE
Promote decent work and living wage to **reduce inequality** and build resilient, **inclusive economies**.



GENDER EQUALITY
Advance **equal representation, participation, pay** and **leadership** across all levels.



SUSTAINABLE FINANCE
Drive sustainability-linked corporate **investments** and SDG-aligned **financing**.

KEY INDICATORS

Global, regional and country-level interventions such as **public policy engagement, driving sustainable investment, transforming supply chains** and catalyzing **collective innovation**.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT OUTCOMES

SBTi-aligned supply chains across scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in high-impact sectors by 2030

Collective positive water impact in at least 100 vulnerable prioritized water basins by 2030

Contribution towards societal impact

In driving sustainability progress and mobilizing businesses towards systemic outcomes, the UN Global Compact aims to scale the positive impact needed to deliver significant results towards people, planet and prosperity in alignment with Agenda 2030. While not directly attributable, the end results of the UN Global Compact initiative and its community of participants has the potential to scale transformative change. As such the UN Global Compact will work with partners to track the scale of its impact across the high impact areas.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF IMPACT INDICATORS

Number of of people's livelihoods improved through UN Global Compact companies paying a living wage

Number of of people whose access to water is improved through corporate collective action on priority water basins

ADVANCE THE BUSINESS CASE

Overlaying the work to drive corporate action and impact, The UN Global Compact will monitor how effectively it equips companies to link sustainability with business performance. We will also assess how companies are integrating sustainability into business planning and decision making. Metrics will focus on:

- Uptake and application of business case evidence, including the number of participants accessing relevant tools and case studies;
- References to UNGC research in corporate strategy or communications; and
- Reporting ROI from sustainability initiatives or engaging boards on ESG-linked value creation.

Together, these indicators will help us understand and strengthen the role of responsible business practices as a driver of resilience, innovation and long-term growth.

08 CONCLUSION



New York City. Photo: iStock

The world needs business leadership that is bold, credible and grounded in action. The UN Global Compact Strategy 2026–2030 is our answer to that call. It reflects both the scale of the challenges we face and the opportunities we must seize. With over 23,000 participating companies and a presence in more than 160 countries, we are uniquely positioned to drive transformative impact, both globally and locally.

OUR VISION IS CLEAR:

**TO MOBILIZE
BUSINESS TO
TRANSFORM
SUSTAINABLE
BUSINESS AMBITION
INTO ACTION AT THE
SCALE THE WORLD
DEMANDS.**

TO REALIZE THIS, OUR STRATEGY IS ANCHORED IN THREE MUTUALLY-REINFORCING STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

1
EQUIP
companies
to act

by providing tailored tools, digital learning journeys and peer support to embed the Ten Principles into core operations.

2
CATALYZE
collective
action

by convening business-led, multi-stakeholder coalitions to tackle structural barriers and accelerate system-level change across critical impact areas.

3
ADVANCE
the business
case

by generating data-driven evidence and real-world examples that demonstrate how responsible leadership delivers both societal impact and long-term business value.

This strategy builds on a strong foundation of principles and participation, but it also looks forward. It is about supporting companies not just in making commitments, but in delivering results through meaningful progress, collective action and evidence of impact. It is about helping businesses see responsibility not as a burden, but as a source of competitive advantage and long-term value.

Mounting evidence makes it clear that aligning with the Ten Principles and the SDGs is not just the right thing to do: it is good business. Companies that lead on sustainability enjoy enhanced brand trust, improved access to capital, higher employee retention and better risk management. In many markets, companies demonstrating credible ESG performance attract more favorable financing terms and long-term investor confidence. By participating in the UN

Global Compact, companies gain access to practical tools, credible guidance, peer learning and global visibility, all tailored to support their sustainability journey and accelerate progress. Whether just beginning or leading at the frontier, every participant is equipped to translate ambition into action.

Crucially, this strategy reinforces the UN Global Compact's unique role within the multilateral ecosystem. As a Special Initiative of the UN Secretary-General, we bridge the private sector with the broader UN system and global policy forums, including the G20, G7, COP summits and UN intergovernmental processes. Our Country Networks and Regional Hubs translate these global priorities into locally-meaningful action, aligning business engagement with national development plans and the shared vision of the 2030 Agenda.

To support implementation and maximize impact, we offer a practical roadmap for engagement:

- **Companies** can leverage tailored onboarding, digital learning, peer communities and the Communication on Progress to assess, act and advance.
- **Investors** can use data and tools to align capital flows with responsible business performance.
- **Policy actors and multilateral partners** can collaborate with the UN Global Compact to shape enabling environments and amplify credible business voices in public discourse.
- **Civil society and academia** can join forces to build capacity, foster innovation and deepen accountability.

To achieve this, we will evolve as an institution: becoming more agile, more regionally responsive, more data-driven and more focused on outcomes. This strategy affirms our commitment to strengthening Country Network capacity and strategic partnership, enabling flexibility in delivery and expanding presence in underrepresented regions including through new and emerging networks. Moreover, as the UN Global Compact's strength lies in our diversity — of sectors, geographies, company sizes and stakeholders — we invite large companies, SMEs and state-owned enterprises alike to stay engaged. Our vision is clear. Our role is essential. And our momentum is real. As we move toward 2030, we invite all companies to lead, because when business acts with purpose, the world changes for the better.

GLOSSARY

Accelerators

A structured UN Global Compact program designed to fast-track the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Ten Principles into a company's core business strategy and operations. Accelerators offer a range of high-impact learning and engagement formats, including executive-level workshops, blended learning, peer exchange, mentoring and issue-specific campaigns. Delivered globally and locally, they help companies translate sustainability ambition into measurable action, while building internal capacity and leadership alignment.

Source: Accelerators | UN Global Compact

Average gender pay gap

The ILO defines equal remuneration for work of equal value as “remuneration for work which is of equal value, whether performed by a man or a woman, shall be paid without discrimination on the grounds of sex.” The concept of equal value refers to work that requires comparable skills, effort and responsibility and is performed under similar working conditions. For each job level or category, companies are to calculate the gap of gross hourly earnings paid to female and male employees and report the average gap of earnings across job categories as a percentage.

Average gross hourly earnings of **MALE** employees

Average gross hourly earnings of **FEMALE** employees

x 100 = _____ %

Average gross hourly earnings of male employees

Sources: ILO — C100 — Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); EFRAG Voluntary Sustainability Reporting Standards for nonlisted SMEs (VSME))

Circular Economy

“Circular economy aims to minimize waste and promote a sustainable use of natural resources, through smarter product design, longer use, recycling, as well as regenerate nature.”

Source: UNDP

Collective action

“Coordinated effort among a group of people and/or institutions within an agreed-upon process in support of a common goal.”

Source: Pacific Institute and Shift

Communication on Progress (CoP)

An annual disclosure platform through which UN Global Compact participants report on their progress in implementing the Ten Principles and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It serves as a benchmarking and transparency tool, enabling companies to assess progress, compare performance and communicate sustainability actions to investors, customers and the public.

Source: CoP Page | UN Global Compact

Country Network

A locally-rooted UN Global Compact entity that engages businesses and stakeholders within a specific country to promote responsible business practices. Country Networks support implementation of the UN Global Compact's mission.

Decent work

“Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that are productive and deliver a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.”

Source: Decent work | International Labour Organization

Due diligence

“A process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how an organization addresses its actual and potential negative impacts.”

Source: GRI Standards Glossary

ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance)

A framework used by businesses, investors and regulators to assess and manage non-financial factors that influence long-term performance, risk and value creation. ESG encompasses:

ENVIRONMENTAL Impacts related to climate change, natural resource use, pollution and biodiversity.

SOCIAL Issues affecting people and communities, including labour rights, diversity and inclusion, health and safety and stakeholder relationships.

GOVERNANCE Corporate governance practices such as board structure, ethics, transparency, anti-corruption and regulatory compliance.

Forward Faster

An initiative of the UN Global Compact that mobilizes companies to publicly commit to ambitious, time-bound targets across key sustainability areas (e.g. gender equality, climate action, living wages, water stewardship and sustainable finance). It includes standardized metrics and reporting mechanisms designed to accelerate measurable progress, strengthen accountability and align business action with the Ten Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Source: Home | Forward Faster

Just Transition

“A just transition ensures that environmentally sustainable economies are promoted in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind. It aims to ensure that the transition to net-zero emissions and climate resilience is orderly, inclusive and just.”

Source: Just Transition | UN Global Compact

Living Wage

“A living wage is the wage level that is necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families, taking into account the country circumstances and calculated for the work performed during normal hours. It should be calculated in accordance with the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) principles of estimating the living wage, and to be achieved through the wage-setting process in line with ILO principles on wage setting.”

Source: International Labour Organization

Nature-Positive

“Nature Positive is a global societal goal defined as ‘halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050’, in line with the mission of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.”

Source: What is Nature Positive?

Pact for the Future

Established in 2024, the Pact for the Future “reaffirms global commitment to the United Nations, the international system, and the principles of international law. It envisions a world where the international system delivers on its promises, reflects the diversity of today’s global landscape, and leverages the collective strength of governments, civil society, and other key partners.” It includes commitments across key areas such as sustainable development, digital governance, youth empowerment and future generations’ rights.

Source: Pact for the Future: A Vision for Global Collaboration — United Nations Western Europe

Participant (of the UN Global Compact)

A company or organization that has formally committed to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and to taking action to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education)

An initiative of the UN Global Compact that engages business and management schools worldwide to integrate sustainability, ethics and responsible leadership into education, research and thought leadership. PRME serves as a global platform for collaboration, innovation and continuous improvement in business education, aligning management theory and practice with the demands of a sustainable and inclusive global economy.

Source: Integrate the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) | UN Global Compact

Regional Hub

A UN Global Compact operational center that supports implementation of the strategy across a specific geographic region. Regional Hubs act as strategic connectors between the UN Global Compact Office, Country Networks and participating companies, ensuring that global priorities are translated into locally relevant action.

Science-Based Targets / SBTi

“Science-based targets show businesses how much and how quickly they need to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to prevent the worst effects of climate change.” The targets are developed by the Science Based Targets initiative, SBTi.

Source: Ambitious corporate climate action — Science Based Targets Initiative

Supply chain

“Range of activities carried out by entities upstream from the organization, which provide products or services that are used in the development of the organization’s own products or services.”

Source: GRI Standards Glossary

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

“A universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set out a 15-year plan to achieve the Goals. The SDGs are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice.”

Source: UN Sustainable Development Goals

Ten Principles (of the UN Global Compact)

A globally-recognized framework that outlines fundamental responsibilities for businesses in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Source: The Ten Principles | UN Global Compact

Scope 1, 2 and 3 Emissions

SCOPE 1 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the organization.

SCOPE 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that result from the generation of purchased or acquired electricity, heating, cooling and steam consumed by the organization.

SCOPE 3 indirect greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions not included in energy indirect (Scope 2) GHG emissions that occur outside of the organization, including both upstream and downstream emissions

Source: GRI Standards Glossary

Sustainable Finance

“Sustainable Finance is the process of taking due account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations when making investment decisions in the financial sector, leading to increased longer-term investments into sustainable economic activities and projects.”

Source: European Commission

Value chain

“An organization’s value chain encompasses the activities that convert input into output by adding value. It includes entities with which the organization has a direct or indirect business relationship and which either (a) supply products or services that contribute to the organization’s own products or services, or (b) receive products or services from the organization. Note 1: This definition is based on United Nations (UN), The Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights: An Interpretive Guide, 2012. Note 2: The value chain covers the full range of an organization’s upstream and downstream activities, which encompass the full life cycle of a product or service, from its conception to its end use.”

Source: GRI Standards Glossary

Water Stewardship

“Use of water that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves facility and catchment-based actions.”

Source: GRI Standards Glossary

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT



HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



LABOUR

- 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



ENVIRONMENT

- 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- 8 undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- 9 encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

As a special initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, the **UN Global Compact** is a call to companies worldwide to align their operations and strategies with Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Our ambition is to accelerate and scale the global collective impact of business by upholding the Ten Principles and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals through accountable companies and ecosystems that enable change. With more than 20,000 companies based in over 160 countries, and more than 60 Global Compact Country Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

For more information, follow **@globalcompact** on social media and visit our website at **unglobalcompact.org**.



United Nations
Global Compact

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The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.