

UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT LEADERS SUMMIT

CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE ON THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS IN PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

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1. We, the Ministers and other high level Government officials participating in the United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit, held a Roundtable on 6 July 2007 on the topic of the "Role of Governments in Promoting Responsible Corporate Citizenship."
2. As globalization brings people, societies and cultures ever closer together, the need and opportunities for cooperation, enhanced understanding and greater prosperity also increase.
3. Responsible businesses that implement proactive corporate policies and practices, including those that respect human rights and ensure safe and decent workplace conditions, environmental protection and good corporate governance, can make a major contribution to the achievement of economic, social and environmental goals. They can also help make markets more sustainable, stable and inclusive. Creating policies and practices that promote business responsibility can also enhance business competitiveness.
4. Voluntary initiatives, such as the UN Global Compact, can play a useful role in promoting responsible corporate citizenship, and can complement Government action.
5. We recognize the contributions of businesses based or operating in our countries in advancing responsible corporate citizenship activities, including the UN Global Compact; promote their continued participation in these voluntary initiatives; and encourage the exchange of experiences among enterprises in promoting corporate social responsibility.
6. The adoption and enforcement of laws and regulations rests with governments. Business-led efforts can only be sustained and brought to scale if public institutions, the rule of law, and transparent and predictable regulatory efforts support responsible business practices. Moreover, collaborative multi-stakeholder initiatives between public institutions, business, civil society and labour organizations offer opportunities to promote innovation and advance sustainable

development in ways that have the potential to go beyond what Governments and business could deliver on their own.

7. Some of the ways in which Governments can support responsible business practices include:

i) Creating an enabling environment: Governments can put in place the necessary conditions for corporate responsibility issues to be discussed and developed. This could include leading by example, such as by articulating support for corporate responsibility guidelines and principles.

ii) Raising awareness: Governments can actively draw attention to general issues, aspects, and benefits of corporate responsibility and stimulate public debate.

iii) Promotion: Governments can highlight best practices (for example, through awards), as well as endorse or invite business and wider community support for voluntary corporate responsibility programs, activities, or initiatives, such as the UN Global Compact.

ix) Tools Development: Recognizing that the business sector may sometimes need guidance or require facilitation assistance, Governments can assist the development of corporate responsibility programs, guidelines, or recognition specifically designed to encourage entrepreneurship, and corporate responsibility within the small and medium sized enterprises sector.

x) Funding: Where they have the resources to do so, Governments can directly contribute resources to help voluntary initiatives to maximize their impact.