



# UN GLOBAL COMPACT LEADERS SUMMIT 2020

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## *Leaders Wanted: Sustainable Business in a Rapidly Evolving World*

The world is facing a retreat from globalization and an increased skepticism of the benefits of global citizenship. While global challenges are becoming more interconnected, our responses are increasingly fragmented. Universal values are being eroded. Despite multiplying conflicts, the multiple threats of climate change, deepening inequality and rising tensions over trade, we cannot seem to agree on the best path forward. Multilateralism and the institutions that support it — including the United Nations — are being called into question.

People across the global community are raising their voices for action — including many young people around the world. This is critical as youth have the necessary impatience and energy to catapult us into a new normal, and it is their future on the line. Now, we must show the young generation that we are serious about changing course for a better, more sustainable world.

This context is particularly important as the UN prepares to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN Charter in 2020, working with Governments and other stakeholders to reaffirm their collective commitment to multilateralism for the benefit of the global community. But what exactly does this shifting landscape mean for business?

Twenty years ago, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan founded the UN Global Compact to promote shared values and principles, and give a human face to the global market. Today — as much as ever before — the very fabric of our society hinges on our ability to make globalization work for everyone. This is the opportunity for business to reaffirm its commitment to responsible action and multi-stakeholder partnerships, reminding us of the myriad of benefits globalization has brought the global marketplace.

There is a long way to go to deliver on the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, and we know that business leadership will continue to be key to our success. From core business activities to strategic social investment, there are many examples of how the private sector is already advancing sustainable development in ways that drive long-term business success and sustainability. Now, we need to bring successful projects and partnerships to scale.

As we move into the “Decade of Action and Delivery” for sustainable development, a new kind of leader is emerging — one with a longer-term vision, the means to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and every reason to do it. Guided by the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, this new generation of leaders is emerging from the business community. They share a common vision of long-term sustainability on a stable and prosperous planet where no one is left behind.

More importantly, this vanguard of business leaders are helping drive positive tipping points where responsible corporate strategies are the new normal for businesses and their supply chains around the world. Through a suite of three new UN Global Compact Global Impact Initiatives designed to help stakeholders drive real world impact at scale, these leaders are driving the Global Goals through youth and innovation, increasing ambition in climate action and setting targets to close the gender gap.

The Young SDG Innovators Programme is one example of how the next generation of entrepreneurs are trailblazing transformational change in their companies, sectors and communities. These young leaders should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Recognizing the urgency of the challenges facing us — and building on two decades of principled business leadership — the Leaders Summit 2020 will be the ultimate corporate sustainability “platform of platforms”, bringing together more diverse content partners and multi-stakeholder participants than ever.

The Leaders Summit will convene more than 1,000 of the world’s foremost corporate sustainability leaders to discuss and debate the values of the UN, the future of multilateralism and the role that principles-based business can play in driving progress on the Global Goals.

Through a combination of inspiring plenary sessions, exhibitions, interactive workshops and networking opportunities, the Summit will feature innovative examples of how multi-stakeholder partnerships are unlocking new business opportunities and capital, while also driving impact on the ground.

For the past 20 years, the UN Global Compact has been building a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders to create the world we want. Now, we need the right kind of leader to take this movement to the next level. If you are a corporate sustainability leader, or aspire to be one, we invite you to join us in New York from 15 to 16 June 2020.