WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY:

GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESS

Global Compact
Network UK

FOREWORD

The adoption of progressive multistakeholder frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change creates opportunities to reshape the role of business in many important global agendas. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is one of them. The original WPS framework focussed on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and their representation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict. However, this agenda has evolved over time and its language has become increasingly concrete, demanding that all actors in society consider links between the WPS agenda and their work. As such, the WPS agenda may now have the scope to connect business interests and meaningful partnerships with government and civil society to find pragmatic solutions for complex gender, peace, and security-related issues. There is a consensus ensuing that the need to find solutions to WPS challenges is as important for companies as it is for governments and people. It is also becoming more apparent that the private sector can enhance human development and strengthen good governance.

Many companies are socially responsible actors that do business with consideration and care in their areas of operation. One of the key concerns of many such businesses is not to be complicit in or responsible for human rights abuses. As this guide underscores, the private sector can play a positive role in the WPS agenda by providing practical solutions in complex working environments in which they have a vested interest.

There is power in working together and harnessing the expertise and subject matter knowledge of different actors working on a common agenda. Forward-looking peacebuilding processes should therefore include strong multi-stakeholder partnerships that will support new methods to prevent, mitigate, and resolve armed conflict. This guide aims to provide insight into how that may be done and provide a foundation for further business-oriented thinking on an agenda as complex, sensitive, and important as WPS.

Beyond these considerations, the creative and innovative nature of many businesses may also mean more innovation, collaboration, and idea-sharing in the WPS space. Relevant actors should continue to encourage broadening the WPS agenda to ensure that companies and women from diverse backgrounds are included in the way problems are solved both locally and globally. Both groups of stakeholders are a critical part of the peacebuilding process moving forward.

Benafsha Delgado
Senior Programme Manager, Business & Human Rights
UN Global Compact Network UK

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

UN GLOBAL COMPACT

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Credit: Albert González Farran – UNMIL, 26 January 2018, Monrovia, Liberia.
Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/27278950497/

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 marked the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Global Compact and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which established the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Despite the steady progress that both initiatives have made over the past two decades, the links between the two remain underexplored, and the potential of the private sector in advancing the WPS agenda remains largely untapped. As the world is facing unprecedented humanitarian crises exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic[1], there is opportunity for the private sector to play an important role in recognising women's contributions to sustainable development, economic growth, and peace and security. By investing in women, contributions from the private sector can ultimately complement efforts to achieve not only the WPS agenda, but also the Sustainable Development Goals.

Investing in the WPS agenda can not only provide the foundation for accelerated social and economic development, but also drive business advantages. It makes business sense to put women's interests at the core of business models and practices. Stable and sustainable communities - and, by extension, business environments - can only exist if the fundamental rights of more than half of the world's population are protected and respected by all stakeholders.

Women, Peace and Security: Guidance for Business builds on existing frameworks such as the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Women's Empowerment Principles, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This guide explains the role companies can play in contributing to the achievement of the key pillars of the WPS agenda, particularly in relation to women's economic empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected areas. It highlights the need to scale efforts to make progress towards WPS by involving business actors in this important global agenda and encouraging them to apply a gender lens to responsible business in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

This guide opens with context-setting on the relationships between business, peace, security, and gender equality and the presentation of the business case for promoting the WPS agenda. It also illustrates a holistic approach that encompasses actions to respect women's rights by following relevant global frameworks which emphasise the responsibility of business to "do no harm". In addition, it provides suggestions for additional positive actions companies can take in support of the WPS agenda, including core business activities, strategic social investments and philanthropy, rightsholder-centred advocacy and public policy engagement, and partnerships and other collective action. Examples are included throughout the guide to illustrate the types of engagement companies can undertake in support of the WPS agenda.

Finally, this guide recommends that businesses take a two-pronged approach to enabling the WPS agenda. Firstly, companies should do no harm to women in fragile and conflict-affected areas by following the relevant responsible business frameworks and conducting heightened human rights due diligence. Secondly, once this pre-requisite has been fulfilled, companies can do good by enacting additional actions in support of the WPS agenda.

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[1] Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock Remarks at the Geneva launch of the Global Humanitarian Overview 2021, OCHA, 1 December 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-mark-lowcock-remarks-geneva-launch-global>

Chapter 1: Introduction

Contemporary armed conflicts are becoming more complex, protracted, and internationalised than ever. As many as two billion people worldwide are currently affected by conflict.[2] This situation is further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is considered a potential threat multiplier that can amplify existing conflict drivers.[3] Faced with these challenges, the resources of the humanitarian sector and the international community are insufficient to address the root causes and humanitarian and security-related consequences of armed conflict.[4]

The consequences of armed conflict, including sexual violence, poor health, poverty, loss of jobs, and destruction of assets, impact women severely.[5] To create both peace and sustainable development – which often represent two sides of the same coin – women must be equal and strategic leaders, and drivers of change at all levels of decision-making.[6]

The interests of women and business are interconnected on various levels. Women are key stakeholders of business activity – as consumers, present or future employees, investors, shareholders, and business leaders, as well as being part of the wider environment in which business operates. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are all relevant to women's lives, and armed conflicts threaten the achievement of all these targets. Responsible businesses that invest in women's rights, protection, empowerment, and economic inclusion are therefore investing in a safer and more sustainable future for all.

Across the workplace, marketplace, and community, businesses can bring about significant setbacks, but also improvements, to women's rights and freedoms.[7]

This becomes particularly salient in the context of armed conflict, where the risks to women's safety and progress are the greatest. It is therefore critical to understand the nexus between women, business, peace, and security in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to assess how companies can avoid doing harm as well as do better by furthering the WPS agenda.

Credit: UN Photo/JC McIlwaine, 17 May 2016, Juba, South Sudan. Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/27366172066/

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[2] Current trends in violent conflict, William Robert Avis, University of Birmingham, 25 March 2019, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5cf669ace5274a07692466db/565_Trends_in_Violent_Conflict.pdf>

[3] Advancing peace in a changed world: COVID-19 effects on conflict and how to respond, Mercy Corps, 10 September 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/advancing-peace-changed-world-covid-19-effects-conflict-and-how-respond>

[4] Current trends in violent conflict, William Robert Avis, University of Birmingham, 25 March 2019, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5cf669ace5274a07692466db/565_Trends_in_Violent_Conflict.pdf>

[5] Women and Armed Conflict, Beijing 20 – UN Women, <https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/armed-conflict>

[6] Building and sustaining peace, UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/building-and-sustaining-peace>

[7] Women, Business and Human Rights: A background paper for the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women in Law and Practice, Ama Marston, OHCHR, 7 March 2014, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/ESL/BackgroundPaper4.pdf>

1.1 OBJECTIVES

This guide was developed to raise awareness of the role businesses can play in mitigating risks to women's rights and advancing the WPS agenda. In addition, it aims to draw particular attention to the opportunities available to businesses which operate in fragile and conflict-affected areas to contribute to both of these objectives.

This guide is intended to serve as a "starting point" for companies wishing to learn about the WPS agenda, while also providing guidance and inspiration for businesses that are already engaged. More specifically, it seeks to:

- Explain the nexus between gender equality, peace, security, and business;

- Highlight the rationale for businesses to contribute to women's economic and social empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected areas;

- Outline the positive and negative impacts of business operations on women in the context of fragile and conflict-affected situations;

- Reference the main business responsibilities and frameworks of action relevant to the WPS agenda;

- Provide examples of actions that businesses can take to contribute to the WPS agenda and women's economic empowerment more broadly; and

- Inspire action and stimulate learning by providing case examples to support and advance women's rights, well-being, and empowerment in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

METHODOLOGY

This guide has been developed by UN Global Compact Network UK. It draws on research done by UN Global Compact Network UK in late 2020 and early 2021 which includes extensive desk research and analysis, two webinars with input from businesses and women's rights experts, and consultations with external partners, including Nicola Popovic, Director and Co-Founder of Gender Associations, Dr Christina Bache, Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (IDEAS), and Lauren Gula, Senior Manager, Gender Equality at the UN Global Compact.

Chapter 2: Context-setting

2.1 GENDER EQUALITY AND BUSINESS

A growing body of research shows that investing in women's participation and leadership in the labour market is smart business.

Women's participation in the workforce strongly correlates with **global prosperity**. Research from the Boston Consulting Group shows that if women and men participated equally as entrepreneurs, global GDP could rise by up to 6%, boosting the global economy by up to $5 trillion.[8]

Individual companies' gender diversity, particularly on executive teams, is connected to better **financial performance**. A McKinsey & Company report from 2019 shows that companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability and 27% more likely to have superior value creation.[9]

Gender diversity – manifested primarily as greater advancement opportunities, increased remuneration, and increased intellectual stimulation in the workplace – helps companies retain more talented women, thus **reducing employee turnover**.[10]

Leadership teams with more women tend to possess competencies which ensure **lasting business**

success, including long-term growth goals, increased innovation and productivity, drive for collaboration, strong corporate governance and transparency, sound environmental management, and social inclusiveness.[11] An IFC Corporate Governance Knowledge publication provides further support for the correlation between a higher proportion of women in business leadership and strong ESG performance. This includes but is not limited to reputation, investor perceptions, and stakeholder engagement.[12]

Given the strong case for gender equality in all spheres of society, companies around the world are increasingly recognising the value of embedding gender equality across business strategy and operations, from the boardroom to the supply chain and directly to communities in which they operate.[13]

However, sustained and ambitious corporate action is needed to accelerate progress: in the latest Global Gender Gap Report, the World Economic Forum predicts that closing the economic gender gap globally will take 267,6 years.[14] The push to "move the dial" becomes even more urgent when taking into consideration the setbacks that COVID-19 has imposed on gender equality across every sphere of life.[15]

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[8] Want to Boost the Global Economy by $5 Trillion? Support Women as Entrepreneurs, Boston Consulting Group, 30 July 2019, <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2019/boost-global-economy-5-trillion-dollar-support-women-entrepreneurs>

[9] Delivering through Diversity, McKinsey & Company, January 2018, <https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/delivering%20through%20diversity/delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx>

[10] Breaking the Barriers: Women in Senior Management in the UK, Catalyst, December 2000, <https://www.catalyst.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Breaking_the_Barriers_Women_in_Senior_Management_in_the_U.K.pdf>

[11] Better Leadership, Better World: Women Leading for the Global Goals, Business and Sustainable Development Commission, March 2018, <https://d306pr3pise04h.cloudfront.net/docs/publications%2F2018%2FWomenRising2030-Better-Leadership-Better-World.pdf>

[12] Women in Business Leadership Boost ESG Performance: Existing Body of Evidence Makes Compelling Case, IFC, 2018, <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/ifc+cg/resources/private+sector+opinion/women+in+business+leadership+boost+esg+performance>

[13] Women's Empowerment and Business: 2020 Trends and Opportunities, Business for Social Responsibility and the United Nations Global Compact, 2020, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/5738>

[14] Global Gender Gap Report 2021, World Economic Forum, March 2021, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf/>

[15] Gender Equality COVID-19 Impact Brief, United Nations Global Compact, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/20th-anniversary-campaign/uniting-business-to-tackle-covid-19/genderequality>

2.2 PEACE, SECURITY, AND BUSINESS

While business may still not be perceived as an important stakeholder in the international architecture of peace and security[16], research shows significant links between the two.

There is a **strong business case** for incorporating conflict-sensitivity into a company's corporate 'DNA'. This is likely to strengthen its reputation, long-term operations, supply chain transparency, and a social license to operate.[17] These are all effective risk-mitigation strategies for business operations in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

Private enterprise, including micro-enterprises and SMEs, are an important **stabilising force** in fragile and conflict-affected situations. They reduce violence and increase the economic resilience of countries, as noted in a Council on Foreign Relations working paper. As such, "supporting entrepreneurship should be a vital component of any reconstruction effort."[18]

In addition to providing jobs and economic opportunities which may encourage different actors to abandon fighting, companies can promote peace and security in other ways. For example, companies can **respect the rule of law**, espouse principles of **corporate citizenship**, conduct individualised risk assessments and **human rights due diligence**, and engage in **track-two diplomacy**.[19]

The World Economic Forum notes that there is a significant overlap between today's fragile environments and emerging or frontier markets. These areas can provide business with access to young urban populations (new markets), key natural resources, and connections to global markets.[20]

In addition, the physical rebuilding required in post-conflict environments can create significant opportunities for local and international investors, for example in the construction, infrastructure, and banking sectors.[21] These opportunities unlock the potential for large returns for the private sector.[22]

Beyond immediate business opportunities, understanding and being invested in peace is in companies' best interest in the long run. The cost of armed conflict exceeds $1 trillion per year globally, which puts a strain on governments and international organisations who are responsible for peacebuilding and reconstruction. The success and profitability of many business operations relies on the socio-economic stability of the markets they operate in. The interconnectedness of today's global markets means that businesses should engage in multi-stakeholder peace-promoting efforts in order to achieve long-term success.

Ultimately, the most effective peace-promoting behaviours for business will inevitably depend on the size of the company, its ownership, and industry, which underlines the need for further and more comprehensive **disaggregated analyses** of how businesses influence peace and conflict.[23]

It is also crucial to acknowledge that business can serve as **"both a friend and a foe to peace and stability".** As the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights points out, businesses operating in conflict-affected areas are not neutral actors, even if they do not take a side in the conflict.[24]

[16] Issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, Working Group on Business and Human Rights, 21 July 2020, <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/212>

[17] Responsible Business Advancing Peace: Examples from Companies, Investors & Global Compact Local Networks, UN Global Compact and PRI, 2013, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/491>

[18] Entrepreneurship in Postconflict Zones, Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, Council on Foreign Relations, May 2012. <https://www.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2012/05/CFR_WorkingPaper12_Lemmon.pdf>

[19] How Business Can Foster Peace, United States Institute of Peace, September 2012, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR315.pdf>

[20] Responsible private sector action to address fragility, conflict and violence, World Economic Forum, February 2016, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Responsible_Private_Sector.pdf>

[21] The Role of the Private Sector in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States, World Development Report 2011, Mary Porter Peschka, IFC, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/887641468163482532/pdf/620590WP0The0R0BOX0361475B00PUBLIC0.pdf>

[22] Mobilizing the Private Sector for Peace and Reconciliation, Amara Amadiegwu, Maya Kihiu, and Manuel Simon, the Graduate Institute Geneva and the World Economic Forum, 2020, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Mobilizing_the_Private_Sector_Report_2020.pdf>

[23] How Business Can Foster Peace, United States Institute of Peace, September 2012, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR315.pdf>

[24] Issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, Working Group on Business and Human Rights, 21 July 2020, <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/212>

In situations where businesses find themselves operating in conflict-affected areas, private sector actors can **become embroiled in human rights abuses**, particularly in resource-rich countries. The unpredictability of fragile and conflict-affected areas often means that doing business in such environments carries the risk of violating human rights or enabling human rights abuses by way of legitimate business operations. For example, children in post-conflict countries may be forced to sell pre-paid phone cards by private telecommunications companies to make a living, or local populations may be evicted from their own land to make way for commercial agriculture projects by foreign companies.[25]

Other negative consequences of business operations in fragile contexts may include inadvertently **escalating violence** by acquiring land or engaging public or private security forces, **fuelling tensions** in divided societies or between warring parties, **indirectly enabling repressive regimes, or becoming linked with non-state armed actors.**

State failure to provide its citizens with adequate political, economic, legal, and civil institutions may also give rise to businesses **attempting to replace state functions**, thereby distorting the public-private divide in fragile societies and increasing instability. This has been a particularly salient issue with private military and security contractors.[26]

Despite the above risks and opportunities, responsible companies should not shy away from operating in fragile and conflict-affected areas, but they should apply a conflict-sensitive approach to business activity and proactive risk management measures in such environments.[27] This should include, but is not limited to, aligning business operations to relevant international and domestic laws and maintaining a regular dialogue with international and civil society organisations that can monitor and report on any negative human rights impacts caused by said companies.

2.3 BUSINESS CASE

The WPS agenda is a comprehensive framework for women's empowerment, sustainable peace, and human security. It rests on four main pillars: participation, conflict prevention, protection, and relief & recovery, all of which are critical to respecting human rights and dignity and in tackling the root causes of conflict to create sustainable peace.[28]

Since its inception in 2000, the WPS agenda has mostly been addressing the responsibility of governments to implement its provisions. However, the potential for civil society stakeholders and businesses to play a bigger role in its implementation is increasingly clear.

At ground level around the world, there is a strong relationship between the private sector and personal identities, including gender relations and dynamics – and, by extension, peace and conflict.[29]

In addition, commitments relating to women's empowerment, the main cornerstone of the WPS agenda, are not new to the world of business, particularly in the context of women's economic empowerment.

In fragile and conflict-affected areas, incorporating a gender-responsive lens to business operations is necessary to ensure that the rights of women and girls are respected. This can help businesses not only "do no harm" but go beyond this and "do better" by positively contributing to the development of the area in question. Being conflict and gender sensitive is the right thing to do for companies, and this approach is conducive to bringing about positive change in support of the WPS agenda, more sustainable peace, and fairer and more stable societies.

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[25] Doing business in conflict-affected countries, Human Rights and Business Dilemmas Forum, <https://hrbdf.org/dilemmas/business-and-peace/#.YEEi7nmnxhG>

[26] Ibid.

[27] Issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, Working Group on Business and Human Rights, 21 July 2020. <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/212>

[28] Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan Development Toolkit, PeaceWomen, 2013, <https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/national_action_plan_development_toolkit.pdf>

[29] Nicola Popovic, 25 September 2020, quoted from "Business Action for WPS" webinar series.

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│  Adhering to business responsibilities│ │          │
│  and enacting additional gender- and  │ │          │
│         conflict-sensitive actions    │ │          │
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│  Women's economic and social          │ │          │
│            empowerment                │ │          │
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│    Creation of opportunities to       │ │          │
│    advance the Women, Peace and       │ │          │
│          Security agenda              │ │          │
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Conflict- and gender-sensitive business conduct makes sense from a business standpoint. As noted previously, women's economic empowerment and high rates of participation in the labour market strongly correlate with companies' financial performance and lasting business success. By adequately investing in women and supporting the legitimacy of their enterprises in fragile and conflict-affected situations, the private sector can assist in restoring a functioning, efficient, and inclusive market that creates a more stable business environment and opens new business opportunities for everyone.[30]

2.4 RELEVANT GLOBAL ACTORS AND INSTRUMENTS

It is advisable that companies wanting to deepen their engagement with the WPS agenda acquaint themselves with global and local actors working in this space and on responsible business more broadly. These actors include but are not limited to the United Nations (UN), national governments, regional organisations, civil society, and the media.[31] Some of the more relevant actors in the context of business are outlined below.

2.4.1. UNITED NATIONS

The UN is the main international organisation responsible for establishing global norms on women, peace and security, ensuring their full implementation within its own efforts, and providing a model of leadership for others.[32] The UN has at its disposal a range of guiding frameworks and principles which support the WPS agenda directly and indirectly, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

– particularly its general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

The lead UN agency responsible for the advancement of women is UN Women and its regional, country, and liaison offices. UN Women implements the WPS agenda through research initiatives, data collection, learning exchanges, and documentation of good practices to inform policy and programming, in addition to providing support to Member States' efforts to translate the WPS agenda from policy to practice.[33]

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[30] Applying A Gender Lens to Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected Areas, UN Global Compact, 2018.

[31] Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, UN Women, 2015, <https://wps.unwomen.org/key-actors/>

[32] Ibid.

[33] Peace and Security, UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security>

Another relevant part of the UN framework for companies wishing to advance the WPS agenda is the UN Global Compact and its Local Networks. Businesses are encouraged to engage in the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, established in 2000 to encourage and support companies to align business operations with universal principles on human rights, labour rights, environment, and anti-corruption.

The Women's Empowerment Principles, launched by the UN Global Compact and UN Women in 2010, elaborate the gender dimension of the Ten Principles and provide a holistic, practical framework for business action to advance gender equality in the workplace, marketplace, and community. UN Global Compact programmes such as Target Gender Equality, e-learning courses, and other engagement opportunities support participating companies in generating concrete outcomes for gender equality and contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 5, focussed on the empowerment of women and girls.

Information- and idea-sharing between UN system actors and the private sector regarding important issues such as the WPS can help build confidence, result in better collaboration, and ultimately reshape this bilateral relationship for the better. For example, the private sector may be better informed on certain economic circumstances of emerging markets than the UN system, while UN agencies may have more expertise on governance issues and conflict prevention than businesses. Building this shared "knowledge pool" can therefore create further connectors and remove dividers between the UN system and business. An example of such initiatives is the UN Business and Human Security Initiative at the London School of Economics, which encourages collaboration between the private sector, the public sector, and civil society to address a wide range of security needs on the ground.[34]

2.4.2 NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Member States of the United Nations have the primary responsibility to ensure that global commitments and obligations on women, peace, and security are integrated into domestic policies, laws, planning, and budget processes. Nation states remain the most influential actors in the implementation of the WPS agenda[35], although regional organisations like the European Union or the African Union also have their own WPS strategies.

It is advisable for companies to familiarise themselves with the WPS National Action Plan of their home country (where available) and where possible seek alignment and opportunities for partnerships with the national government in support of the WPS agenda.

2.4.3. CIVIL SOCIETY

There is perhaps no other international agenda which has civil society so firmly at its centre as WPS, which is mainly due to civil society organisations' lobbying for the adoption of resolution 1325 and contributions to its drafting.[36] Civil society, including conflict-affected communities, peacebuilders, women-led and women's rights organisations, and human rights defenders, are an integral part of the WPS agenda. Some of the most prominent civil society organisations working on the WPS agenda include the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS), and the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security.

Businesses can pursue a range of different opportunities with civil society stakeholders in the WPS space, including partnerships and collective action, advocacy and philanthropic efforts, and other activities and initiatives depending on the interests and capacities of those involved. It is also crucial that businesses listen to civil society actors, such as local women's organisations and human rights defenders, and take stock as to what has worked well on the ground and what is needed. These interactions can be a positive learning opportunity for businesses, saving time and resources.

[34] United Nations at LSE, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/projects/united-nations-at-lse>

[35] Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325, UN Women, 2015, <https://wps.unwomen.org/key-actors/>

[36] Ibid.

Chapter 3: Responsible Business Frameworks That Can Help Support the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

As stated by the UN Global Compact, while businesses are strongly encouraged to take additional actions to support women, this cannot be a substitute for failing to respect women's rights.[37] This chapter presents some of the key responsible business frameworks and principles which businesses can commit to in support of women's rights. These responsibilities can lay the groundwork for corporate action in support of the WPS agenda and focus on doing **no harm.**

3.1. UN GLOBAL COMPACT TEN PRINCIPLES

The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact are a set of normative principles to guide business policy and conduct in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment, and anti-corruption. They 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.[38]

Progress made on **Principle 1** ("Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights"), **Principle 2** ("Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses"), and **Principle 6** ("Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation") feeds most directly into conditions needed to advance the WPS agenda.

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

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[37] Gender Equality, UN Global Compact, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/social/gender-equality>
[38] The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, United Nations Global Compact, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>

Businesses can also join the **UN Global Compact Business for Peace** initiative, a business leadership platform that aims to expand and deepen private sector action in support of peace in the workplace, marketplace, and local communities. Companies can also get involved with the **PRME Working Group on Business for Peace**, which aims to create a value proposition of continuous, applied research that will provide tools for incorporating business for peace into management education, and encourage the sustained wide-spread integration of contributions to peace into company operations and strategy—while also helping to establish which business practices contribute most directly to peace.

3.2. UNITED NATIONS GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) provide a normative global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activity. The UNGPs were developed by the former UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, Professor John Ruggie, in consultation with governments, companies, business associations, civil society, affected individuals and groups, investors, and others around the world.[39]

The Guiding Principles most relevant to the WPS agenda are contained in the **'Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights'** section of the official UNGPs Business document, which includes thirteen Principles.[40] The cornerstone of any WPS-friendly business approach should be Principle 11, which states that "Business enterprises may undertake other commitments or activities to support and promote human rights, which may contribute to the enjoyment of rights. *But this does not offset a failure to respect human rights throughout their operations."* [emphasis added]

In the Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights report, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights proposes **gender guidance specific to each of the 31 guiding principles** and invites businesses to consider this guidance when implementing the UNGPs.[41]
The guidance also encourages companies to use the **WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool** to assess the nature and extent of gender discrimination throughout their operations, as well as the effectiveness of their gender equality measures.

The private sector is also encouraged to follow and apply a gender lens to other guidance and tools for conducting responsible business in fragile and conflict-affected environments where relevant, including but not limited to:

- Guidance on Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected and High-risk Areas

- OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

- OECD Risk Awareness Tool for Multinational Enterprises in Weak Governance Zones

- OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas

- IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability, and

- The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

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[39] The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Relationship to UN Global Compact Commitments, United Nations Global Compact and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, July 2011, <https://d306pr3pise04h.cloudfront.net/docs/issues_doc%2Fhuman_rights%2FResources%2FGPs_GC+note.pdf>

[40] UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, June 2011, <https://d306pr3pise04h.cloudfront.net/docs/issues_doc%2Fhuman_rights%2FResources%2FGPs_GC+note.pdf>

[41] Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, November 2019, <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/peace/rol-security-hr/RBAP-2019-Gender-Dimensions-Guiding-Principles-Business-and-Human-Rights.pdf>

GENDER FRAMEWORK

FOR THE UNITED NATIONS GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

GENDER-RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT
- Review whether laws, policies, norms, standards and practices are, directly or indirectly, discriminatory towards women
- Assess how the State or business enterprise's current and future actions or omissions might adversely affect women
- Collect sex-disaggregated data
- Consider intersectionality
- Ensure meaningful participation of women and women's organizations in the assessment process
- Engage gender-sensitive experts to conduct impact assessments
- Evaluate the effectiveness of gender transformative measures and remedies

GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE REMEDIES
- Offer a range of preventive, redressive and deterrent remedies
- Engage women's organizations and gender-sensitive experts to identify appropriate remedies
- Address both specific and systematic abuses affecting women
- Propose remedies that could change discriminatory power structures and reduce violence against women
- Engage with governments and other stakeholders to reform discriminatory laws

GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE MEASURES
- Make a public commitment to achieve substantive gender equality
- Practice rights-based empowerment of women
- Take measures (including affirmative action) to achieve substantive equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and violence against women
- Engage gender-sensitive experts to evaluate the efficacy of measures taken
- Communicate regularly with stakeholders
- Collaborate with women's organizations
- Sensitize decision makers about gender equality
- Conduct advocacy for gender equality

3.3. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

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 the 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.[42]

WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and as such, **all seven WEPs** feed directly into the WPS agenda.

3.4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 Global Goals adopted by the 193 Member States of the United Nations in 2015 to achieve a better future for all and leave no one behind by 2030. They are a result of a consultation process involving business, civil society, and citizens and which recognised that business has a very important role to play in their achievement.[43] With less than ten years left to achieve them, it is important that this **"Decade of Action"** brings a renewed focus to the intersections of the SDGs and the WPS agenda.

Businesses can contribute to the WPS agenda by following the recommendations set out in **SDG 5** ("Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", **SDG 10** ("Reduce inequality within and among countries"), **SDG 16** ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"), and **SDG 17** ("Strengthen the means of and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development").

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42 Women's Empowerment Principles, About, <https://www.weps.org/about>

43 The SDGs Explained for Business, United Nations Global Compact, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/sdgs/about>

Some of the business themes addressed by these four Global Goals that are most relevant for the WPS agenda include equal remuneration for women and men, diversity and equal opportunity, zero tolerance for workplace violence and harassment, women in decision-making roles, economic inclusion and access to financial services, and capacity-building.[44]

The **SDG Compass** provides useful examples of key business actions and solutions in support of each of these Global Goals. Most of these examples are highly relevant for the WPS agenda, including expanding business relationships with women-owned enterprises, recruiting, training, and employing local community members, and engaging in public-private dialogues, partnerships and collective action in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, anti-corruption, and the rule of law.

Credit: UN Photo/Nektarios Markogiannis, 28 January 2020, Juba, South Sudan. Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/49464556656/

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[44] SDG Compass, Learn More About the SDGs, <https://sdgcompass.org/sdgs/>

Chapter 4: Additional Actions for Business to Support the Women, Peace and Security agenda

In addition to following the relevant guidance set out in the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, the UNGPs, the WEPs, and the SDGs, companies can boost their contributions to the WPS agenda by enacting further positive changes within their business operations – going beyond doing no harm and **doing good**.

Businesses which operate or have supply chains in fragile and conflict-affected countries can act individually or in partnership with others to support the WPS agenda. Such actions include – but are not limited to – core business activities, strategic social investments and philanthropy, rightsholder-centred advocacy and public policy engagement, partnerships, and other collective action.

While the examples provided in the following sections are not exhaustive, readers are invited to consider how they might inspire different companies to tailor, innovate, and think creatively about contributing to the WPS agenda.

4.1. CORE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Core business functions are an integral part of the private sector's potential value to the WPS agenda. They include supply chain management and sourcing procedures, research and development of products and services, marketing and communications, and recruitment and retention practices. Through its core business model, a company impacts its own workforce, labour market, marketplace, and communities, including the environment.

By committing their core business activities to sustainable development and humanitarian action, companies can foster more resilient societies and markets. Most businesses already have some practical experience mitigating risk and avoiding conflict by, for example, undertaking human rights due diligence, conducting human rights impact assessments, or even providing remedies to groups negatively affected by their operations. By their very nature, due diligence and risk management processes in business already address issues relevant to the WPS agenda.

Furthermore, businesses have for a long time been using their core business capabilities to contribute to humanitarian action by providing necessary goods and services. Business has thus become one of the key partners for the humanitarian community by way of business-driven innovation and partnerships between aid agencies and corporations.[45]

Gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive businesses should also consider introducing additional resources and policies that can help ease the transition and retention of women in the labour markets of fragile and conflict-affected areas, as well as support women's entrepreneurship and women-owned businesses. Regardless of their individual characteristics, companies can advocate for and follow through on women's entry to and retention in the labour market and thereby contribute to sustainable and equitable workplaces. This in turn will create safe and stable communities and business environments and improve the WPS landscape.

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[45] Humanitarian crises, emergency preparedness and response: the role of business and the private sector, Steven A. Zyck and Randolph Kent, 16 July 2014, <https://odi.org/en/publications/humanitarian-crises-emergency-preparedness-and-response-the-role-of-business-and-the-private-sector-final-report/>

A 2020 brief by Dr Christina Bache, Visiting Fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (IDEAS), suggests some of the following considerations to core business: flexible working hours, work-life balance schemes, childcare facilities, paid parental leave for parents, wellbeing and parenting schemes, continuing education, and transportation services.[46] In fragile and conflict-affected areas, which often lag behind in terms of progressive company policies and facilities to support women at work[47], these provisions may enable women to feel more supported and valued.

As a way to link these efforts directly to the WPS agenda, companies operating in fragile and conflict-affected areas may wish to create an **Action Plan** that emulates the National Action Plans (NAPs), which serve as a tool for governments to articulate priorities and coordinate the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the national level.[48]

In addition, businesses may wish to consider conducting gender-responsive due diligence or how the Beyond Consultations tool by GAPS UK/Women for Women International UK may be applied to their own operations in fragile and conflict-affected states.

FEMALE FIRST: Improving women's access to decent work in conflict-affected countries

Committed To Good (CTG),
United Arab Emirates

CTG is a private sector company that supports the implementation of humanitarian and development programmes in conflict-affected countries through the provision of specialised Human Resources and Project Management services. CTG has operational experience in more than 25 fragile and conflict-affected countries and employs over 3,500 staff, most of whom are nationals from the conflict-affected communities where it operates.[49]

In 2017, CTG launched Female First, a gender parity recruitment programme encouraging their recruiters, in-country teams, and clients to help improve women's access to decent work opportunities in humanitarian and development roles in conflict-affected countries. Underpinning this programme is CTG's goal that by 2030, 30% of its project roles will be represented by women.[50]

Since its launch, Female First has grown to encompass several additional dimensions: creating internships and mentoring opportunities through its Women in Aid programme, training and partnering with local universities and institutions to build women's skills and knowledge to help ease their entry into the labour market, and implementing and advocating for the WEPs in the workplace, marketplace, and community.[51]

[46] Maximising the Role of Business in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Environments: Women's Contributions to Peace, Dr Christina Bache, March 2020, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/Assets/Documents/project-docs/un-at-lse/Bache-Womens-Contributions-to-Peace-March-2020.pdf>

[47] Women's Work Amid Fragility and Conflict: Key Patterns + Constraints. Yvonne Quek, GIWPS, February 2019, <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Womens-Work-Key-Patterns-Constraints.pdf>

[48] Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan Development Toolkit, PeaceWomen, 2013, <https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/national_action_plan_development_toolkit.pdf>

[49] Why CTG, Committed to Good, <https://ctg.org/expertise/why-ctg/>

[50] Female First, Committed to Good, <https://ctg.org/work-with-us/female-first/>

[51] Female First – Gender Equality in Progress, Committed to Good, 2020, <https://ctg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CTG-FemaleFirst-Brochure-2020.pdf>

ON PURPOSE:
Investing in local female artisans in a post-conflict setting

Kate Spade & Company, USA

Kate Spade & Company is an American fashion company which designs and markets apparel and accessories.[52]

In 2013, Kate Spade & Company recruited 150 female artisans in the Rwandan community of Masoro and helped them create a worker-owned, for-profit social enterprise. This business investment was launched with the aim of providing

talented women in a post-conflict community with access to the global marketplace, with the Rwandan facility becoming a supplier for Kate Spade & Company.[53]

In addition to achieving economic and social returns for the women, their communities, and the company, this project provides psychosocial support for women suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome and ensures that all employees have an ownership share of the business.[54]

4.2. STRATEGIC SOCIAL INVESTMENTS AND PHILANTHROPY

Social investments, broadly speaking, are resources required to empower social and environmental change.[55] As such, businesses can commit **financial capital** (including cash or in-kind contributions), **social capital** (including networks and relevant contact points), and **human capital** (including relevant expertise, skills, and volunteering efforts) to support the UN agencies, humanitarian organisations, and governments working on Women, Peace and Security-related issues.

To avoid duplication and allow for relevant expertise and resources to be applied and distributed in the most efficient way possible, companies are encouraged to work in collaboration with reputable organisations who specialise in gender, peace, and security, rather than creating one-off initiatives or programmes. Businesses should also take special care to conduct extensive due diligence on organisations they consider as potential partners before committing to strategic social investments and philanthropic efforts under their

auspices. Companies are also encouraged to implement the six **Principles for Responsible Investment** in their investment practices.

In some cases, businesses may also be able to provide support directly to individuals or communities affected by conflict, although due diligence should be undertaken to mitigate any unintended negative consequences that may result from direct engagement. In these situations, companies may want to consult with local human rights and women's rights organisations and experts on the best course of action.

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[52] Kate Spade & Co LLC, Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/profile/company/KATE:US>

[53] Georgetown Celebrates Study of Kate Spade & Company Project in Rwanda, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 21 June 2017, <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/georgetown-celebrates-study-of-kate-spade-company-project-in-rwanda-2/>

[54] Women's Economic Participation in Conflict-Affected and Fragile Settings, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, January 2016, <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Occasional-Paper-Series-Womens-Economic-Participation.pdf>

[55] The Landscape of Social Investment: A Holistic Topology of Opportunities and Challenges, Alex Nicholls with Cathy Pharoah, March 2008, <https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-10/Landscape_of_Social_Investment.pdf>

CHARLOTTE TILBURY:
A £1 million pledge to help women survivors of war rebuild their lives

**Charlotte Tilbury Beauty and
Women for Women International UK,**
United Kingdom

Charlotte Tilbury Beauty is a beauty brand launched in 2013 by Charlotte Tilbury MBE, a British make-up artist.[56]

In 2014, Charlotte Tilbury became a supporter of Women for Women International, a non-profit humanitarian organisation that provides women survivors of war and conflict with resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency. Charlotte became the organisation's ambassador in 2016, and in 2019, she pledged £1 million to help women survivors of war rebuild their lives.[57]

Charlotte's £1 million donation to Women for Women International is helping fund the organisation's programmes in Rwanda, Iraq, and Nigeria, thus amplifying the voices of the women that they work with.[58]

As stated by Brita Fernandez-Schmidt, the Executive Director of Women for Women International UK, "Charlotte Tilbury Beauty contributes to the WPS agenda by raising both funds and awareness around our work with women survivors of war and helping women to enrol in our year-long training programme, many of whom will in turn become entrepreneurs".[59]

Credit: UN Photo/Albert González Farran, 27 March 2018, Monrovia, Liberia.
Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/39579957630/

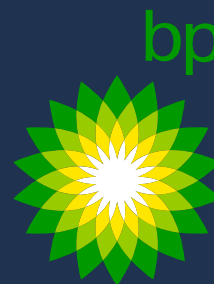
[56] Our Ambassadors – Charlotte Tilbury, Women for Women International UK, <https://womenforwomen.org.uk/charlotte-tilbury-0>
[57] Ibid.

[58] Brita Fernandez Schmidt, 8 October 2020, quoted from "Business Action for WPS" webinar series.
[59] Ibid.

100 WOMEN IN DEMINING: Empowering local women while moving toward a landmine-free world

BP Angola and HALO Trust, Angola

BP Angola is the Angolan subsidiary of BP, the British multinational oil and gas company. BP Angola is one of BP's key centres for hydrocarbon exploration and development and a key part of BP's activity in deep-water exploration and production.[60]

In 2020, BP Angola announced its $6.1 million pledge over four years to support the 100 Women in Demining project by the HALO Trust, a British landmine clearance charity.[61] The funding is done in partnership with the National Agency for Petroleum and Gas (ANPG), Sonangol P&P, Equinor, and ISS.

100 Women in Demining is a unique project to train and employ all-female demining teams, creating a space for women's empowerment whilst making Angolan land safe from landmines, a legacy of the country's three-decade-long civil war.

This project provides women in rural, mine-impacted communities in Angola with jobs, skills, and training while also contributing to SDG 3, 5, 8, 15, and 17.[62]

BP Angola's donation will support the employment of at least 85 women in the Angolan province of Benguela, where they will help remove the threat of landmines as deminers, team leaders, minefield supervisors, drivers, administrators, medical supervisors, and logisticians. As such, the project will enable these women to take even more control of their lives and play an important role in the future of their country.[63]

Some of the outputs already achieved by the teams supported through BP's funding include: 297,450 m2 of land cleared, 98 anti-personnel and 5 anti-tank mines destroyed, and 98 unexploded/abandoned ordnance (UXO/AXO) removed.

4.3. RIGHTSHOLDER-CENTRED ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Patriarchal behaviours and systems of power which often accompany humanitarian crises and conflicts can also translate into the weakening of women's agency and increased vulnerability of women in their society.[64] In these situations, it is important for all actors in society to draw attention to the gendered impacts of conflicts and advocate with and on behalf of affected women.

Regardless of size, sector, composition, or geographical scope, companies are in a unique position to amplify

women's voices by leveraging the variety of different networks at their disposal. As such, **businesses can harness the power of their stakeholders** (e.g. employees, customers, business associations, civil society, media, and government channels) **to promote women's rights, relief, and participation in peacebuilding.**

The private sector can contribute to advocacy in support of the WPS agenda by, for example, running awareness campaigns among their stakeholders, lobbying the

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[60] BP in Angola, BP, <https://www.bp.com/en_ao/angola/home/who-we-are/bp-in-angola.html>

[61] BP Angola commits $6.1 million of funding for landmine clearing charity HALO Trust, bp, 4 March 2020, <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/news-and-insights/press-releases/bp-angola-commits-funding-for-landmine-clearing-charity-halo-trust.html>

[62] 100 Women in demining, eni.com, <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/operations/angola-halo-100-women-demining.html>

[63] BP Angola commits $6.1 million of funding for landmine clearing charity HALO Trust, bp, 4 March 2020, <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/news-and-insights/press-releases/bp-angola-commits-funding-for-landmine-clearing-charity-halo-trust.html>

[64] Women, vulnerability, and humanitarian emergencies. Aoláin, F. N., Mich. J. Gender & L., 18, 1., 2011, <https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=mjgl>

government to create or improve their WPS National Action Plan, pledging their support and resources to existing relevant campaigns globally and locally, and participating in and promoting events, and forums in support of the WPS agenda.

Rightsholder-centred/collaborative advocacy campaigns should also be directed at other businesses in the area, who should be called upon to:

- Provide women with platforms and mechanisms to participate in decisions that

affect their lives, as well as opportunities to capitalise on their specific experiences and skills;

- Take preventive actions to mitigate and minimise the risks that women may face in the future because of their business activities;

- Align their operations to the relevant global and local frameworks and partnerships that can help achieve the WPS agenda.

RENAFEM: Advocating for women in the DRC's mining sector

RENAFEM,
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

RENAFEM stands for Réseau National des Femmes dans les Mines, or the National Network of Women in Mining. The organisation, founded in 2017, is composed of over 300 women-led associations working in mines across the DRC.[65]

Through this national network, stakeholders work jointly to disseminate laws on the participation

and protection of women in mining in the DRC.[66] In addition, RENAFEM provides a space for collaboration and innovation among those working on gender-based violence and women's rights in the DRC's mining sector.

RENAFEM has also set up monitoring committees at the local, regional, and national levels to monitor the inclusion of women in mining decisions, women's involvement in promoting peace, and rates of gender-based violence on mining sites.[67]

[65] Gender issues in the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, USAID, May 2020, <https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/USAID-ASM-and-Gender-Brief-1-June-20-Final.pdf>

[66] Welcome to Women in Mining DRC – RENAFEM - Exclusive interview with Kaleba Ngoie-Kasongo, Executive Director, Hear Congo, International Women in Mining and IWiM, <https://internationalwim.org/welcome-to-women-in-mining-drc-renafem/>

[67] Gender issues in the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, USAID, May 2020, <https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/USAID-ASM-and-Gender-Brief-1-June-20-Final.pdf>

MUJERES A LA PAR:
Building peace through women's political participation

Gases de Occidente, Colombia

Gases de Occidente is a Colombian natural gas company which operates primarily in Valle del Cauca and north of Cauca department[68], one of the Colombian regions most affected by the ongoing armed conflict in the country.

In 2017, Gases de Occidente promoted 'Mujeres a la PAR: Building peace through political participation', an initiative which aims to achieve equality of political participation between women and men in the North of Cauca. The project started after concerns were raised by a group of women's rights defenders in the north of Cauca regarding their low participation in strategic decision-making spaces.

'Mujeres a la PAR: Building peace through political participation' has joined many other efforts to

contribute to the generation of new women's empowerment processes in the region. It fostered the attendance of 400 women in the forum 'Democracia en la Plaza', making them aware of the proposals of the candidates for Congress in 2018 and promoting the participation of 31 women in the elections for public office. In addition, the initiative resulted in young people and women getting together and encouraging candidates to sign the 'Pact for Youth, Women, and Peace' (Pacto for la Juventud, las Mujeres, a la Paz). As a result of these efforts, during the elections of 2019, 8 women were elected as mayors of municipalities in Cauca, compared to 3 in the previous local elections.[69]

The active role of the non-governmental organisations EmpoderArte and ASOCODITA was fundamental to the success of the initiative.

4.4. PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER COLLECTIVE ACTION

Collective action can vary in resource requirements, desire/need for common purpose and consensus between stakeholders, expectation for coordinated action, and expectation for company responsiveness; as such, **collective action can be informative, consultative, collaborative, and integrative.**[70]

The private sector may be best positioned to maximise its contributions to peace – and, by extension, the WPS agenda – if it acts in collaboration with other business partners, civil society, and the government, none of which can achieve impact on peace if they act alone.[71] As stated by SDG 17, all stakeholders in society should work together in partnership to promote and achieve sustainable development.

When operating in areas affected by conflict, businesses should work with stakeholders on the ground, particularly the authorities that are responsible for protecting the affected women, so long as they are able to verify that such authorities are not complicit in human rights abuses, corruption, or other forms of harmful or criminal activity. To avoid risks, maximise impact, and ensure that humanitarian and other forms of assistance are managed appropriately and effectively, companies should follow the lead of relevant government agencies and humanitarian organisations, contributing where their resources and expertise are needed most.

[68] Gases de Occidente S.A. E.S.P. (Gases de Occidente), bnamericas, <https://www.bnamericas.com/en/company-profile/gases-de-occidente-sa-esp>

[69] Mujeres a la Par, proyecto social de Gases de Occidente, gana reconocimiento de Pacto Global, Fundación Gases de Occidente, March 2020, <https://www.fundaciongasesdeoccidente.org/noticias/mujeres-la-par-proyecto-social-de-gases-de-occidente-gana-reconocimiento-del-pacto-global>

[70] The CEO Water Mandate Guide to Water-Related Collective Action, UN Global Compact, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/wrca_full_report_0.pdf>

[71] Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals by Supporting Peace: How Business Can Contribute, UN Global Compact, 2015, <https://d306pr3pise04h.cloudfront.net/docs/issues_doc%2FPeace_and_Business%2FAdvancingSDGsPeace.pdf>

GLOBAL LINKS:
Creating a new generation of female entrepreneurs in post-war Iraq

Tupperware Brands, Rollins College, and the US Department of State's Office of Global Women's Issues, Iraq

Tupperware Brands is an American multinational multi-level marketing company whose portfolio primarily features food preparation, storage and serving solutions for the home.[72]

In 2012, Tupperware Brands launched the Tupperware Global Links programme, a year-long externship for female university professors in Iraq. The programme is designed to inspire a new generation of Iraqi women entrepreneurs, and in turn, help strengthen Iraq's economy and rebuild its middle class. Global Links was developed in partnership with

US Secretary of State's Office of Global Women's Issues and Rollins College.

The programme is composed of two parts: a hands-on externship at Tupperware's headquarters in Orlando, Florida and an academic year in residence at nearby Rollins College focussed on entrepreneurship, women's business ownership, and financial self-sufficiency. Using a "train-the-trainer" model, the programme will enable participants to return to Iraq and conduct training for hundreds of Iraqi university students, instilling them with the skills necessary to participate in post-conflict governance in Iraq.[73]

Since its inception in 2012, the programme has expanded its focus beyond post-conflict countries and now includes developing countries, including India and Brazil.[74]

THE ADOLESCENT GIRLS INITIATIVE:
The girl effect in post-conflict environments

Nike Foundation, World Bank, and various national governments,

Afghanistan, Jordan, Lao PDR, Liberia, Haiti, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan

Nike Foundation is the charitable arm of Nike Inc., an American multinational company that designs, markets, and distributes athletic footwear, apparel, equipment, and accessories. Nike Foundation works to get girls on the international agenda and drive resources to them.[75]

In 2008, the World Bank launched the Adolescent Girls Initiative, an innovative public-private partnership to increase economic opportunities for adolescent girls in post-conflict and developing

countries. The programme specifically targeted girls because of the girl effect – the ability of adolescent girls in developing countries to bring unprecedented economic and social change to their families, communities, and countries. Nike Foundation was the primary corporate partner in the project.[76]

The Adolescent Girls Initiative was piloted in Liberia and expanded to include Afghanistan, Jordan, Lao PDR, Haiti, Nepal, Rwanda, and South Sudan.[77] The Initiative identified employment needs in post-conflict and developing countries and provided relevant skills training to adolescent girls, matched to paying jobs. The emphasis was on employment in high-growth and high-need sectors, such as agriculture, entrepreneurship, emerging industries, urban services, infrastructure, public works, and healthcare.[78]

[72] Our Brands, Tupperware Brands, <https://www.tupperwarebrands.com/company/brands>

[73] Tupperware Brands Launches 'Global Links' Externship Program to Educate Iraqi Women on Power and Principles of Entrepreneurship, 3BL Media, 26 January 2012, <https://www.3blmedia.com/News/Tupperware-Brands-Launches-Global-Links-Externship-Program-Educate-Iraqi-Women-Power-and>

[74] Tupperware Brands Announces Arrival of 2019 Global Links Scholar, Dr. Denise Delboni, Tupperware Brands, 5 February 2019, <https://ir.tupperwarebrands.com/news-and-events/press-releases/2019/02-05-2019-140323899>

[75] The Nike Foundation, Devex, <https://www.devex.com/organizations/the-nike-foundation-48806>

[76] Adolescent Girls Initiative, The World Bank, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/adolescent-girls-initiative>

[77] Ibid.

[78] Adolescent Girls Initiative Launched, Nike News, 10 October 2008, <https://news.nike.com/news/adolescent-girls-initiative-launched>

AGRI-BUSINESS CREATION (ABC):
Breaking down economic barriers for women entrepreneurs in Yemen

spark

SPARK, Yemen

SPARK is a Dutch NGO which opens pathways for young people, particularly women and refugees, to study, work, and grow their own businesses in fragile communities. The organisation unites the private sector, local government, and other key partners to build enabling environments that allow entrepreneurs in regions affected by conflict to start and scale up their own business.[79]

ABC was a SPARK programme which coached emerging agri-entrepreneurs through training and mentoring them and supporting their business plans. This resulted in rapid job creation and agri-entrepreneurship development. In collaboration with financial institutions, loans were provided for start-ups, which empowered local entrepreneurs to embrace new economic opportunities.[80]

In Yemen, with support from ABC, four women entrepreneurs have been able to secure funds from a micro-loan company in Hodeidah, CAC-Bank, in order to build on their supply and marketing. CAC-Bank has awarded the women credit of around 1,000 USD to support them in expanding their business ideas.[81]

Credit: UN Photo/Fardin Waezi, 21 July 2019, Bamyan, Afghanistan.
Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/48424754366/

[79] About Us, SPARK, <https://spark.ngo/about-us/>
[80] Agri-Business Creation (ABC), SPARK, <https://spark.ngo/programme/agri-business-creation-abc/>

[81] Female entrepreneurs awarded loans in Yemen, SPARK, 8 March 2016, <https://spark.ngo/female-entrepreneurs-awarded-loans-in-yemen/>

Closing Summary

This guide argues that businesses can create positive enabling environments for the WPS agenda to keep moving forward by, first, **doing no harm** to women in fragile and conflict-affected areas by following the relevant guidance set out in the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Women's Empowerment Principles, the Sustainable Development Goals, and other relevant international standards for responsible business.

Second, when businesses set up an ongoing human rights due diligence process that considers all the above, they can also **do good** by taking additional actions to support the WPS agenda. This may include applying a gender and conflict-sensitive lens to their core business activities, strategic social investments and philanthropy, rightsholder-centred advocacy and public policy engagement, and partnerships and other collective action.

As explained throughout this guide, the interconnections between gender equality, peace, security, and business are deep, complex, and often sensitive, and businesses wishing to make positive contributions to the WPS agenda should take every possible care to be responsible when engaging with it. Ultimately, this kind of responsible risk-taking under the banner of "doing no harm and doing good" should be encouraged and is likely to yield positive results.
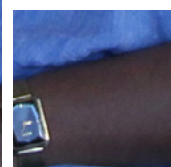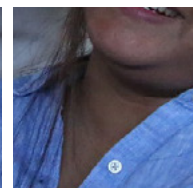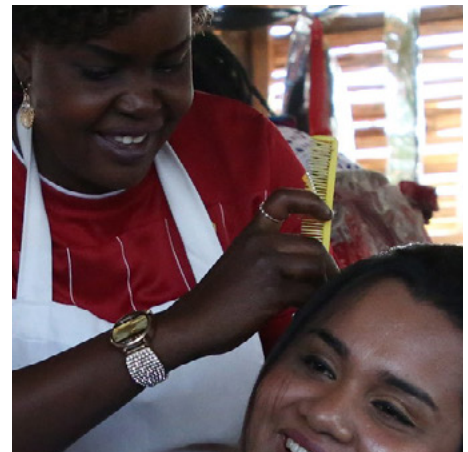
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Appendix 1: Resources

Beyond Consultations tool

Business Action for Women, Peace and Security webinar series

Gender-Responsive Due Diligence Platform

Guidance on Responsible Business in Conflict-Affected and High-risk Areas

IFC Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability

OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

OECD Risk Awareness Tool for Multinational Enterprises in Weak Governance Zones

Sustainable Development Goals

The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact

The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

Women's Empowerment Principles

Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool

Abbreviations

ABC	Agri-Business Creation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CTG	Committed To Good
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IFC	International Finance Corporation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RENAFEM	Réseau National des Femmes dans les Mines
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UN Global Compact	United Nations Global Compact
UNGPs	United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

ABOUT THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compact is a call to action for companies globally, to align their operations and strategies with ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

Launched in 2000, the mandate of the UN Global Compact is to guide and support the global business community in advancing UN goals and values through responsible corporate practices.

With more than 12,000 companies and 3,000 non-business signatories based in over 160 countries, and 69 Local Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

ABOUT THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK UK

Through an extensive programme of activity, the UN Global Compact Network UK connects UK-based organisations in a global movement dedicated to driving sustainable business.

We promote practical sustainability leadership through inspiring business ambition, enabling action that delivers sustainable growth, and actively shaping the business environment to create a world we want to live and do business in.

For more information, follow us on **LinkedIn** and **Twitter** (@globalcompactUK) or visit our website at **unglobalcompact.org.uk.**

DISCLAIMER

The inclusion of company names and/or examples in this publication is intended strictly for learning purposes and does not constitute an endorsement of the individual companies by the UN Global Compact Network UK.

Global Compact
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