

# FOREWORD

A truly global movement is underway, with a vanguard of companies in all key markets taking action on corporate sustainability and driving innovation in areas as diverse as energy and climate change, water stewardship, women's empowerment, children's rights and anti-corruption.

At the UN Global Compact launch in 2000, approximately 40 companies came together with a dozen labour and civil society leaders to commit to universal principles. Today, the Global Compact stands at 8,000 companies and 4,000 non-business signatories based in 150 countries, representing nearly every industry sector, size, and with equal representation from developed and developing countries. The idea and practice of responsible business has been rooted in all continents, and our 100 Local Networks are convening companies and acting on key issues at the ground level. The spread of this movement was unthinkable just 15 years ago when few companies were considering their impact on the environment and society.

Yet, we are far from a tipping point in bringing corporate sustainability to scale and impact. As business remains our best hope to produce many of the solutions needed to drive positive and transformative change, a critical mass of companies must recognise that environmental and social issues are critical to long-term business success.

The ten principles and the four issue areas they represent – human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption – serve as the bedrock of 'performance aspiration' for participating companies. And, to be sure, the business case for mainstreaming the principles into strategy, culture and operations has never been stronger.

That is why it is with great pleasure that we welcome this book, *The UN Global Compact: Fair Competition and Environmental and Labour Justice in International Markets*. In outlining the specific implications for business when embracing the Global Compact, it is our aim that this collection will provide assistance on your journey towards corporate sustainability, in the spirit of maximising the benefits that participation in the Global Compact offers. It is intended to generate maximum value by positioning your

organisation well to manage the spectrum of emerging challenges and opportunities in the context of globalisation.

We hope you find this book useful to help develop a strategic approach to drive your institution's success and achieve your objectives.

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