

# WORLD BUSINESS WOMEN'S GENDER BALANCE PLEDGE

## INTRODUCTION – ICC'S STANCE ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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Inclusion – the ability to recognise, incorporate and celebrate diverse perspectives – is the glue that holds successful organisations and is a fundamental leadership skill that can be honed and developed over time. Inclusive leaders recognise the value of celebrating difference and ensuring an equitable culture where all stakeholders feel supported. Beyond tolerance, inclusive leaders must work to actively combat bias, discrimination and harassment as threats to long-term resilience and our shared future.

ICC knows that diversity is good for business and that acknowledging and incorporating the perspectives of underrepresented groups is vital to unlocking our collective potential. Providing a platform to welcome opposing views and unlock unique skills sets enables organisations to drive long-term progress by crowding in expertise, combatting groupthink and mobilising resources. In this context, ICC is a strong proponent of diverse representation in consultations, events and board rooms, and aims not only to recognise underrepresentation but to call out imbalance where noticed and proactively seek greater representation of underrepresented groups.

Homogeneous leadership groups offer limited perspectives and deprive audiences of the range of views that emerge when they have a broader range of experiences and insights. In return these groups risk serving and appealing to a limited range of stakeholders – potentially exacerbating the social inequality, economic exclusion and biodiversity loss which contribute to chaos in our world.

Research shows that diverse teams and organisations are more productive, better at solving problems and better equipped to avoid and manage risk. Having people from underrepresented groups in the boardroom has been shown to improve corporate governance, reputation and oversight while reducing unethical behaviour. Moreover, organisations that are the most diverse do not undertake their work in silos – often they have strong community engagement programmes and pursue partnerships which fall outside of their traditional realm – yet they generally outperform their competitors in their own industries.

It is time to diversify leadership to change how we address the world's most pressing challenges. This begins with:

- Seeking guidance from experts about the role that ICC can play in advancing equity and inclusion within the organisation and throughout our global network.
- Advocating for the integration of underrepresented groups at all levels of the decision-making process.
- Actively pursuing and developing partnerships which advance social equity.
- Providing tools, guidance and resources which enable other organisations to take action.

## WBW'S GENDER BALANCE PLEDGE – OVERVIEW

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ICC recognises that diversity is good for business and acknowledges the underrepresentation of women at many events -- including those organised and hosted by ICC. We believe it is important not only to recognise the underrepresentation but to call out imbalance where noticed and proactively seek greater representation of women and other underserved groups on panels.

Diverse panels improve the quality of discussions. A homogeneous panel proffers limited perspectives and deprives audiences of the range of views that emerge when speakers have a broader experiences and insights. In return, such panels risk appealing to a limited audience, particularly if participants are also of the same age, ethnicity and region.

When audiences are exposed exclusively to traditional role models, the absence of a diversity is easily perpetuated: fewer women and representatives of other underrepresented groups will take up speaking opportunities and fewer will be invited to speak. This has wider consequences career-wise, as public speaking is an important tool for increased exposure, recognition and new professional opportunities.

As the institutional representative of 45 million businesses, ICC is leading by example and has committed to a number of measures to leverage the opportunities we have to lead in this area at the numerous events we organise or are represented at. We are ideally positioned to demonstrate to the business community and to the international forums in which we operate that ICC is actively committed to advancing inclusion and equity. While we're on the right track, we recognise that more can – and must – be done and encourage leaders to take the panel diversity pledge.

## WBW'S GENDER BALANCE PLEDGE – COMMITMENTS

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### WE COMMIT TO

- **External panels with ICC staff members invited to speak:**
  - Request confirmation of all panel invitees and how gender balance and representation will be achieved;
  - Where possible or reasonable, decline speaking roles on overly gender-imbalanced panels and propose qualified alternate speakers to promote greater exchange of views.
- **Panels organised by ICC:**
  - Take active steps to encourage gender balance and representation on panels seeking support to secure speaker diversity if needed.
  - Where possible, avoid limiting participation to very high-ranking speakers (CEOs, ministers, Secretaries General...) where those representatives are all men, to allow for the participation of more women speakers.
  - Encourage opportunities to invite younger professionals, not only empowering them but also fostering greater diversity and gender balance;
  - Undertake efforts to ensure women speak as experts on “hard” topics as well as “soft” topics (i.e. not only on panels relating to gender or diversity, but also on technology, finance, etc.);
  - Host panels on diversity issues, when relevant, to raise awareness externally about our internal commitment and link it to our external advocacy.
- **Within ICC Global Headquarters:**
  - Make our pledge known and applied by all staff, and encourage its adoption by the wider ICC network;
  - Use and contribute to our diverse database of potential speakers;
  - Monitor statistics on panel composition for all ICC-hosted events and external events with ICC speakers where possible. Implement plans to improve results over time;
  - Offer professional development opportunities, including public speaking guidance and training for women and young professionals to unlock greater opportunities for participation and exchange of views.