

CONCEPT NOTE

Ring the Bell for Gender Equality

We Are All Generation Equality

Monday, 2 March 2020

CONTEXT

2020: A Transformative Year for Gender Equality

2020 marks 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the most comprehensive global agenda for girls and women in all areas of life. Despite some progress, real change has been slow and to date, not a single country has achieved gender equality. Now the world is facing an unprecedented set of challenges that threaten progress for girls' and women's rights.

International Women's Day 2020

The theme for International Women's Day (8 March) 2020 is, *I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights*. The theme is aligned the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, the Beijing Platform for Action is recognized as the most progressive roadmap for the empowerment of women and girls, everywhere.

The year 2020 is a pivotal year for advancing gender equality worldwide, as the global community takes stock of progress made for women's rights since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action. It will also mark several other galvanizing moments in the gender equality movement: a five-year milestone towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security; and the 10th anniversary of UN Women's establishment.

The emerging global consensus is that despite some progress, real change has been agonizingly slow for the majority of women and girls in the world. Today, not a single country can claim to have achieved gender equality. Multiple obstacles remain unchanged in law and in culture. Women and girls continue to be undervalued; they work more and earn less and have fewer choices; and experience multiple forms of violence at home and in public spaces. Furthermore, there is a significant threat of rollback of hard-won feminist gains.

The year 2020 represents an unmissable opportunity to mobilize global action to achieve gender equality and human rights of all women and girls.

BACKGROUND

Global Initiative

In its sixth year, the 'Ring the Bell for Gender Equality' initiative is a partnership between Women in ETFs, IFC, Sustainable Stock Exchanges (SSE) Initiative, UN Global Compact, UN Women, the World Federation of Exchanges. These organizations encourage exchanges to participate in bell ringing events to raise awareness about the business case for women's economic empowerment.

In celebration of International Women's Day (8 March 2020), stock exchanges around the world will host a bell ringing ceremony to raise awareness of the pivotal role the private sector can play in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment. In March 2019, a record 85 exchanges rang their bells for gender equality, an increase from 33 exchanges four years ago, and 2020 is expected to be even bigger.

The Women's Empowerment Principles

WEPs are a set of Principles offering guidance to business on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. Established by UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment.

WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By joining the WEPs community, the CEO signals commitment to this agenda at the highest levels of the company and to work collaboratively in multistakeholder networks to foster business practices that empower women. These include equal pay for work of equal value, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance against sexual harassment in the workplace.

Event at Nasdaq

In New York, the Ring the Bell for Gender Equality at Nasdaq is co-organized by Nasdaq and UN Women and it will be celebrated with an open ringing and a conference. The main objective of the 'bell ringing' is to bring attention to the pivotal role the private sector can play in advancing gender equality to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

As a WEPs signatory, Nasdaq is active in its efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Nasdaq and UN Women invites its partners to share lessons learned and good practices in the implementation on the Women's Empowerment Principles and gender equality policies in the marketplace, workplace and community.

The event will bring together businesses aspiring for gender equality. The private sector is well placed to directly advance gender equality and women's empowerment and directly affect change on issues such as improving diversity in senior management and on the boards of directors, developing more gender-sensitive policies, developing gender-themed investment products, and improving transparency on gender policies and practices. At the nexus of company and investor interaction, stock exchanges are uniquely positioned to influence capital markets to achieve this.

THE EVENT

The business community has a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. While the private sector is increasingly recognizing that advancing gender equality through business operations and value chains means better talent, higher productivity, more customers, and a stronger bottom line, progress remains slow. Thus, the time is now for business and markets to scale up actions and change practices.

Nasdaq Time Square is an opening bell ceremony on 2 March 2020 to ring the bell to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. The topic for the event at Nasdaq is “*We are all Generation Equality*”.

LOCATION AND TIME

Opening Bell and Photos in front of Nasdaq Tower (by invitation only)

Nasdaq MarketSite, 4 Times Square, New York, New York 10036

9:00 – 10:00 am

We Are All Generation Equality – Conference

Nasdaq

151 West 43rd St. – 10th Floor

New York, NY 10036

12:30 – 4:00 pm