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**WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
PRINCIPLES**

Established by UN Women and the  
UN Global Compact Office

# TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN BUSINESS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



Funded by the European Union



**weempowerasia**  
Gender equality means good business



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## WeEmpowerAsia Programme



The WeEmpowerAsia programme (WEA) was a joint programme of the European Union and UN Women aimed at increasing women’s leadership and participation in private-sector businesses across seven countries: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. WEA aimed to build inclusive and sustainable growth and stronger links between European and Asian markets, through gender-sensitive trade and supply chains. The EU, brought together valuable private- and public-sector partnerships across multiple sectors, as well as provided solid expertise in trade and economic development.

The overall objective of the programme was for more women to access enhanced business opportunities and leadership within the private sector, to advance sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

As part of WEA, UN Women created a multi-stakeholder group within the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and beyond to establish standardized guidance and reporting frameworks for the private sector to help strengthen and support the aligned implementation of the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs). Further, through improved government policies and favourable regulator guidance, ASEAN economies and beyond were enabled to yield the business and societal benefits of a gender-inclusive economy.

For more information on WEA, visit:

<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/women-poverty-economics/weempowerasia/our-programme>

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# ACRONYMS

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<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>B2B</b>	business to business
<b>CSR</b>	corporate social responsibility
<b>DFI</b>	development finance institution
<b>ESG</b>	environmental, social, and governance
<b>GLI</b>	gender lens investing
<b>GRM</b>	gender-responsive marketing
<b>GRP</b>	gender-responsive procurement
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>MSME</b>	micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SGX</b>	Singapore Exchange
<b>SME</b>	small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>STEM</b>	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
<b>WEA</b>	WeEmpowerAsia
<b>WEPs</b>	Women's Empowerment Principles
<b>WEPs Tool</b>	Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Assessment Tool
<b>WOB</b>	women-owned business



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**Gender equality is good for business and the economy.** Over the last three years, the WeEmpowerAsia programme (WEA) has worked to increase the number of women who lead and participate in business in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, during which period there has been much progress on gender equality in business in Asia. From 2018 to 2021, **there was a 186 per cent increase in companies in Asia and the Pacific that have signed the UN Women and UN Global Compact's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).**<sup>1</sup> In Asia and the Pacific, 400 companies have completed the United Nations Global Compact's [Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool \(WEPs Tool\)](#)<sup>2</sup> over the last four years.

The report draws on a multitude of primary and secondary sources that look at over 2,250 **companies already committed to promoting gender equality in Asia.** It is worth noting that some of the primary data sources used in the report, particularly data from the surveys and the WEPs Tool, represent companies' **self-reported progress** and offer a valuable pulse check on the perceptions and priorities of the private sector. Based on this data, the report finds that despite companies' commitment, concrete implementation is just beginning. **Strong commitments continue to outpace actions.** Only 35 per cent of WEA stakeholders and partners indicate taking concrete actions to increase the number of women in management and leadership positions and just 30 per cent of companies in Asia and the Pacific that have taken the WEPs Tool have time-bound, measurable

goals and targets to build a pipeline of qualified women for management.<sup>3,4</sup> While 81 per cent of WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific have approaches to ensure an environment free of violence, harassment, and sexual exploitation,<sup>5</sup> just 38 per cent of those companies provide confidential support for victims of domestic violence. The gaps between commitments to gender equality and action are wider when looking at income generating activities, with just **27 per cent of the companies using the WEPs Tool in Asia and the Pacific actually developing products or services that specifically target women.** These insights, point to the need for more actions being needed to match the increasing commitment made by companies in Asia and the Pacific.

**The report is written for businesses in Asia and the Pacific,** as well as for gender and private-sector field builders (such as the United Nations, support organizations, researchers, donors, and investors), stock exchanges, policy makers, and regulators in Asia and the Pacific. It seeks **to provide them with the motivation, inspiration, and recommendations to advance gender equality in the private sector.**

Largely guided by the WEPs, the report offers **a depth of insights, emerging best practices, and identifies forward-looking actions** that companies in Asia and the Pacific can take to promote gender equality through their business operations. Where these actions also apply to policymakers, government agencies, or other private sector stakeholders, this is signalled.

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1 The WEPs are a set of seven principles offering businesses a holistic framework to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community.

2 The WEPs Tool is the official WEPs analysis tool. This self-assessment tool includes multiple-choice questions in 18 areas of a company's policies and practices related to gender equality on activities in leadership, workplace, marketplace, and community. The tool is free and can be accessed at <https://weps-gapanalysis.org/>. It should be noted that the WEPs Tool data presented in this report are the aggregate results of self-reported data that has not been verified or validated by any of the tool partners (United Nations Global Compact, UN Women, or any member of the Inter-American Development Bank Group). It represents a sample of 400 responses submitted by businesses between the tool's launch in March 2017 and December 2021.

3 "WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey ("Satisfaction Survey"). Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

4 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

5 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.



## CALL TO ACTION

We recommend a number of actions for all actors reading this report to support gender equality to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 of the Agenda 2030, but particularly for businesses to advance gender equality through their internal and external business processes.

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**If you are a company that has not yet started advancing gender equality, start today** and get ahead of your competition by joining the WEPs and use the [WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool](#) (WEPs Tool) to identify your companies' strengths and areas where further gender actions can be taken.

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**If you are a company that has started advancing gender equality, continue to strengthen and deepen your actions.** Integrate a lifecycle approach to your gender actions in your internal, organizational practices and in your engagement in your markets, value chains and communities.

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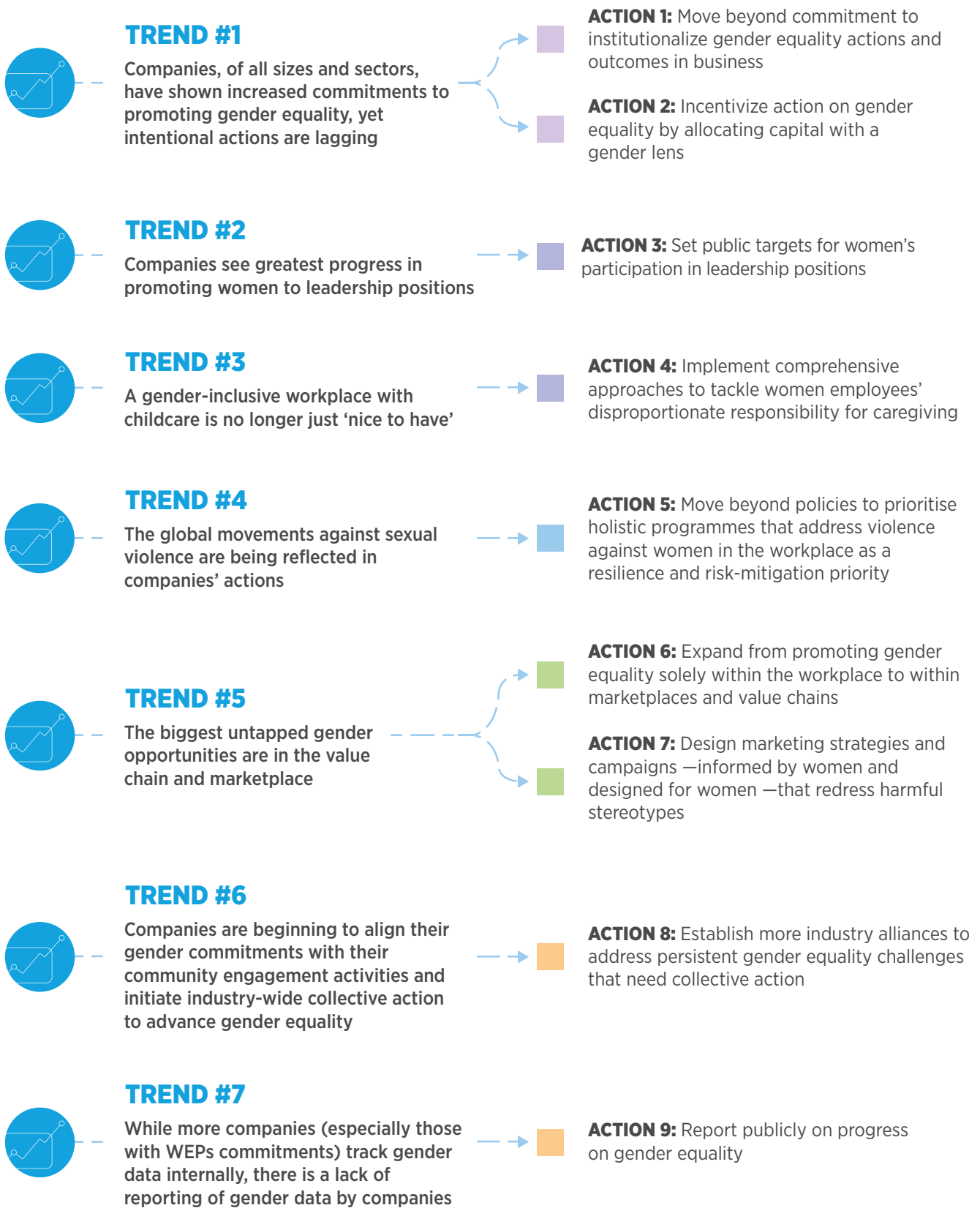
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**If you are a company that wants to be a cutting-edge leader,** report publicly on your progress on gender equality, join or create industry alliances, and apply for the [WEPs Awards](#).

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Whether you are a company, government, regulator, stock exchange, field builder or a donor, we recommend specific actions to advance gender equality (see Figure 1 on the next page).

Figure 1.







# INTRODUCTION

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In recognition of the private sector's key role in promoting gender equality, UN Women and UN Global Compact's **Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)** are a set of seven principles offering businesses a holistic framework to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. The WEPs are listed below.

## LEADERSHIP

■ **Principle 1:** Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

## WORKPLACE

■ **Principle 2:** Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

■ **Principle 3:** Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women workers

■ **Principle 4:** Promote education, training, and professional development for women

## MARKETPLACE

■ **Principle 5:** Implement enterprise-development, supply-chain and marketing practices that empower women

## COMMUNITY

■ **Principle 6:** Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

## MONITORING

■ **Principle 7:** Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

The WEPs are guided at their core by the needs of women workers from all sectors and backgrounds. They recognize the contribution and potential for empowerment of women workers along every stage of the value chain—from producers to production-line workers, to business managers, to suppliers, business owners, and consumers. They also recognize the unique vulnerability of women in the informal sector, which is particularly large in Asia and the Pacific, and of migrant workers, both groups often left out of company approaches to inclusive business conduct. Tackling gender issues lie at the heart of achieving targets on all 17 **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), particularly SDG 5: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The WEPs offer an opportunity to the private sector to leverage and add to ongoing actions by other stakeholders, such as national and local governments to catalyse the momentum towards gender equality.

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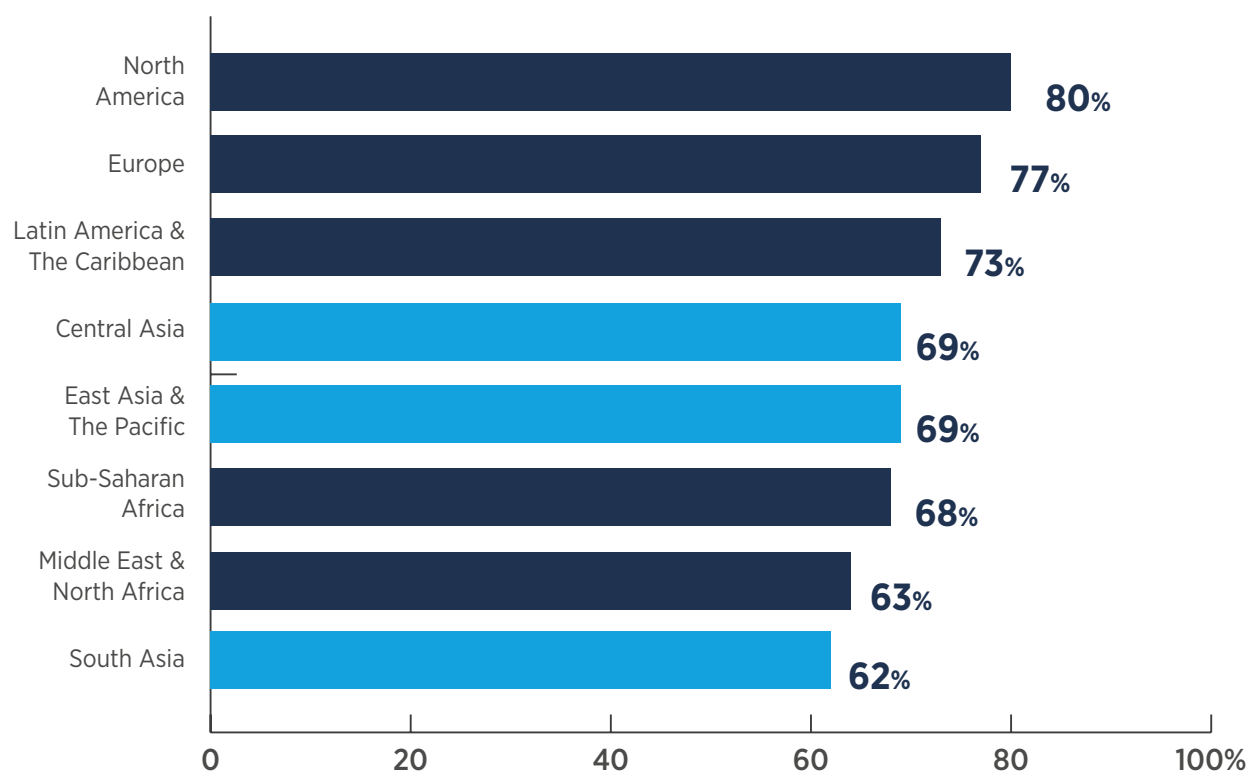
“Flexible work was one of our advocacies even before the initial traces of COVID emerged in the world. The emergence of COVID forced businesses to look at [flexible work] as a stop gap but now they are being forced to look at it as a permanent measure. The pandemic really changed the way people look at work and the workplace.”

**- Julia Andrea R. Abad**  
*Executive Director, Philippine  
Business Coalition for Women  
Empowerment*



The **COVID-19 pandemic** has impeded gains toward gender equality globally and in Asia and the Pacific; the 2021 Global Gender Gap Report<sup>6</sup> showed that globally, the average distance completed to gender parity regressed by 0.6 percentage points between 2020 and 2021. While prior to the pandemic the projected number of years required to close the global gender gap was 100, in 2021 it had grown to 136, though notably, some recovery is already being seen as the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report<sup>7</sup> showed the number of years is now 132. Today, the regions of Asia and the Pacific rank 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> globally in terms of the per centage of the gender gap they have closed.

**Figure 2.** Gender gap closed to date, by region<sup>8</sup>



Women experienced higher rates of unemployment during the pandemic period as they are frequently employed in the sectors directly disrupted by lockdown and/or social distancing measures; the gender gap on workforce participation has widened as women have disproportionately taken on increased care responsibilities; and women’s re-entry into the workforce has been delayed with lower hiring

rates and delayed hiring into leadership roles.<sup>9,10</sup> Among women entrepreneurs interviewed in ASEAN countries in April 2022, 86 per cent said they had been negatively or very negatively affected by COVID-19, 75 per cent said their caregiving responsibilities had increased, 77 per cent said they were selling fewer products and services, and 34 per cent said they might have to close their operation entirely.<sup>11</sup>

6 World Economic Forum (WEF). [Global Gender Gap Report 2021](#). Cologny/Geneva, Switzerland: WEF, 2021.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

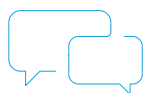
10 World Economic Forum (WEF). [Global Gender Gap Report 2022](#). Cologny/Geneva, Switzerland: WEF, 2022.

11 UN Women. [Asia and the Pacific Needs Assessment for More Gender-Inclusive Entrepreneurship: Highlights on Impacts from](#)

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“We know that most women are in the service sector, for example in hairdressing, small restaurants, and the like. It really did impact the ability of women in these types of occupations to continue operating, as they couldn’t take their business online.”

**- Amanda Satterly**  
*Asian Development Bank*



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**Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19 pandemic, over the past three years of WEA,** there has been much movement on commitment to gender inclusion (and WEPs specifically), particularly in businesses, workplaces, and evolution of gender-smart corporate investing (such as in nascent use of corporate venture capital funds for gender-smart solutions). At the same time, there has been only sporadic uptake of practices in the marketplace and on reporting.

Today, companies in Asia and Oceania have an average WEPs performance score of 35 per cent (out of 100)<sup>12</sup>, situating the region slightly above the global average of 32 per cent and leaving much room for growth.<sup>13</sup> This score indicates that the average company is in the “improver”

category, meaning the companies recognize the importance of gender equality and are taking concrete steps to introduce respective policies and practices, but are still working on a strategic approach to implementing this commitment and measuring and reporting on progress. In sum, companies and ecosystem actors are making commitments and starting to take action but need more guidance on how to move forward with overcoming the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and unleashing gender equality as a driver for economic growth.

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

**Gender diversity in the workforce and leadership of companies improves economic development, innovation, cost savings, productivity, resilience, market growth, and brand reputation.**<sup>14</sup> This leads to increased job opportunities, more inclusive workplaces taking into account women’s specific needs, new and improved career pathways and professional development support, and new business opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Figure 3 outlines how gender equality within business can improve innovation, cost savings, productivity, resilience, and market growth.

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**COVID-19.** UN Women, 2020

12 The WEPs Tool is the official WEPs analysis tool. This self-assessment tool includes multiple choice questions in 18 areas of a company’s policies and practices related to gender equality on activities in leadership, workplace, marketplace, and community. It provides a score that places companies in one of four categories based on their actions: Beginner (0-25%), Improver (25-50%), Achiever (50%-75%), and Leader (75%-100%). The tool is free and can be accessed at <https://weps-gapanalysis.org/>.

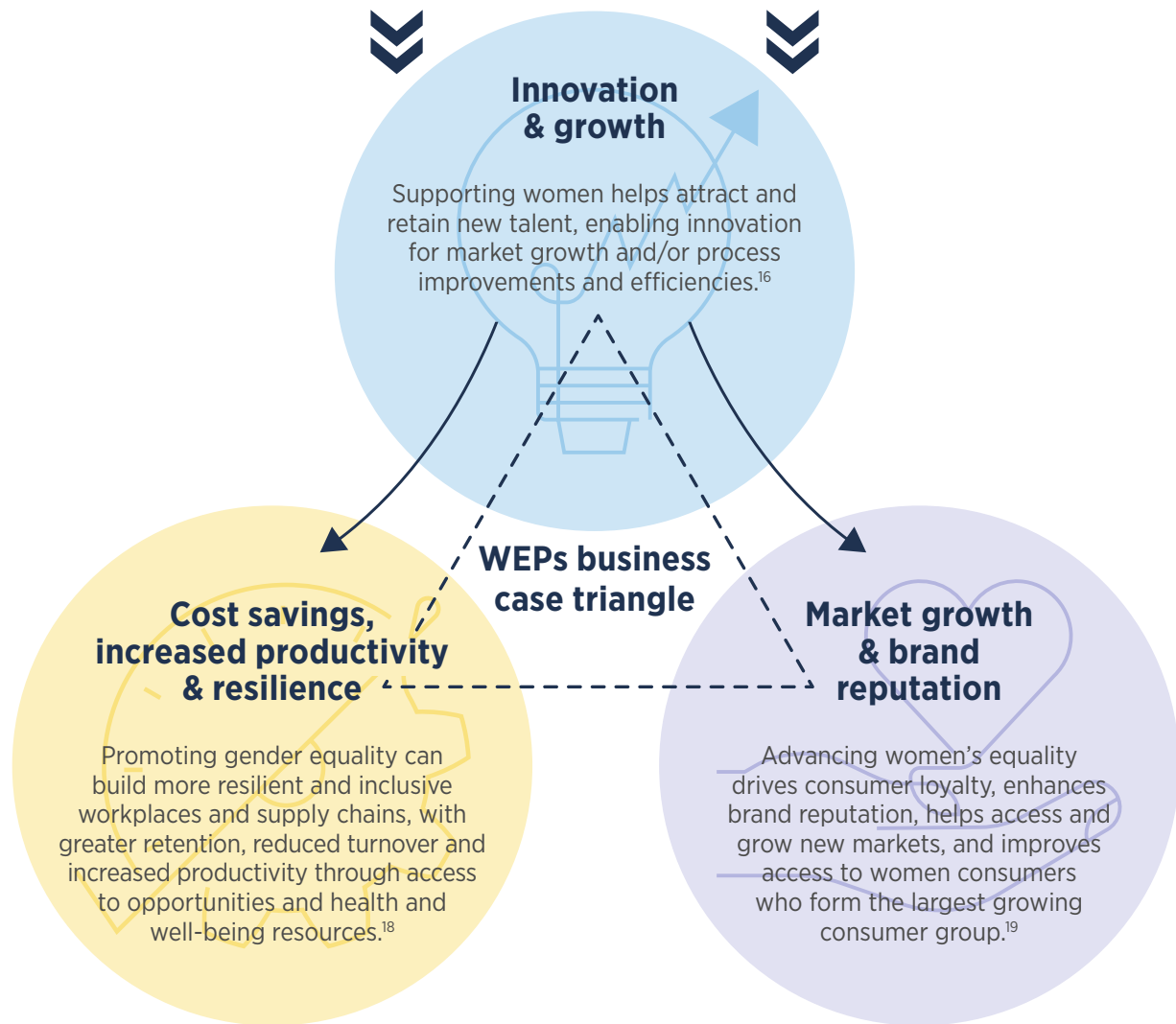
13 United Nations Global Compact. *Women’s Empowerment and Business 2022 Trends and Opportunities: Progress Amid Pandemic Challenges Across Regions*. New York: United Nations Global Compact, 2022.

14 UN Women. *Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Introduction for Companies in the Asia and the Pacific*. UN Women, 2020

**Figure 3.** Business case for embracing the WEPs<sup>15</sup>

## INNOVATION THROUGH DIVERSITY

Companies with more diverse leadership teams perform financially better and are more likely to have superior value creation.<sup>16</sup>



<sup>15</sup> UN Women. [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\) Introduction for Companies in the Asia and the Pacific](#). UN Women, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Hunt, V., et al. [Delivering through Diversity](#). McKinsey & Company, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Davis Pluess, J. and Pruzan-Jorgensen, P. M. [Women's Empowerment in Global Value Chains: A Framework for Business Action to Advance Women's Health, Rights and Wellbeing](#). BSR, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Hunt, V., et al. [Delivering through Diversity](#). McKinsey & Company, 2018.

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report seeks to provide businesses of all sizes with the motivation, inspiration, and recommendations to continue the trend towards advancing gender equality, including signing onto the WEPs. It also seeks to support ecosystem actors to advance gender equality in the private sector. The ultimate goal is to drive more inclusive recovery post-COVID-19.

To do this, this report will identify progress made by the private sector in Asia and the Pacific in advancing gender equality through commitments and responsible business practices. This includes:

- **Highlighting trends in data and learnings** across the region including the seven WEA Programme countries: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam;
- **Showcasing examples** of corporate WEPs signatories that have taken tangible actions to advance gender equality in their organizations;
- **Presenting a forward-looking view** of key areas still in need of prioritization and further work; and
- **Conveying how WEA**, through its policy, business, and capacity building interventions, has contributed to both the strengthening of business engagement and the implementation of tangible gender-responsive practices within and beyond these organizations.

Finally, the report concludes with a **call to action** for key stakeholders, with specific recommendations to advance private sector actions in the region.

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Key target audience for this report:

- Companies in Asia and the Pacific

Additional target audiences for this report:

- Gender and private sector field builders in Asia and the Pacific
- Stock exchanges
- Policy makers and regulators in government



# METHODOLOGY

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The research for this report was conducted between January and June 2022. Data collection included the use of primary and secondary sources:

## ■ PRIMARY SOURCES

To engage a range of stakeholders, from gender experts to companies leading on gender, the following was undertaken:

- A survey conducted with WEPs signatories across the Asia region (152 respondents)
- A review of data from the WEPs signatories database (1,665 companies)
- A survey conducted with WEA stakeholders and participants (256 respondents)
- Interviews with seven selected WEPs signatories in Asia
- Selected good practices from WEPs signatories compiled by WEA

## ■ SECONDARY SOURCES

These consisted of data from the [Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool](#)<sup>19</sup> (WEPs Tool) collected by UN Global Compact (2,682 companies, of which 400 are in Asia and the Pacific), and other research sourced from international and regional publications (see appendix for details).

This variety of sources represents a sample of companies already committed to promoting gender equality; depending on the data source, almost all of the respondents are WEPs signatories or winners of the [UN Women Asia and the Pacific WEPs Awards](#).

Finally, based on these insights and UN Women's experience engaging the private sector in the region, as well as Value for Women's practical experience working with companies and investors, a series of actions were developed to guide future efforts by the private sector and other ecosystem actors.



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19 This is the official WEPs analysis tool. Note that because the tool is open to any company, not all companies that completed it are WEPs signatories.



**Important note to the reader:** While the aforementioned datasets cover a range of similar themes on gender equality and business, the sample sizes are different in terms of country coverage, question response rates, and business sizes.<sup>20</sup> Intentionality is a key driver in responses to similar questions across the datasets. Data from the WEPs signatories survey, the WEPs signatories database, and WEPs awardees cover companies that have signed on to the WEPs to advance their gender equality agenda; these companies may be the furthest along in their gender equality journey. In contrast, many companies that took the WEPs Tool may have done so to assess their current performance on advancing gender equality within their business; not all companies that have taken this tool nor all WEA stakeholders and participants have signed on to the WEPs. The WEPs Awards applicants fall somewhere in the middle, as companies are not required to be signatories to apply, and in fact 50 per cent of applicants were not WEPs signatories. The report, where needed, has taken note of these differences in drawing out insights and conclusions.

Additionally, it is important to note two further caveats while interpreting the primary data cited in the report:

Firstly, a few of the surveys analysed in the report represent companies' *self-reported progress* and offer a valuable pulse check on the perceptions and priorities of the private sector. For ease of reference, across the report these data points are referred to as "self-reported" or "reported" by companies. These surveys are:

- the WEPs signatories survey (titled "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific" Survey) (2022);
- the WEA-lead Action Impact Survey ("Satisfaction Survey") (2022);
- the WEPs Activator Malaysia Campaign Survey (2022);
- the Trends data from the WEPs Regional and National Awardees of 2021; and
- the United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool ("WEPs Tool") (2017-2021).

Secondly, given the limited sample size in each of these surveys, the analysis reflects the progress made by a *limited subset of companies* in the private sector on gender equality. It does not reflect progress of the entire business sector in the region.

Further information on these data sources is available in the appendix.

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20 Please see appendices for more details on these sources.



# TRENDS, EMERGING BEST PRACTICES, AND FUTURE ACTION PRIORITIES

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“There seems to be a trend towards being more gender-friendly, so to speak, from a corporate standpoint... because of pressure and because of genuine interest — because (companies) have become more conscious about this issue. But it is a slow process.”

**- Ma. Aurora “Boots” D. Geotina-Garcia**

*Co-Chair, Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE)*



The **trends below are drawn from the companies in Asia and the Pacific that are already committed to advancing gender equality**; they show what actions are occurring and what best practices are emerging. At the end of each trend description, we include a series of forward-looking actions that companies in Asia and the Pacific can take to promote gender equality through their business operations. Where these actions also apply to policymakers, government agencies, or other private-sector stakeholders, this is signalled.

# 1 TREND

**Companies, of all sizes and sectors, have shown increased commitments to promoting gender equality, yet intentional actions are lagging**

## SUMMARY

Increased commitments to gender equality measures are reflected in the increase in WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific. Actions have advanced in multiple areas including awareness, women’s leadership, and workplace equality, and some of this has been catalysed by the pandemic.

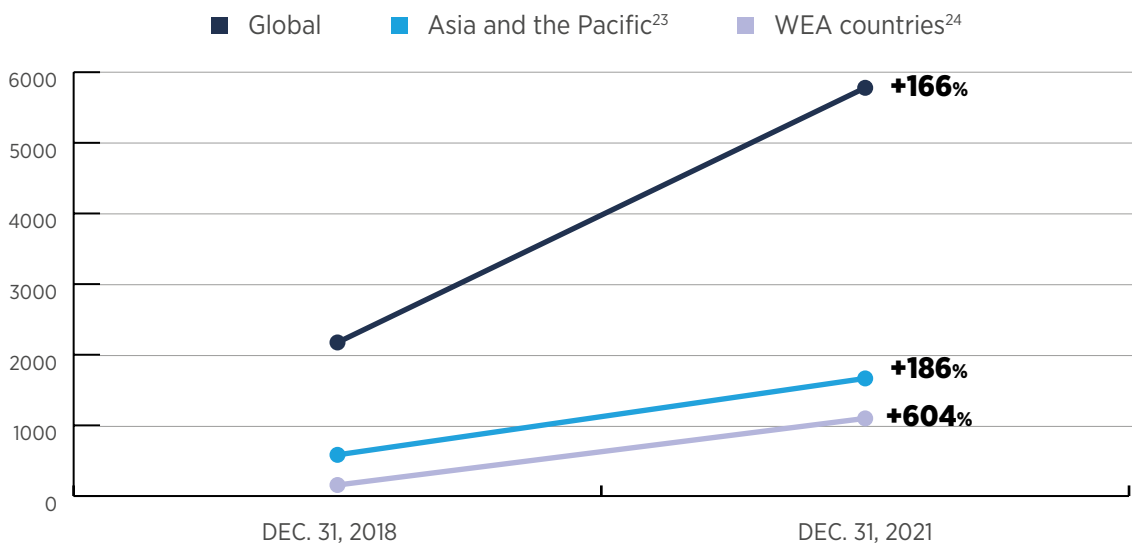
### 1.1 SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN THE UPTAKE OF THE WEPs IN ASIA

As of May 2022, WEPs signatory companies<sup>21</sup> number more than 6,600 globally. Since the end of 2018, just before WEA launched, WEPs **signatories in WEA countries have increased seven-fold** (see Figure 4 below). These increases **signal growing high-level commitment to**

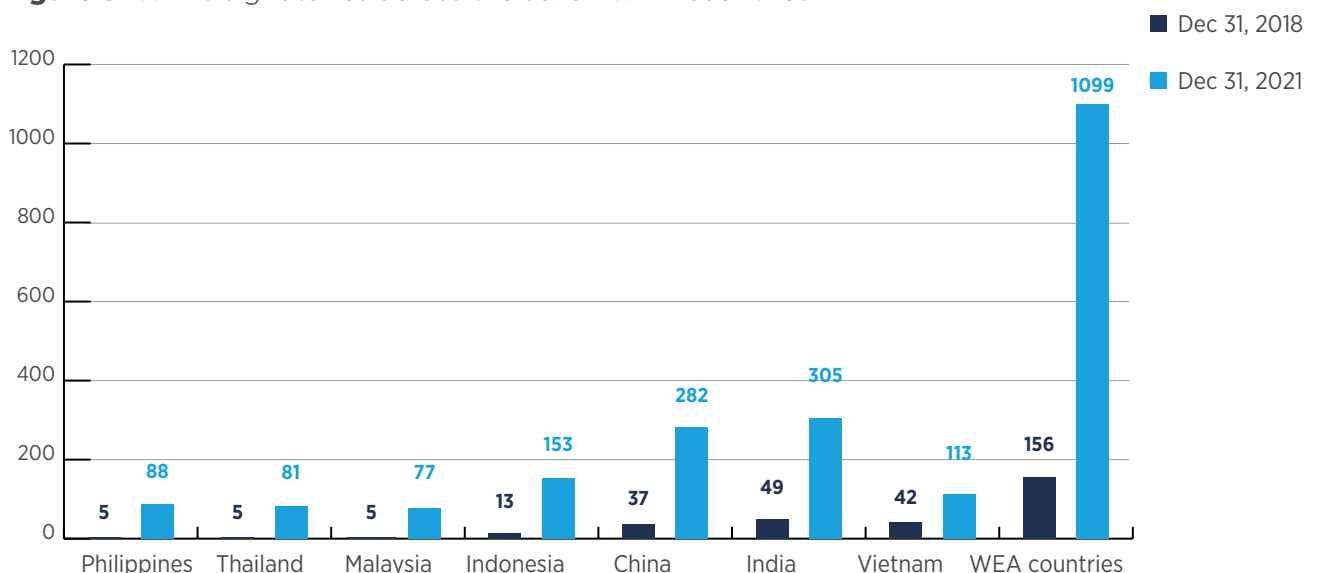
**promote gender equality** and make space for greater gender transparency, action, and accountability. Making the commitment to become a WEPs signatory is the first step on companies’ gender journey.

21 To become a WEPs signatory, a company’s chief executive must sign the [CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs](#), which outlines the areas for companies to advance equality between men and women. The process and guidance to become a WEPs signatory are available in several languages at <https://www.weps.org/join>

**Figure 4.** WEPs signatories 2018 - 2021<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 5.** WEPs signatories across the seven WEA countries<sup>25</sup>



**Multiple factors have catalysed this increase in commitments,** including the following:

- WEA has driven growth in the WEPs community** (see Box 1). The seven-fold increase in WEPs signatories in WEA countries since 2019 dwarfs the increase of WEPs signatories globally during this same period, which multiplied by just 2.6.<sup>26</sup> This growing uptake is also reflected in the increased number of submissions for the Asia and the Pacific WEPs Awards.<sup>27</sup> The growth from

22 WEPs database of signatories in APAC and WEA countries. UN Women.

23 This includes WEA countries.

24 China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam

25 WEPs database of signatories in APAC and WEA countries. UN Women.

26 Ibid.

27 This is the awards programme hosted by WEA and funded by the European Union. In 2021 and 2022, it was hosted with additional support from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

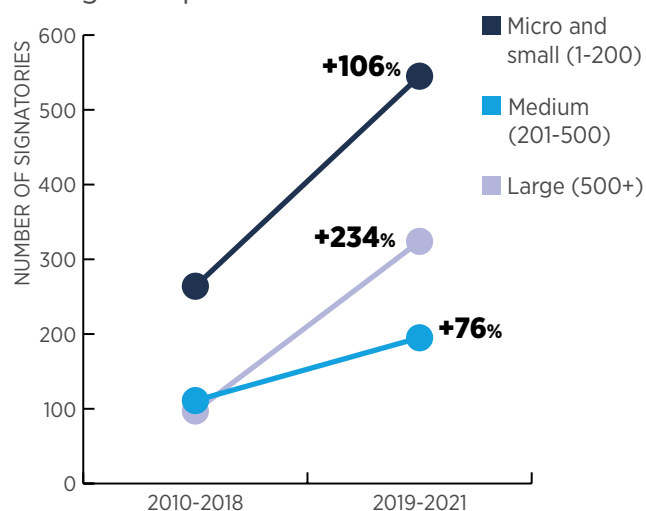
300 applications in 2020 to 700 in 2021 reflects both the increasing number of signatories<sup>28</sup> and the growing number of companies in the region that self-identify as having exemplary practice and want to be recognized for it. Furthermore, 78 per cent of WEPs signatories surveyed reported that they have benefited from joining the WEPs community.<sup>29</sup>

- **Increased awareness in the private sector that committing to gender equality is the right and smart thing to do.** As self-reported by the companies surveyed, this is both because promoting gender equality contributes to the management of key internal and external business objectives (the business case), and because of direct engagement from the top chief executives (see Figure 6).
- **Increased mobilization of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to commit to the WEPs,** in addition to the large and multinational companies that traditionally have made up the majority of signatories. After the WEA programme launched in 2019, the number of micro and small businesses becoming signatories more than doubled, the number of medium-scale businesses increased by 76 per cent and the number of large businesses tripled (see Figure 7).
- **Increased mobilization to the WEPs of companies across a range of industries and sectors.** Before the WEA programme launch, signatories tended to be in the sectors of commercial services, food and household products, and software and services. Today, there are significant numbers of signatories coming from the textiles and apparel sector, diversified financials, media, and more (Figure 8).

**Figure 6.** Why WEPs signatories promote gender equality<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 7.** The WEPs have been adopted widely— WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific run the gamut from microenterprises to large companies<sup>31</sup>



28 Note that the correlation here is not direct as a company can apply to the WEPs Awards without being a WEPs signatory, the company is only required to become a signatory to be awarded; 50 per cent of companies that applied to the WEPs Awards were not WEPs signatories.

29 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

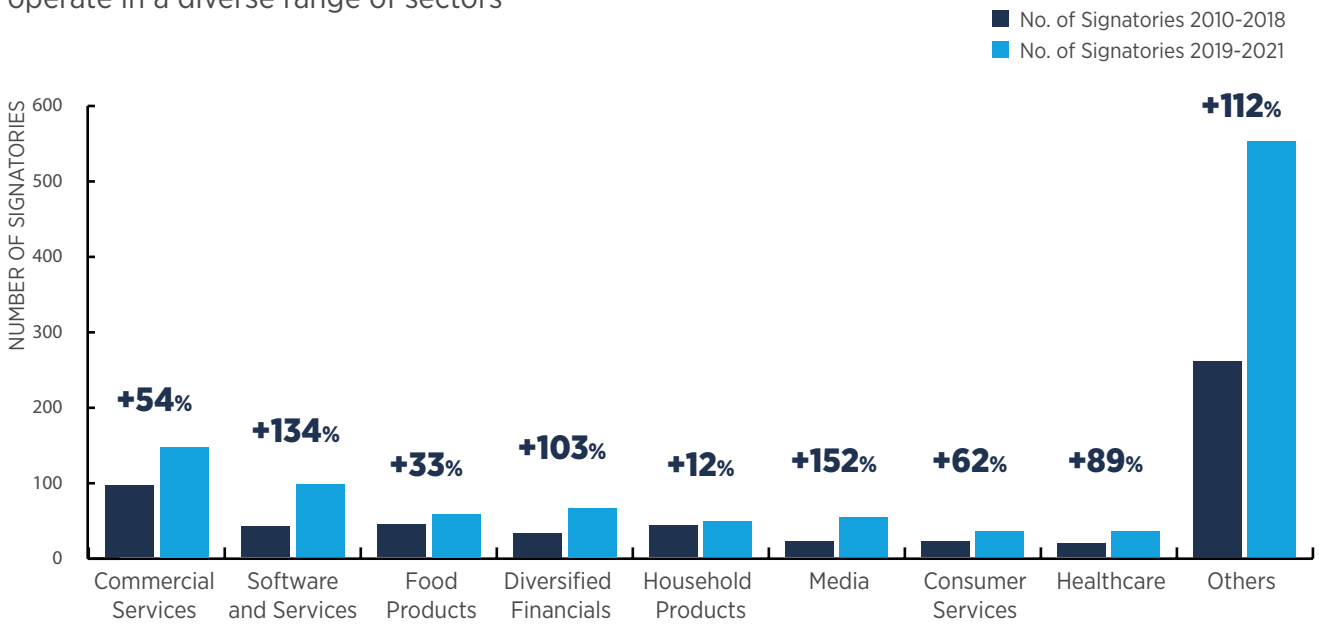
30 Ibid.

31 WEPs database of signatories in APAC and WEA countries. UN Women.

Note: 15 signatories are self-employed and 103 have not provided data on number of employees

32 WEPs database of signatories in APAC and WEA countries. UN Women.

**Figure 8.** The WEPs have been adopted widely — WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific operate in a diverse range of sectors



© iStock

Note: Data from 1,656 MSMEs that signed on to the WEPs between 2010 and 2021.

## BOX 1

# EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



## HOW THE WEPS ACTIVATOR MALAYSIA CAMPAIGN DROVE COMMITMENT IN THE COUNTRY

For 11 months beginning in November 2020, UN Women and Malaysian social enterprise LeadWomen<sup>33</sup> collaborated to run the WEPS Activator Malaysia campaign, reaching 500 individuals from the private and public sector in the country. The campaign consisted of:

- WEPS awareness training;
- joining the WEPS community; and
- WEPS implementation training.

The campaign was unique in the broad range of companies reached, the comprehensive knowledge imparted, the open sharing enabled, and the way it supported companies to identify their gaps in implementations of gender equality strategies.

### AS A RESULT OF THE CAMPAIGN, COMPANIES DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Completing the WEPS Tool: To date, 85 companies in Malaysia have completed the tool, a number not only higher than the five companies that had completed it before the Activator campaign but also higher than that of any other country today.
- Signing on to the WEPS: The number of signatories in Malaysia increased from eight before the Activator campaign to 78 as of February 2022.
- 30 applicants to the WEPS Awards in Malaysia.

And companies self-reported that they took action by:

- assessing existing gender equality practises and creating individual action plans;
- reviewing internal policies and frameworks;
- continuous awareness raising and advocacy of gender equality internally; and
- setting gender-related targets.

At the end of the programme, more than half of the companies indicated willingness to pay to attend an awareness session or participate in a deeper dive programme.

The campaign also identified learnings for similar initiatives in the future, top of which were to include targeted approaches to respect the different stages companies are at in their gender journey, encourage more peer learning and success-story sharing, and offer regular small-group follow-on sessions to encourage further engagement and sharing.

33 LeadWomen Sdn Bhd was established in 2011 with a mission to increase women's representation in senior leadership and on the boards of corporate Malaysia.

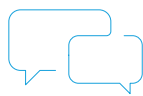


## 1.2 COMMITMENTS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY HAVE TRANSLATED TO PROGRESS ON MULTIPLE FRONTS WITHIN COMPANIES

“Companies are beginning to see diversity as more than a binary concept— to see the intersection of disability and gender inequality, or gender as more than just male and female. The trend as we see with our members is toward diversity, equity and inclusion. So when they talk about gender equality it is really to create a workplace that is diverse which is able to provide opportunities to all.”

**- Julia Andrea R. Abad**

*Executive Director, Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment*



By the powerful step of signing the WEPs, signatories demonstrate strong commitment to gender equality. As self-reported by WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific, they perceive their **most notable progress to be on promoting women in leadership, advancing workplace equality, increasing awareness on gender**

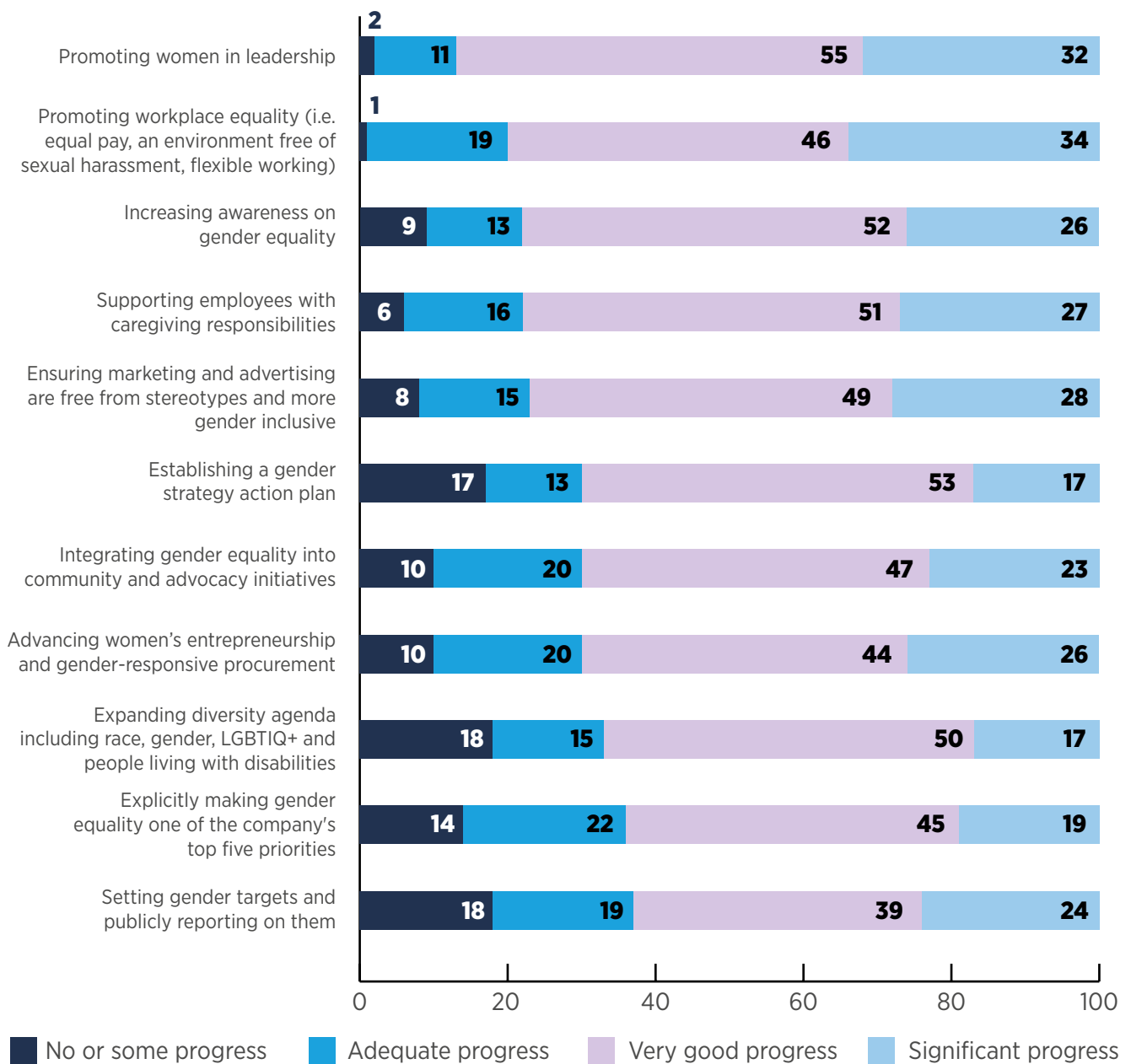
**equality, supporting employees who have caregiving responsibilities, and, most recently, ensuring marketing is free of stereotypes.**

At the same time, the survey data shows that not many WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific **translate their gender commitments into strategies, explicitly making gender one of their top priorities or in setting accompanying publicly reported targets.** It is important to expand the diversity agenda by using an intersectional lens and looking at equality beyond the binary of men and women by broadening the agenda and taking actions to be inclusive of race, people of the LGBTIQ+ community and people living with disabilities. The reader should note that these gender equality priorities and perceptions of progress (seen in Figure 9) are based on self-reported data from a limited set of companies surveyed in the region and do not purport to represent those of the overall business sector in the region.



**Figure 9.** Areas in which WEPs signatories have shown progress to advance gender equality (%)<sup>34</sup>

**Our company has shown progress to advance gender equality in the following areas:**



34 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

## BOX 2

# WHERE THE FRONTRUNNERS ARE



UN Women Asia and the Pacific WEPs Awardees are WEPs signatories that have taken the greatest actions for gender equality. Based on the data self-reported by the 115 awardees in Asia and the Pacific from 2021,<sup>35</sup> we see trends of advancing gender equality as follows:

- **Towards equal participation of women in the workforce, including at the senior level:** 56 per cent of the awardees have a workforce made up at least half of women, and 51 per cent of the awardees have at least half of their management positions occupied by women.
- **Towards formalized retention of women in the workforce:** 76 per cent of the awardees have formal criteria to promote gender equality in one or more of the following processes: selection, hiring, retention, promotion, and/or training processes.

### There is still significant progress left for the frontrunners:

- **Untapped opportunities to improve retention of women in the workforce:** Very few awardees provide an option for a phased return to work after maternity or paternity leave, and very few offer on-site, clean, and safe childcare facilities, or childcare subsidies for offsite care. Some awardees do not have a formal paternity leave policy.
- **Significant commitment and action are required on addressing harassment, violence, and sexual exploitation:** A minority of awardees have attained the gold standard of at least one of the following: a stand-alone policy stating zero tolerance of all forms of violence, harassment, and sexual exploitation at work; a confidential grievance mechanism; tracking of the number of grievances; annual training for all levels of staff to ensure a gender friendly, safe workplace; or confidential support for victims of domestic violence.

All awardees provide maternity leave to their workforce and 57 per cent have aligned with or go beyond the Convention 183 on Maternity Protection of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which provides for 14 weeks of maternity leave.

- **Towards promotion of responsible behaviour with communities:** 95 per cent of the awardees have taken action on responsible marketing and advertising, including to tackle negative stereotypes and gender bias in their marketing material.

- **Support to employees to manage caregiving responsibilities remains significantly low:** Few awardees offer flexible working hours or telecommuting. Only a handful provide parental leave and/or caregiver benefits to employees.
- **Procurement practices are lacking in their support for women-owned businesses (WOBs) and their advancement of gender equality in the marketplace:** Only some awardees have policies and/or practices in place to both expand relationships with WOBs as suppliers, and procure from suppliers that have good performance on gender equality or encourage suppliers to have good performance on gender equality. Some awardees do not have any of the aforementioned policies.

35 Almost all awardees came from WEA countries; only four awardees came from non-WEA countries.

“The recent statistics are alarming— according to a global LinkedIn study, nearly 60 per cent of women surveyed working in marketing have either left or have contemplated leaving the industry amid the pandemic. COVID-19 adversely affected women because they were burdened with responsibilities of being at home and taking care of kids, spouses and aged parents.... one of the strategic priorities the [Unstereotype Alliance](#), India chapter took is to create programmes to enable women to come back to mainstream work and take full-fledged employment.”

**- Sharath Prasad Damera**

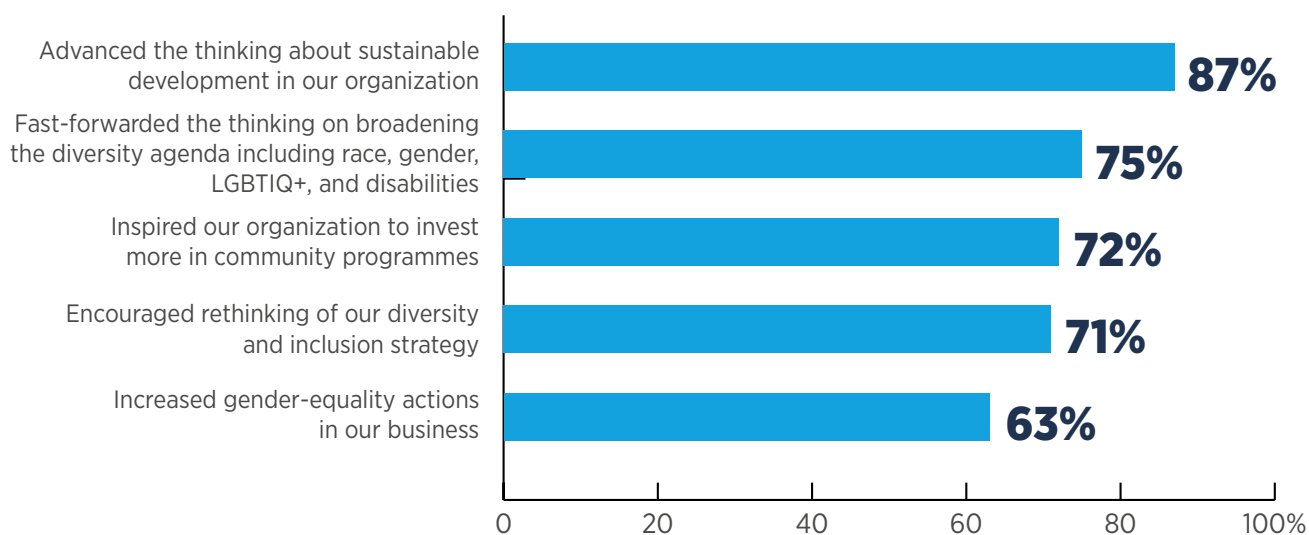
*National Consultant on Gender Diversity in Marketing and Advertising, Unstereotype Alliance (India)*



### 1.3 COVID-19 HAS FURTHER CATALYSED INCREASING COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

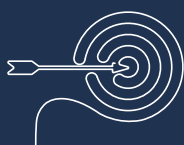
WEPs signatory companies surveyed in 2022 report that the COVID-19 pandemic advanced their thinking on sustainable development and catalysed their gender equality commitments and actions (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10.** How the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted WEPs signatory companies in advancing gender equality<sup>36</sup>



36 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

## LOOKING FORWARD: ACTIONS NEEDED



### **ACTION 1: Move beyond commitment to institutionalize gender equality actions and outcomes in business**

*For companies, governments, regulators, stock exchanges, field builders, donors*

WEA engagement created an enabling environment for corporate leadership commitments to strengthening the leadership, participation and inclusion of women in the region's private sector, as seen through the almost-doubling in the number of Asia and Pacific applicants for the WEPs Awards from 2020 to 2021. More such engagement is needed; still today, less than 55 per cent of the private companies responding to the WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey indicated that they were working on gender strategies, policies, or action plans; attending activities to increase their capacity for promoting gender equality; or conducting or supporting advocacy and campaigns around gender equality. Furthermore, other gender actions have been undertaken by even fewer respondents.<sup>37</sup>

Moving forward, companies will need to build on **commitments with intentional actions** to promote gender equality within the workforce, market, and value chain. As this commitment becomes the norm, investors, shareholders, and relevant stakeholders will demand strategies linked to gender equality and women's empowerment, and corresponding actions and results.

In parallel, **awareness needs to be further raised:** 65 per cent of WEPs signatories surveyed said they feel that increasing the awareness on gender equality needs to be prioritized by the private sector collectively to accelerate building more gender-inclusive businesses in the region in the coming five years.<sup>38</sup>

Across both awareness and action, companies need to be thinking about broadening their gender diversity agenda beyond men and women by incorporating **intersectionality within their frameworks**. This means that corporate actions need to be inclusive of several dimensions such as race, gender identities, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity and disabilities as part of their diversity and inclusion efforts.



### **ACTION 2: Incentivize action on gender equality by allocating capital with a gender lens**

*For companies, governments, field builders, donors*

Around 61 per cent of the WEPs signatories surveyed agreed that available resources to fund gender equality actions have contributed to advancing gender equality in their company.

In 2021, globally there were 206 gender lens investing (GLI) funds, which together had raised US\$6 billion, compared with only US\$1.3 billion raised and deployed by 58 GLI funds in 2018.<sup>39</sup> Increasingly, gender bonds and performance-based loans are a vehicle for donors, development finance institutions (DFIs), and banks to stimulate companies they invest in to promote gender equality throughout their strategies and operations. Donors, DFIs, and policymakers should consider increasing their use of the abovementioned tools and GLI funds, which is capital that applies a gender lens in how investment decisions are made in order to obtain better social and business results.

37 "WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey ("Satisfaction Survey"). Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

38 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

39 Wharton Social Impact Initiative, Catalyst At Large. "[Project Sage 4.0: Tracking Venture Capital, Private Equity, And Private Debt With a Gender Lens.](#)" Wharton Social Impact Initiative, December 2021.

## 2

## TREND

## Companies see greatest progress in promoting women to leadership positions

“[Organizations are] definitely looking for and bringing in more women and there’s also considerable efforts on how to progress these women— so there has been quite a bit of investment in leadership development programmes.”

- Anne Abraham

Founder and Chair, LeadWomen (Malaysia)



## SUMMARY

Promoting women in leadership positions is a top priority for companies in Asia and the Pacific. While further action is required to make this concrete, emerging best practices from countries like Malaysia show how this can be done to achieve results at scale.

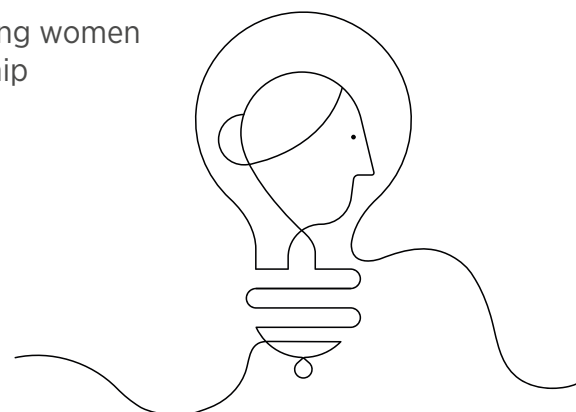
Most WEA programme stakeholders and partners surveyed feel that in the last three years, **businesses in the region have made the most gender progress promoting women in leadership positions.**<sup>40</sup> And 87 per cent of WEPs signatories surveyed in the Asia region reported that their company had shown “significant” to “very good” progress in promoting women in leadership roles. This is also a top priority moving forward; surveyed WEPs signatories ranked the advancement of gender equality over the next three years among their top priorities.<sup>41</sup>

**Yet concrete targets and actions remain limited.** Women represent only 24 per cent of middle and senior management jobs in the

Where most gender equality progress has been made among businesses in APAC in the past 3 years<sup>42</sup>

71%

in promoting women in leadership



40 “WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey (“Satisfaction Survey”). Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

41 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

42 “WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey (“Satisfaction Survey”). Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.



private sector in ASEAN; as reported in the survey, only 49 per cent of WEA stakeholders and partners think that businesses in the region ensure that their recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion policies support diversity and support women to stay in the workforce and be hired into traditionally underrepresented roles.<sup>43,44</sup> Only 35 per cent of WEA stakeholders and partners self-report taking actions to increase the number of women in management and leadership positions, and 30 per cent of companies in Asia and the Pacific taking the

WEPs Tool say that they have time-bound, measurable goals and targets to build a pipeline of qualified women for management.<sup>45,46</sup> Furthermore, interviews highlighted overall persisting negative perceptions around women's abilities to hold senior positions, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

43 Duerto-Valero, S., Kaul, S., and Chanchai, R. [ASEAN Gender Outlook](#). ASEAN and UN Women, 2021.

44 "WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey ("Satisfaction Survey"). Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

45 Ibid.

46 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

## BOX 3

# EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



### COMPLEMENTING TARGETS WITH SHIFTING MINDSETS: WOMEN ON BOARDS AS A 'BUSINESS ISSUE' NOT A 'WOMEN'S ISSUE' IN MALAYSIA

In 2011, the Malaysian Cabinet approved a non-binding national target of 30 per cent women's representation in decision-making positions across all Malaysian public listed companies by 2016. However, this was seen as a 'women's issue' and demand for and uptake of women on corporate boards remained low. This was despite efforts by the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development and its partner [LeadWomen](#), a private company innovating the board-recruiting process in Malaysia, which were working to create a pipeline of female leaders.

For this reason, in 2015, the Malaysian government, together with key stakeholders including LeadWomen, launched the Malaysian chapter of the [30% Club](#), a UK-based business campaign aiming to boost the number of women in board seats and executive leadership of companies all over the world. This generated so much interest nationally that the board and executive leadership diversity issue was relocated from the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development to regulators, including the Malaysian Stock Exchange and Securities Commission. Subsequently, the regulators hosted roundtables, which drove significant engagement and traction with the private sector, including senior business leaders, board chairs, and women business leaders and their networks.

In parallel, LeadWomen began to benchmark the per cent of companies' board seats held by women. It did this by tracking this percentage for the 900+ publicly listed companies on the Malaysian stock exchange (in line with global best practice, Malaysia's top 100 companies were tracked separately from the rest of the companies).

Together, the 30% Club campaign and benchmarking succeeded at shifting gender diversity in senior leadership from being a 'women's issue' to a 'business issue'. Furthermore, the top 100 companies in the country have achieved nearly 26 per cent women board members, while women's board membership in the rest of the countries has, on average, increased to about 18 per cent. Furthermore, in 2021, the government mandated that Malaysia's publicly traded firms must have at least one woman on their boards by September 1, 2022 for large capital companies and by June 1, 2023 for other listed firms. Additionally, that same year, the Securities Commission included in the Malaysian Corporate Code of Governance a recommendation that all boards be at least 30 per cent women for better governance.

As part of this 30% Club campaign, keys to this successful shift have been:

- involving leaders and companies that championed gender equality;
- benchmarking and tracking the progress with two key indicators, the top 100 companies and the rest of the 900 publicly listed companies on the Malaysian stock exchange with a goal of achieving at least 30 per cent of the top 100, and zero all-male boards across all listed companies; and
- government actions which brought significant attention to the issue of gender equality and pushed government-linked companies on the issue.



### THE ROLE OF REGULATORY BODIES AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS IN INCREASING DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

- In Singapore, the Diversity Action Committee, formed in August 2014, seeks to increase the number of women appointed to the boards of companies listed on the Singapore Exchange (SGX). It released a triple-tier target for directorship appointments in April 2017: women should hold 20 per cent of all board seats at SGX-listed companies by 2020, 25 per cent by 2025, and 30 per cent by 2030. As a result of this, women's participation on Singapore boards has reached 20 per cent at top companies and 30 per cent at statutory boards.<sup>47</sup>
- In Thailand, the Securities and Exchange Commission has adopted a plan titled "Promoting the Roles of Women in Thailand's Capital Market" to promote women's leadership, with a goal that 30 per cent of the listed companies in Thailand should have at least 30 per cent female board directors. Additionally, to increase the roles of women on the board, the Commission is working to financially support workshops and knowledge-exchange sessions to promote qualified women taking on board leadership roles.<sup>48</sup>

## LOOKING FORWARD: ACTION NEEDED



### **ACTION 3: Set public targets for women's participation in leadership positions**

*For companies, governments, regulators, stock exchanges*

Women's leadership is a salient issue that companies are focused on, particularly as companies are increasingly being asked to report on gender diversity in leadership positions by their stakeholders, but progress remains slow. Securities and exchange commissions and stock exchanges should consider setting and/or more widely disseminating targets for women's participation in boards.

Further, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) indices and gender indices are increasingly using women's participation on boards and senior leadership, and should continue to do so.

Private-sector organizations should set targets and publicly report progress on women's participation on boards and in leadership positions.

47 Council for Board Diversity. [Statistics as at December 2021](#). Council for Board Diversity. Accessed July 2022.

48 UN Women. [Building Pathways to Gender Equality and Sustainability through the Women's Empowerment Principles: Thailand Policy Brief](#). UN Women, 2022.



## 3

## TREND

A gender-inclusive workplace with childcare is no longer just ‘nice to have’

## SUMMARY

Workplace policies and practices on equal opportunities and compensation, coupled with care-related support for employees (e.g. flexible work policies and parental leave provisions for both men and women), are necessary drivers for improving workforce gender equality and women’s workforce participation.

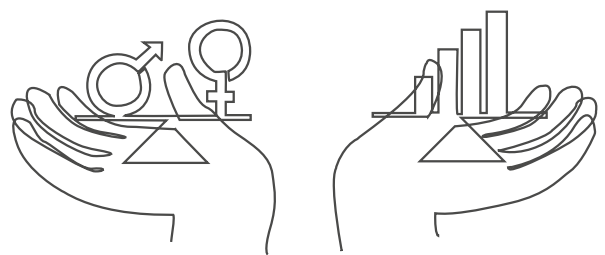
### 3.1 COMPANIES HAVE FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING A WIDE RANGE OF WORKPLACE EQUALITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

As self-reported by companies, a wide range of actions developed by WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific over the past five years have addressed gender discrimination, equal pay, maternity leave, caregiving, and sexual harassment— all of which are key to ensuring women’s equal participation in the workforce.<sup>49</sup> As much as **85 per cent of signatories surveyed indicated their company had implemented a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy**,<sup>50</sup> with this number being similar (77 per cent) among companies using the WEPs Tool in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>51</sup> A total of 77 per cent of WEPs signatories surveyed in Asia and the Pacific self-reported that they have implemented a **policy to ensure that men and women are equally compensated**.<sup>52</sup> Other sources show that while progress has been made in the region on ratification of ILO

#### Policies of WEPs signatories in the Asia region<sup>53</sup>

# 85%

have implemented a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy



49 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

50 Ibid.

51 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

52 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

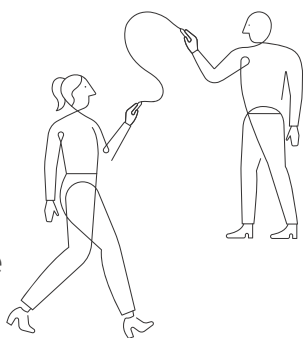
53 Ibid.

Convention on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), some larger Southeast Asian countries are yet to sign up.<sup>54</sup> More critically, implementation of the convention in countries where ratification has taken place remains in early stages.

On this range of actions taken on workplace equality, such as on equal pay, sexual harassment, and flexible working, 79 per cent of WEPs signatories self-reporting data in the Asia region feel their company had made very good or significant progress.<sup>55</sup> Looking forward, WEPs signatories intend to continue making **workplace equality a top priority for advancing gender equality** in their company over the next three years.<sup>56</sup> The Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (IBCWE), for example, is focusing its women's equality and empowerment agenda inwards within businesses, focusing on women in the workforce, leadership, and around internal systems and processes.

### COVID-19 impact among WEPs signatories in the Asia region<sup>57</sup>

**71%**  
rethought  
diversity and  
inclusion  
strategies due  
to COVID-19



COVID-19 has accelerated this focus. 71 per cent of WEPs signatories in the Asia and the Pacific region self-reported that COVID-19 encouraged rethinking of diversity and inclusion strategies in their companies.<sup>58</sup> Specifically, there was awareness that women had been disproportionately affected. In response, they also perceived that inclusive workplace approaches were changed, driving greater flexibility and responsiveness to employee needs.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.2 CHILDCARE IS A CRITICAL WORKPLACE ACTION, YET IT IS STILL OVERLOOKED

When looking across all best practices for inclusive workplaces, there remains a lot of work to be done, particularly in support of women's disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities.

#### **Caregiving responsibilities significantly affect women's ability to participate in the workforce.**

The pandemic led to a disproportionate increase in the responsibility for caregiving borne by women globally. In ASEAN Member States 30 per cent of women noted increases in the intensity of domestic work since the spread of the virus, compared to only 16 per cent of men.<sup>60</sup> In Asia and the Pacific, women's employment decreased by 3.8 per cent as compared with a decline of 2.9 per cent for men during the pandemic period. Further, fewer women are expected to rejoin the workforce (41 per cent). The lack of care service and infrastructure that would enable women to combine work with family responsibilities is a key driver of the reduction of women in the workforce.<sup>61</sup>

54 ILO. [Ratifications of C111 - Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention, 1958 \(No. 111\)](#). ILO. Accessed July 2022

55 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Duerto-Valero, S., Kaul, S., and Chanchai, R. [ASEAN Gender Outlook](#). ASEAN and UN Women, 2021.

61 International Labour Organization. [Building Forward Fairer: Women's Rights to Work and at Work at the Core of the COVID-19 Recovery](#). Policy Brief. International Labour Organization, July 2021.

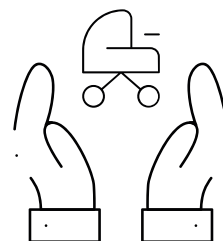
Flexible working and childcare support are key to help address this burden of care faced by both men and women, but particularly women, in the workforce. Furthermore, research shows that **companies that offer generous paid parental leave and other parental benefits report higher rates of employee retention, morale, engagement, and productivity.**<sup>62</sup>

78 per cent of WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific self-reported that their companies had made very good or significant progress on support for caregiving, and 44 per cent of respondents to a survey undertaken by WEA on the care entrepreneurship landscape in Asia also reported that they were willing to allocate resources to support employees to seek childcare services. However, both surveys show that **actions by companies are still limited** (see Figure 11).<sup>63,64</sup>

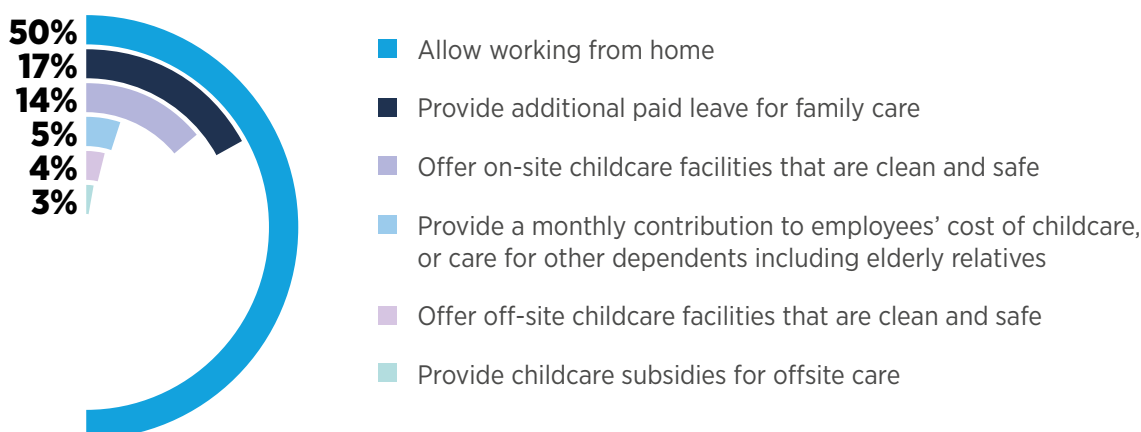
**Employer-supported care among WEPs signatories in the Asia region<sup>63</sup>**

**84%**

not providing childcare facilities or subsidised childcare services



**Figure 11.** Actions your company is taking to enable and/or incentivize equal caregiving responsibilities (for both parents)<sup>65</sup>



Taking **further actions on caregiving support remains a low priority for companies**; just 30 per cent of the WEPs signatories in the Asia region self-reported this as an area for priority action in the next three years.<sup>66</sup>

Companies do see a **clear role for governments to support childcare** through public investments into care infrastructure, subsidised and public-private partnership models, certification services, and regulation to mandate childcare support to be provided by companies of a certain size.<sup>67</sup>

62 Ward, M. [One Chart Shows Why More Companies Should Invest in More Parental Leave](#). *Business Insider India*, December 2020.

63 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

64 Bopinc. *Analysis Corporate Survey “Care Entrepreneurship Landscape Asia”*. UNW, October 2021. Unpublished.

65 Ibid.

66 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

67 Bopinc. *Analysis Corporate Survey “Care Entrepreneurship Landscape Asia”*. UNW, October 2021. Unpublished.



### 3.3 MATERNAL LEAVE POLICIES ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED; MORE ACTION IS NEEDED INCLUDING ON PATERNAL LEAVE

**Parental leave is a key driver to retain women in the workforce**, and several countries in the region have laws around statutory provision of maternity leave. However, less than half (49 per cent) of those using the WEPs Tool in Asia and the Pacific have a paid maternity leave policy aligned with the ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection, which provides for 14 weeks of maternity leave.<sup>68</sup> Looking at the other part of the equation, 24 per cent of WEPs signatories self-reported as having provided paid paternity leave in the last five years.<sup>69</sup> Other data available for the Asia and the Pacific region suggests that even where paid paternity leave is offered, the number of days is significantly low: an average of five days in East Asian and Pacific countries and eight days in South Asian countries.<sup>70</sup>

**Regulatory action plays a key role here.** 29 per cent of companies using the WEPs Tool in Asia and the Pacific self-reported as offering paid paternity leave in line with national requirements in the country of operation, whereas only 18 per cent are offering it where no legal requirement exists in the country of operation. This is an indication of the role of regulation.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, when asked if there was anything else they would like to flag about their company's work promoting gender equality, multiple WEPs signatories self-listed their return-to-work programme for mothers who had taken a career break after giving birth.<sup>72</sup>

68 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

69 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

70 Statista. [Length of Paid Maternity and Paternity Leave in Asia Pacific in 2019, by Region](#). Statista, 2020. Accessed June 2022

71 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

72 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

## BOX 4 EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



### KLAY SCHOOLS INDIA: AN EXAMPLE OF ACCELERATING DELIVERY OF EMPLOYER-SUPPORTED CARE<sup>73</sup>

Klay Schools in India offers pre-school, daycare, special education, and daycare services for corporates. All its teachers are women, and 40 per cent come from challenging economic and social backgrounds. The teachers can bring their children to daycare at highly subsidised rates. Klay Schools has 300 corporate clients, each with more than 50 employees, accounting for 30–35 per cent of its income stream. Corporates can choose from four different types of childcare services:

**ONSITE/NEAR-SITE DAYCARE** is a daycare facility for employees set up inside or near the corporate premises.

**SHARED SERVICES** is a daycare facility run by Klay Schools near the office, where most of the capacity is blocked for the employees, and the rest is open to outsiders.

**UNDERWRITING/SUBSIDISED** care enables corporates to block a certain capacity or subsidise childcare for employees at a specific centre or in centres across multiple locations.

**BACK-UP CARE** allows corporates to block a few seats/days in a month to cater to employees who may have ad hoc childcare support requirements at any specific centre or multiple locations.

© iStock



<sup>73</sup> Copied from source: UN Women. *Think piece: Innovations in childcare to advance women's economic empowerment – Can inclusive care entrepreneurship be a pathway to address gaps in the childcare sector in Asia and the Pacific?* UNW, 2022.



### **ACTION 4: Implement comprehensive approaches to tackle women employees' disproportionate responsibility for caregiving**

*For companies, governments, field builders, donors*

**Companies in the region should recognise, reduce, and reward the burden of care for employees by developing a comprehensive roadmap on care that puts gender equality at the heart of the process.<sup>74</sup>**

**Recognise and reduce the burden of care:** Given that 35 per cent of companies that used the WEPS Tool in Asia and the Pacific self-report the lack a paternity leave policy and only 24 per cent of the WEPS signatories surveyed self-report as having offered paid paternity leave in the last five years, distributing parental caregiving responsibilities requires a more comprehensive approach than is currently being taken in the market.<sup>75,76</sup> Regulatory action is needed here. Today, several countries in Asia and the Pacific provide at least the ILO minimum recommended paid maternity leave of 14 weeks, but legislation is required in several other countries.<sup>77</sup>

**Redistribute the burden of care:** Additionally, there is some indication of private-sector demand for support in reducing employees' caregiving responsibility— 79 per cent of WEPS signatories surveyed self-report a preference for governments to provide subsidies for employer-supported childcare services and 83 per cent see a need for government legislation to increase paid parental leave in the countries in which they operate.<sup>78</sup>

**Reduce the burden of care and reward employees with innovation:** While the business-to-business (B2B) market for care solutions is still very much in its infancy, employer-supported B2B care models can offer business development opportunities for care enterprises, creating new employment opportunities in a highly feminized sector, while at the same time supporting employees and keeping more women from dropping out of the workforce.

74 Based on the 5R framework developed in: ILO. [Care Work and Care Jobs: For the Future of Decent Work](#). International Labour Organization, 2018.

75 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

76 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPS) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

77 Countries providing at least the ILO recommended 14 weeks paid maternity leave in APAC are: Australia, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam. Data from World Bank. [Parenthood: Women, Business and Law Database](#). Accessed July 2022.

78 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPS) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

# 4

## TREND

The global movements against sexual violence are being reflected in companies' actions

“Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace is a key area of traction for advancing gender equality in private sector. What we saw right now on sexual harassment is just really a tip of the iceberg. It is very important to have employees and management realize that this is a bigger issue to deal with if they want to have more women in their [workplace]”

- **Maya Juwita**

*Executive Director of Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment*



### SUMMARY

Many companies are tackling workplace harassment and violence, especially violence against women and girls, through adequate policies and support for victims. Tracking and reporting this data and addressing the specific health and safety needs of employees is needed to further reduce costs to companies.

Workplace sexual harassment and violence against women and girls deter women's full workforce participation. It is also both a safety and health issue. Ultimately, it imposes costs not just on the victims and survivors but also on businesses, the economy, governments, and societies: it is estimated that the economic costs of violence against women could be up to 2 per cent of global gross domestic product, or US\$1.5 trillion.<sup>79</sup> Both domestic and workplace violence can affect company productivity, employee retention, absentee rates, and increased employer-supported medical care costs. It is therefore in the interest of companies to tackle this issue. Importantly, this violence may take place not only in the workplace but also *en route* to work, such as on public transportation.

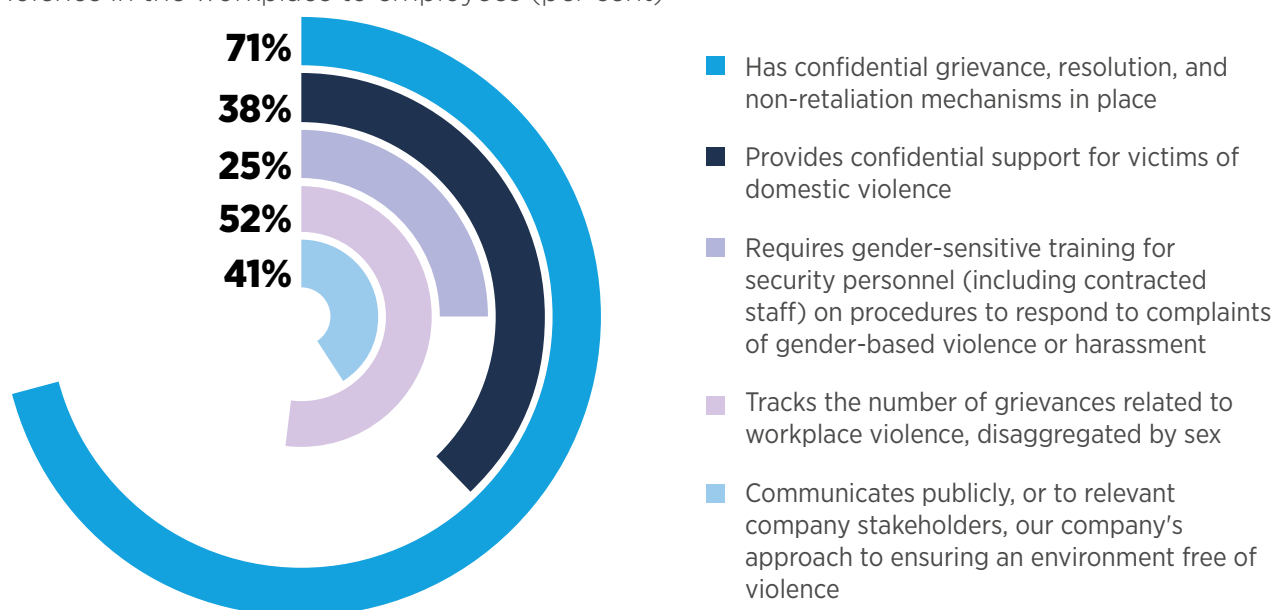
© Pexels, Anna Tarazevich



79 UN Women. [The Economic Costs of Violence Against Women](#). News Item. UN Women, September 2016.

In the last five years, **81 per cent of WEPs signatories surveyed in the Asia and the Pacific region have reported implementing an approach or policy to ensure an environment free of violence, harassment, and sexual exploitation.**<sup>80</sup> As above, while the proportion of the WEPs signatories surveyed implementing approaches to tackle violence, harassment and sexual exploitation, it is important to note the limited set of respondents to the survey and that this is not at all representative of the overall business sector in the region. As seen in Figure 12, companies in Asia and the Pacific using the WEPs Tool have reported taking a number of actions to tackle the challenges posed by violence and harassment on the domestic front and in the workplace by employees.<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 12.** What companies are doing to tackle challenges posed by domestic violence and violence in the workplace to employees (per cent)<sup>82</sup>



**Tracking sex-disaggregated data and reporting on these are critical in reducing the direct and indirect costs of violence to companies.** Just over half the companies that used the WEPs Tool reported tracking the number of grievances related to workplace violence, disaggregated by sex, and 38 per cent of those reported providing confidential support for victims of domestic violence.<sup>84</sup> Violence-related tracking and reporting mechanisms are key tools for employers to provide adequate support to employees who are victims of domestic violence; these mechanisms also contribute to addressing the incidence of violence in society. This is particularly relevant in the context of an increase in interest around flexible work policies, as the lines between home and workplaces have increasingly blurred due to the pandemic.

80 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

81 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

82 Ibid.

83 We also recognize that some countries have legislation on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace, so companies may have protocols that they are not reporting on.

84 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.



## BOX 5

# EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



## DELOITTE'S POLICIES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, SOUTH-EAST ASIA

In line with its diversity, equity, and inclusion commitment, Deloitte believes that domestic and family violence is not just a family issue but also a workplace matter. The company stands against any form of violence and is committed to a safe, supportive and inclusive workplace for all its employees. In 2021, Deloitte Southeast Asia launched a Domestic and Family Violence Policy to establish a proactive mechanism that would support employees to mitigate domestic and family violence whilst ensuring confidentiality and a healthy work environment for all.

The policy provides access to support measures, including counselling, paid leave, flexible working arrangements, salary advances, safety planning, and internal and external referral pathways. Launched in 11 offices across Southeast Asia, Deloitte plans to further embed the policy in the future through more awareness and training.

Additionally, in conjunction with the United Nations' 16 Days of Activisms against Gender-Based Violence, Deloitte Southeast Asia hosts talks and trainings and amplifies the 'signal for help' hand gestures to build awareness of domestic and family violence and further de-stigmatize support seeking.

## LOOKING FORWARD: ACTION NEEDED



### **ACTION 5: Move beyond policies to prioritize holistic programmes that address violence against women in the workplace as a resilience and risk-mitigation priority**

*For companies, governments, field builders, donors*

As a first step, companies in Asia are asking for support in developing the basics needed to address violence against women, particularly confidential grievance mechanisms and sexual harassment policies. Companies in the region should see these mechanisms as the bare minimum while at the same time moving towards creating workplace cultures and systems that are confidential, prevent violence against women and girls, encourage reporting, respond safely and without revictimization, and monitor and report on performance to stakeholders, including confidential support for victims of domestic violence.

As recent movements in the region — from India to the Philippines — have shown, addressing violence against women and girls will no longer be seen as a side issue.

## 5

## TREND

The biggest untapped gender opportunities are in the value chain and marketplace

## SUMMARY

Supplier diversity and gender-responsive marketing (GRM) practices would help improve the resilience of companies' supply chains, advance gender equality within global value chains, and tap the market for women as consumers, this being the fastest growing market globally.

### 5.1 COMPANIES ARE MOTIVATED TO MAKE THEIR SUPPLY CHAINS DIVERSE AND THEREFORE MORE RESILIENT, THOUGH ACTION REMAINS LIMITED

Companies' engagement with their supply-chain stakeholders such as suppliers and distributors, as well as in the broader value chains within which they operate, can significantly shape opportunities, actions and outcomes on gender equality in the marketplace.

Gender-responsive procurement (GRP), defined as the "selection of services, goods and civil works that considers their impact on gender equality and women's empowerment", is one such key tool in advancing gender equality practices in the marketplace.<sup>85</sup> It promotes, for example, the principles of buying from WOBs to enable their equitable access to markets, and buying from enterprises that themselves buy from WOBs in order to create more diverse value chains. GRP enriches supply chains by broadening the range of suppliers of goods and services available to businesses and governments, and by advancing women's economic empowerment.<sup>86</sup>

Overall, companies understand the benefit of gender equality in diversifying and strengthening supply chains: Nearly 90 per cent of WEPs signatories in the Asia region report that one of the reasons they promote gender equality is because **it helps build more resilient supply chains**.<sup>87</sup>

Yet, few companies are taking active steps to advance gender equality within their supply chains. For example, in the past five years, only **38 per cent of the signatories have reported taken steps to advance procurement with WOBs**, be it in the value chain or when contracting vendors.<sup>88</sup> And only **44 per cent of the signatories have reportedly encouraged their suppliers and vendors to advance gender equality**.<sup>89</sup> While these actions are limited even for companies committed to the WEPs and may have received training and support to improve GRP, in reality outside of this cohort, the use of procurement as a key means to strengthen

85 UN Women. [Gender-Responsive Procurement in Asia and the Pacific: An Opportunity for an Equitable Economic Future](#). UN Women, 2022.

86 Ibid.

87 "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

88 Ibid.

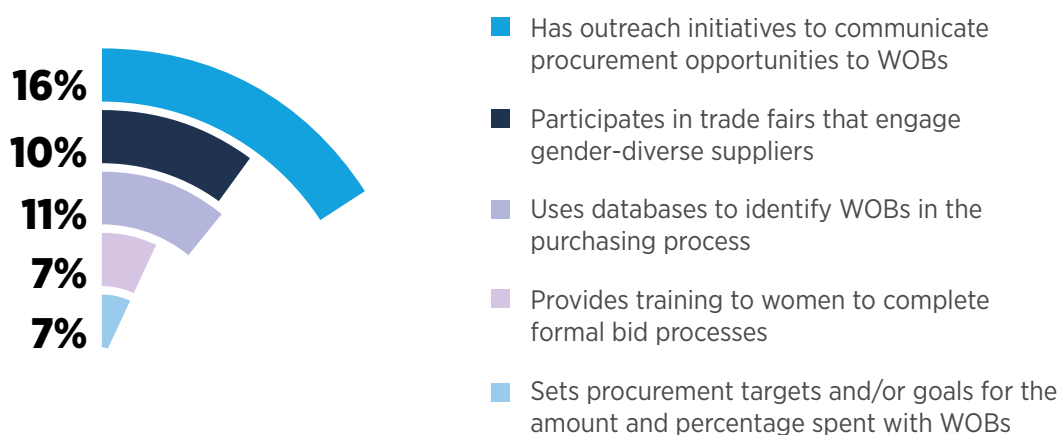
89 Ibid.

supply chains and advance gender equality is likely to be even more limited.

Other data suggests that GRP remains in the earliest stages of development and adoption of all the areas of awareness and action to advance gender equality, whether in the private or public sector. For example, the World Bank estimates that only 1 per cent of US\$1 trillion of the annual global public procurement is from WOBs.<sup>90</sup> One reason for such low uptake of actions on GRP may be lack of information on, or understanding of the role of, GRP in business.<sup>91</sup> 89 per cent of companies that took the WEPs Tool skipped or left unanswered the questions related to the GRP— the lowest response rate

amongst all 18 questions — indicating significant knowledge and data gaps. However, there are some emerging examples of approaches on companies’ engagement with WOBs to make their procurement practices more gender-responsive. Albeit limited in action, as seen in Figure 13, these companies reported approaches ranging from outreach to inform WOBs about procurement opportunities, to providing support for women to participating effectively in their company’s GRP process by providing training. This remains a large untapped market both for WOBs as well as for companies looking to improve their competitive advantage and strengthen the resilience of their supply chains.

**Figure 13.** Steps that Asia and the Pacific companies that took the WEPs Tool are taking to expand their procurement relationships with WOBs<sup>92</sup>



90 Nam, Nicholas. ‘Gender Equality in Public Procurement’. World Bank Blogs. February 18, 2021

91 UN Women. *Gender-Responsive Procurement in Asia and the Pacific: An Opportunity for an Equitable Economic Future*. 2022.

92 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

## BOX 6

# EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



### UNILEVER THAILAND IS INCREASING ITS SPEND WITH DIVERSE SUPPLIERS<sup>93</sup>

In 2021, Unilever announced a new target to spend €2 billion (US\$2.43 billion) annually with diverse suppliers, including women, people living with disabilities, LGBTIQ+, and members of other disadvantaged groups, by 2025.

Unilever Thailand has started action toward achieving its global company's goals of spending on diverse suppliers. To do this, the company began by mapping the WOBs among its current suppliers, prioritizing its top suppliers (accounting for 80 per cent of its procurement) in the first round of mapping. It established a baseline of its procurement from women-owned and women-led suppliers by gathering sex-disaggregated information on the suppliers' boards of directors and top management. One challenge encountered was the difficulty of verifying the gender of a supplier's ownership, as its supplier database did not contain the necessary information. Unilever Thailand's procurement manager did note that it was nevertheless easier to find the women-led businesses than other diversely owned suppliers, because women-led companies are more open than other companies to disclosing and sharing the profile of their senior leaders. Thus, prioritizing buying from WOBs may be a starting point for broader supplier-diversity programmes.

The company also implemented a new supplier-development programme, developed in partnership with Thailand's Office of SMEs Promotion, to provide diversely owned, managed, and led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with access to skills, financing, and networking opportunities.<sup>94</sup> Most SMEs recruited to the programme (80 of 94) were women-owned.

## 5.2 THE MARKET REMAINS LARGELY UNTAPPED FOR GOODS AND SERVICES THAT SERVE THE DIFFERENTIATED NEEDS OF MEN AND WOMEN

There is a clear business case for advancing women's equality in the marketplace as this improves access to women consumers who form the largest-growing consumer group globally.<sup>95,96</sup> This means ensuring the product or service is accessible for and meets the needs of women in the face of gender differences, norms, and inequities.

However, the market for this remains largely untapped: among companies using the WEPs Tool in Asia and the Pacific, just **27 per cent report that they are developing products or services that specifically target women**, 21 per cent report only considering gender differences in access to products and/or services, and 13 per cent are publicly communicating their commitment (see Figure 14).<sup>97</sup>

93 Reproduced from source: UN Women. [Gender-Responsive Procurement in Asia and the Pacific: An Opportunity for an Equitable Economic Future](#). UN Women, 2022.

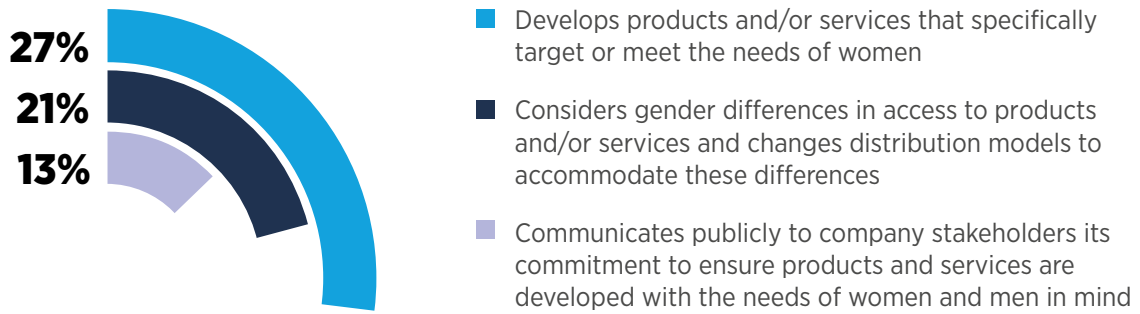
94 Unilever. "[Unilever Commits to Help Build a More Inclusive Society](#)." Press Release. Unilever, 2021.

95 UN Women. [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\) Introduction for Companies in the Asia and the Pacific](#). UN Women, 2020.

96 Brideson, B. "[The Next Disruptive Market Worth \\$28 Trillion? It's You](#)". *Business Chicks*.

97 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

**Figure 14.** Asia and the Pacific companies' approaches to developing products and services with a gender lens<sup>98</sup>



## BOX 7

### EMERGING BEST PRACTICE

#### BANK OF AYUDHYA'S GENDER BOND IS MAKING THE MARKETPLACE MORE EQUAL IN THAILAND

Advancing gender equality is particularly important in the financial sector. In this sector, there are fewer women employees than men, which makes gender-sensitive products inherently less likely, and access to finance is already a key barrier to women entrepreneurs.

In 2019, recognizing this need, Bank of Ayudhya issued a Women Entrepreneurs Bond worth US\$220 million. Asia Pacific's first private-sector women entrepreneurs' bond, it was developed to meet the financing needs of businesses owned, managed, and operated by women and, in doing so, support the growth of these businesses.

Today, the bond is both correcting market failures around women-owned business needs and making a strong business case for better segmentation of products and services that cater to women clients. The successful bond experience has enabled Bank of Ayudhya to lend almost three times the bond's value to women's businesses in the MSME sector. Additionally, the bank reports that its women entrepreneur borrowers tend to do very well, as indicated by their credit profile.

"We first established our ESG division [in 2018] to demonstrate our firm's commitment to taking environmental, social, and governance issues very seriously. This is a public commitment on gender, environment, and human rights and once there is a commitment you can only do more and you cannot do less."

**- Poonsit Wongthawatchai**

*Executive Vice-President & Head of Environmental, Social, and Governance Division,  
Bank of Ayudhya Public Company Limited (Thailand)*



98 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

### 5.3 RESPONSIBLE MARKETING PRACTICES ARE HELPING MANAGE REPUTATIONAL AND MARKET RISKS BUT FURTHER ACTION IS NEEDED TO REDUCE PERPETUATION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

“Market research in 2017 has shown that about 70-80 per cent of the female customer base doesn’t relate to the portrayals of gender in advertising and media. It is not different for men either — both men and women are portrayed in stereotypical ways”

**- Sharath Prasad Damera**

*National Consultant on Gender Diversity in Marketing and Advertising,  
Unstereotype Alliance (India)*



Companies’ marketing of their products and services impacts narratives on women’s roles in society, markets, and homes. How and where companies advertise, including how they portray gender roles in their marketing materials, is closely linked to the business case for managing market leadership and reputational risks where key customers (i.e. women) have the power to vote with their wallets. Gender-responsive marketing (GRM), defined as practices that identify and address different needs to promote equal outcomes and that represent all genders as capable, intelligent, and independent, is a powerful means of shaping perceptions and redressing inequalities perpetuated by gender stereotypes while doing business.<sup>99</sup>

In total, 77 per cent of the WEPs signatories surveyed in Asia and the Pacific report that in the last five years they have made significant or very good progress on keeping marketing and advertising free from stereotypes, and making these materials more gender inclusive.<sup>100</sup>

However, this is one of companies’ lowest priorities for action over the next three years. **This is likely to be a major source of missed opportunities in terms of reputational risk management and building competitive advantage for companies in the region.**

**Only 26 per cent of companies using the WEPs Tool in the region answered questions on GRM.** As in the case of GRP, it is likely that this is because of the low level of understanding on how this contributes to a company’s gender equality goals.<sup>101</sup> However, for those that did answer the questions on GRM, Figure 15 shows the range of emerging GRM approaches being used as tools as reported by companies to advance gender equality in society. This figure highlights that there remains ample scope for improvement in GRM actions across the board, most notably on tracking the number of marketing complaints related to gender stereotyping and negative portrayals of women.<sup>102</sup>

99 Definition adapted from UNICEF. [Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Advertising: A UNICEF Playbook](#). UNICEF, 2021.

100 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

101 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

102 Ibid.

**Figure 15.** Gender-responsive marketing approaches in Asia and the Pacific (%)<sup>103</sup>



## BOX 8

### EMERGING BEST PRACTICE

#### UNSTEREOTYPE ALLIANCE INDIA IS DRIVING PROGRESSIVE PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NON-TRADITIONAL ROLES

The Unstereotype Alliance India chapter was founded in India through WEA support in 2021 with a founding group of nine members and allies. The membership base has since expanded and today includes national and global marketing and communications firms and groups such as the Advertising Standards Council of India, the Advertising Agencies Association of India, The Advertising Club, the International Advertising Association- India, consulting firms, and multinational companies.

In alignment with WEP 5: Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices, Unstereotype Alliance India members undertook context-specific research on harmful stereotypes from advertising and marketing content, followed by capacity building and evidence-based advocacy to address these harmful stereotypes.

As a result, in 2022, for the first time, the foremost awards platform in Indian advertising — the ABBY awards at Goafest — introduced both a panel and an award on diversity and inclusion. Using Unstereotype Alliance India's framework as their judging criteria, this special category of award recognized positive and progressive advertising including:

- ads that portray diversity and inclusion in terms of gender, race, class, age, ability, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, language, education, etc;
- ads that break gender stereotypes and showcase progressive/positive gender portrayals; and
- ads that influence gender perceptions and attitudes, including those of young boys and girls.

In this way, leading industry players are collectively encouraging responsible advertising and marketing practices.

103 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

## LOOKING FORWARD: ACTIONS NEEDED



### **ACTION 6:** Expand from promoting gender equality solely within the workplace to within marketplaces and value chains

*For companies, governments, regulators, field builders, donors*

There is a vast untapped potential to improve social and business outcomes by considering gender when companies source, design, deliver, and distribute products and services. However, **only 22 per cent of the signatories self-report prioritising advancement of women’s entrepreneurship and supporting women suppliers among the top three areas that the private sector collectively needs to prioritize to accelerate gender-inclusive businesses** in Asia and the Pacific in the coming five years.<sup>104</sup> Less than a third report a focus on actions to advance women’s entrepreneurship and support women suppliers over the next three years in their own companies.<sup>105</sup> **This indicates the extent of work needed to incentivize gender actions in the market and the value chain.**

Promoting GRP will require public and private sector stakeholders to come together. **Companies need to collect sex-disaggregated data** on their suppliers and distributors, build the capacity of actors in the value chain to respond to women-led business needs, and set targets for supplier diversity. For buyers, this entails making commitments on GRP and creating accountability mechanisms to institutionalize related processes. For sellers, enterprises need to demonstrate commitment towards fostering gender-responsive practices by training staff and looking at the contributions that all the units within the enterprises can make on advancing gender equality. Governments can play a critical role in advancing GRP practices within their own process but also by incentivizing private companies, particularly on reporting related indicators publicly.<sup>106</sup>



### **ACTION 7:** Design products and services, marketing strategies and campaigns— informed by women and designed for women —that redress harmful stereotypes

*For companies, field builders*

Global research has found that worldwide, more than 77 per cent of consumers prefer to purchase from socially responsible brands.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, brands with progressive and inclusive advertising are linked with a higher intention to purchase.<sup>108</sup> Taken together, this data shows that companies in the Asia region, particularly those providing products and services directly to consumers, have an opportunity to design products and services with women in mind, and create purpose-led brands to address persistent gender-related challenges, including gender stereotypes, thus improving overall engagement with women customers throughout the product lifecycle from design to disposal.

Industry alliances can be a powerful lever not only to do this at the company level but also to drive systemic change at the industry and community levels.

104 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

105 Ibid.

106 UN Women. [Rethinking Gender-Responsive Procurement: Enabling An Ecosystem For Women’s Economic Empowerment](#). UN Women, 2021.

107 UN Women. [Responsible Business Conduct in G7 Countries](#). UN Women, 2018.

108 Unstereotype Alliance. [Unstereotype Metric 2020: Key Findings](#). 2021.



# 6

## TREND

**Companies are beginning to align their gender commitments with their community engagement activities and initiate industry-wide collective action to advance gender equality**

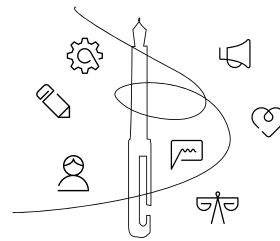
### SUMMARY

Gender equality helps companies gain market leadership and licence to operate, as well as achieve their corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, and human rights commitments. However, there is significant room for improvement on actions to achieve these goals and in so doing bring systemic change to the industry and communities.

### 6.1 ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IS IMPORTANT FOR COMPANIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS, THOUGH ACTIONS REMAIN INSUFFICIENT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR AMBITIONS

Community engagement supports companies in both securing their supply chains and obtaining the social licence to operate within local market contexts. Nearly all WEPs signatories surveyed in the Asia region report that **gender equality is a key driver for them to deliver on CSR activities in the communities where they operate (90 per cent) and contribute to the SDGs (95 per cent)**.

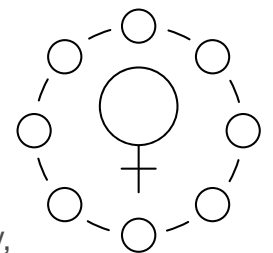
Yet, data from the same group suggests gaps between this ambition and action. In the last five years, **just under half (47 per cent) of signatories reported implementing an approach to embed gender in CSR activities, philanthropy, public advocacy, and partnerships**.<sup>109</sup> The most frequent approaches are, specifically: partnering, participating in multi-stakeholder platforms, and joining public advocacy campaigns. Advocacy around legal barriers to women’s empowerment is occurring much less frequently (see Figure 16).<sup>110</sup>



**90%**  
of WEPs signatories  
look to gender equality  
to deliver on CSR  
activities

**47%**

of WEPs signatories  
embed gender in CSR,  
philanthropy, advocacy,  
or partnerships



109 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

110 Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

**Figure 16.** Asia and the Pacific companies' approaches to supporting gender through CSR, philanthropy, advocacy, and partnerships<sup>111</sup>



## 6.2 GENDER EQUALITY IS A HUMAN RIGHT BUT ACTION ON THIS IS LIMITED

Looking at human rights specifically, **41 per cent of WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific report having implemented policies and practices to ensure respect for the rights of women and girls in the local communities where they operate.**<sup>112</sup> When companies implement such policies and practices, it most often looks like ensuring equal participation of women and men in community consultations and having transparent grievance and resolution mechanisms in place; less often it looks like assessing the differential impacts of company presence and/or initiatives on men and women.<sup>113</sup>

**41%**

of WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific report having policies and practices to ensure respect for women's and girls' rights in the local communities where they operate<sup>112</sup>



## 6.3 BUILDING OF INDUSTRY ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO DRIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE AT COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY LEVELS IS NEEDED

86 per cent of the survey respondents in Asia and the Pacific reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that government, policy makers and regulators can play an important role in creating multi-stakeholder partnership programmes to advance specific areas, such as women's entrepreneurship.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

<sup>112</sup> "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

<sup>113</sup> Aggregated Analysis of United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool: Asia and the Pacific Region Results. United Nations Global Compact. Unpublished.

<sup>114</sup> "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.



32 per cent of the WEPs signatories also feel that setting up industry alliances, i.e. collective action by the private sector to address the issue of women in STEM, is important to build more gender inclusive businesses across the region.<sup>115</sup>

As demonstrated by the example of the work done by the Unstereotype Alliance, industry-wide alliances and partnerships can bring about systemic change by influencing overall narratives, setting standards and helping set priorities for collective actions to advance gender equality.

## BOX 9 EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



### THE VERY GROUP, UNITED KINGDOM: ONLINE RETAIL COMPANY DRIVING CSR ACTIONS IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH IT OPERATES<sup>105</sup>

The Very Group is a multi-category digital retail brand platform, providing 4.8 million customers in the United Kingdom and Ireland with a selection of products ranging from lifestyle, fashion, electronic goods, and more from more than 2,000 famous brands.

The Very Group estimates that more than 20,000 women and girls between the ages of 12 to 25 are employed as temporary labourers in the textile industry in Tamil Nadu, India. To meet marriage expenses, including dowries, families often seek jobs for their daughters to generate extra income. Seeking to promote ethical recruitment in the face of this forced labour and gender discrimination, the company launched The Very Group's South Indian Textile Mill project.

Focused on training, the project includes establishing five resource centres in India to grow knowledge of labour rights among 11,000 female workers and their families. As part of this, the company also launched TIMBY (from "This is my back yard"), an app which allows workers and their families to raise concerns and grievances, and access support and remedies; approximately 23,000 people have been impacted so far. The Very Group proactively engages with factories, mills, workers, and factory-employed labour brokers to lead this change.

115 Ibid.

## EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



### USING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACHES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN CHINA<sup>116</sup>

To promote gender equality in the information and communications technology and textile industries, UN Women China (through WEA) partnered with the China Electronics Standardization Association and the China Textile Information Center. These partnerships supported the integration of gender into China's industrial-level guidance, in alignment with the WEPs.

For example, in the information and communications technology industry, the updated Evaluation Index System on Social Responsibility Governance Level of Information and Communication Technology Industry (T/CESA 16003-2021) came into effect in April 2021 and included gender dimensions such as incorporating gender indicators in reporting and setting up a mechanism to prevent and address incidences of sexual harassment. In the textile industry, a WEPs implementation guideline document was developed under the framework of CSC9000T, China's first standardized management system of social responsibility.

Along with the revised industry guidance, this achievement was possible as the result of focused technical support, including 10 training sessions and knowledge-sharing seminars, reaching more than 28,000 company representatives.

These achievements can potentially benefit at least 12,483 companies in these two industries by supporting the companies to issue and implement gender-responsive policies. Since 2019, 157 companies across the two industries have signed the WEPs.

## LOOKING FORWARD: ACTION NEEDED



### **ACTION 8: Establish more industry alliances to address persistent gender equality challenges that need collective action**

*For companies, field builders, donors*

One third of WEPs signatories feel that setting up industry alliances to advance certain thematic areas (e.g. transform the advertising industry, drive the full and equal participation of women in STEM fields, or address sexual harassment) needs to be prioritized by the private sector to accelerate building more gender inclusive businesses in the region.<sup>117</sup> This can be strengthened through CSR investments to advance women's rights and women's equal participation in the sectors the company operates in, or strengthen the communities and industries where they operate (e.g. communities linked to factories or upskilling programmes for women in technology for infrastructure companies).

<sup>116</sup> UN Women. [Impact Story: Driving Private Sector Efforts to Promote Gender Inclusivity in China](#). UN Women, 2022.

<sup>117</sup> "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

## 7

## TREND

**While more companies (especially those with WEPs commitments) track gender data internally, there is a lack of reporting of gender data by companies**

“What is measured is visible and only what is visible can be acted upon or remedied. More binding gender reporting and accountability mechanisms will allow business to make faster progress towards a more gender-inclusive economy with all its benefits.”

**- Katja Freiwald**

*Regional Lead, Women’s Economic Empowerment,  
UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific*



## SUMMARY

Companies track and report on gender-related data for a number of reasons, often to meet legislative and board-level requirements or understand the business case for investments in training, hiring, retention, and promotion practices. However, large gaps remain in tracking and reporting, particularly on sex-disaggregated data. Regulators and governments can play a key role in legislating reporting criteria (such as on ESG) to advance gender equality in the corporate sector.

## 7.1 LARGE GAPS REMAIN IN TRACKING AND REPORTING KEY GENDER DATA

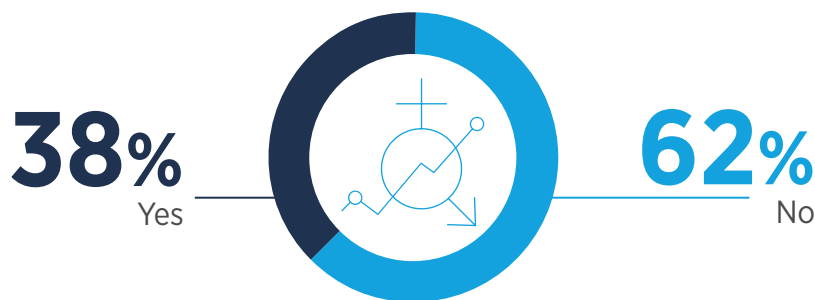
**A critical lever for unleashing the business and economic benefits associated with gender equality is accountability and reporting on gender-related areas.** Encouraging transparency (e.g. through tracking and externally reporting gender indicators) enables good practices to be identified, benchmarks to be created, new standards of transparency to be established, and accountability to be upheld.

Despite the power of data, the kind of data reported by companies in the region varies significantly. Among WEPs signatories in the Asia region, 38 per cent of signatories **report externally on some gender indicators** (see Figure 17). Specifically, among WEPs signatories surveyed, public reporting is below 20 per cent on both procurement spending from WOBs and on equal pay; slightly more companies publicly report on equal opportunities and violence reporting mechanisms; and a third publicly report on gender diversity of their workforce and women in leadership positions.<sup>118</sup> In contrast, more than 60 per cent of this small subset of signatories surveyed report that they **internally track these gender indicators** (see Figure 17).<sup>119</sup>

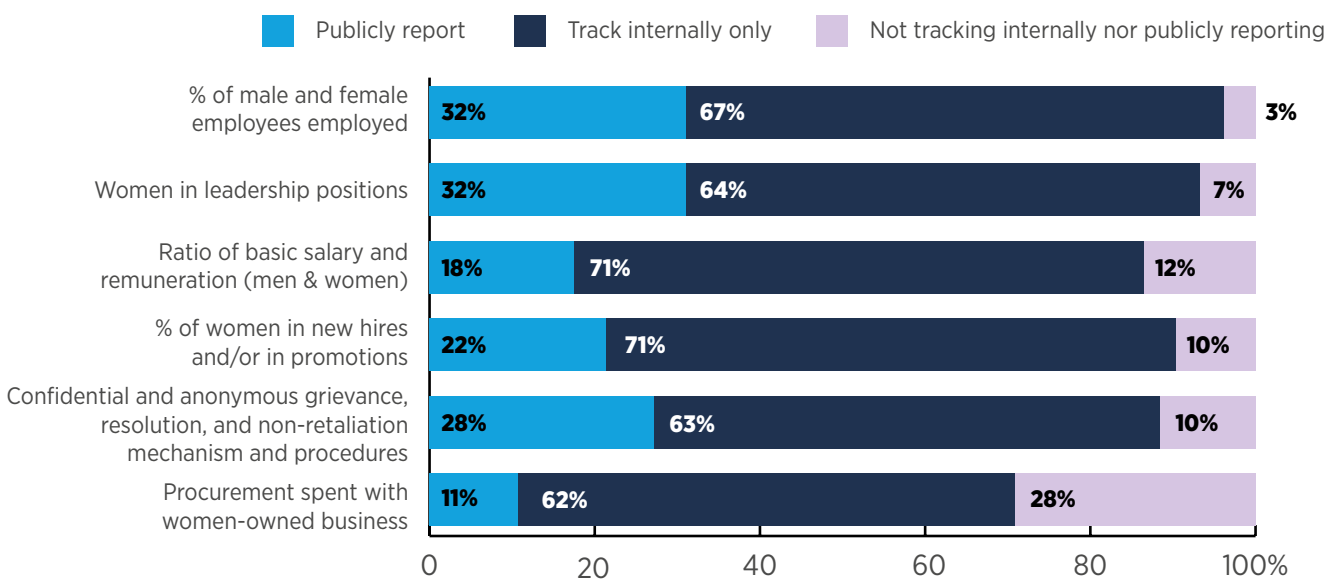
118 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

119 Ibid.

**Figure 17.** WEPs signatories that report externally on gender indicators<sup>120</sup>



**Figure 18.** Gender indicator tracking and reporting by WEPs signatories as part of their business or sustainability reporting<sup>121</sup>



Not only is it important to identify if companies are reporting on gender indicators, but also to look at what specifically they are reporting on regarding these gender indicators. Analysing a broad swath of 75 publicly listed companies in ASEAN countries shows that on **pay equity**, for example, while 25 per cent of the companies report not having any gender pay disparities, they mainly base this simply on a general statement about the company’s commitment to not discriminate in pay or benefits based on gender; only 7 per cent report publicly on their actual pay gap.<sup>122</sup> This is insufficient to drive the transparency and accountability necessary for change. Companies need to shift from reporting general statements to reporting the actual numbers or percentages.

120 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

121 Ibid.

122 UN Women. [Ecosystem Landscaping to Advance the Accountability to implement the Women’s Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#). UN Women, 2021.

## 7.2 REGULATORS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN BUSINESS, SUCH AS INCLUDING GENDER AS PART OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR LISTED COMPANIES

Regulators, including securities and exchange commissions, stock exchanges, and sector-specific regulatory bodies, can and do play a key role in this gender equality data collection, measurement, and reporting.

In the case of stock exchanges, **5 out of 9 stock exchanges in ASEAN countries have some type of initiative to promote gender equality.** For instance, the Ho Chi Minh City Stock Exchange has started to **collect sex-disaggregated data** on women chief executives in listed companies and currently is composing annual report guidelines with gender equality indicators for listed companies. However, in countries where stock exchanges have only been established in the last decade (e.g. Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar), reporting requirements and guidance are limited to financial statements and business operations, with no specific guidance for sustainability or gender issues.<sup>123,124,125</sup>

Reporting can drive accountability on gender equality and has been a catalyst for the progress that has been made. Despite the of gender initiatives among stock exchanges, those that do have gender initiatives are often **emphasising basic reporting, with sustainability reporting being the entry point** for listed companies



disclosing gender-related indicators. For example, in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore, listed companies are required by the respective Securities and Exchange Commission to produce an annual sustainability report and some limited gender-related or women empowerment indicators. This is a welcome first step, but only the beginning of the process.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Sex disaggregation of data means analysing separately the data on each sex; this requires identifying the sex of the individual at the moment of data collection.

<sup>124</sup> Yangon Stock Exchange, Cambodia Securities Exchange and Lao Securities Exchange were established in the last 10 years. In comparison, the other stock exchanges in ASEAN countries have been operating for more than 20 years.

<sup>125</sup> UN Women. [Ecosystem Landscaping to Advance the Accountability to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#). UN Women, 2021.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

## BOX 10

# GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES IN REPORTING



- **DENMARK:** 2006 legislation mandated firms of 35 employees or more to report gender pay gaps. The study showed that the gender pay gap at firms with mandatory reporting shrank by 7 per cent, while the gap at firms without mandatory reporting stayed steady.<sup>127</sup>
- **GREAT BRITAIN** (but not Northern Ireland): enacted changes to its Equality Act, making it compulsory for companies with more than 250 employees to report their gender pay gap. This forced transparency saw a fall in the gender pay gap for median gross hourly earnings, from 9.1 per cent in 2017 to 8.6 per cent in 2018, following the changes in legislation.<sup>128</sup>

## BOX 11

# EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



## GLOBAL REPORTING FRAMEWORKS BY THE SINGAPORE EXCHANGE<sup>129</sup>

To encourage companies to include reporting on gender-related indicators within their yearly sustainability report requirement, in 2017 the SGX provided listed companies with resources on global reporting frameworks, including the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework.<sup>130</sup>

Note, however, that SGX, like the other stock exchanges in the region, does not have a specific gender-related regulation nor targets for listed companies. However, starting in 2022, SGX will mandate that all listed firms provide climate-related reporting and disclosures on board diversity on a comply or explain basis.<sup>131</sup> Mandating gender reporting criteria for listed companies in ASEAN would move the needle on private-sector transparency and accountability for contributing to increased women's equal economic participation in the region.

127 Bennedsen, M. et al. [Do firms respond to gender pay gap transparency?](#) National Bureau of Economic Research, 2019.

128 Perraudin, F. [“What is gender pay gap reporting and what does it mean?”](#) *The Guardian*, 28 Feb, 2019.

129 Reproduced from source: UN Women. [Ecosystem Landscaping to advance the Accountability to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#). UN Women, 2021.

130 Singapore Exchange. [“Sustainability Reporting.”](#) Singapore Exchange, 2016.

131 Aravindan, A. [“Singapore Exchange to mandates climate, board diversity disclosures”](#). *Reuters*, Dec. 15, 2021.



## BOX 12 EMERGING BEST PRACTICE



### FILIPINO BUSINESSES WORK WITH REGULATORS TO CREATE A MORE CONDUCTIVE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE) was launched in March 2017 through Investing in Women, an initiative of the Australian Government, in partnership with the Philippine Women's Economic Network. PBCWE is made up of large businesses that look to take the appropriate steps to improve gender equality in their workplaces and to influence businesses, both in their supply chains and other large businesses, to also become better employers of women. Notably, in recent years, PBCWE has begun to work with regulators to create a more conducive policy environment, including to improve the gender component of forthcoming mandatory sustainability reporting.

“In the beginning we did mostly capacity building and assessments, but a new stream of work emerged in the last couple of years. It has to do with policy advocacy working with regulators on creating a more conducive policy environment. For example, our work with the Securities & Exchange Commission, which we supported by Investing in Women as well as UNW, has to do with improving the gender component of the sustainability reporting that is about to be required by the [Securities & Exchange Commission], which is the corporate regulator.”

**- Julia Andrea R. Abad**

*Executive Director, PBCWE*





### **ACTION 9: Report publicly on progress on gender equality**

*For companies, governments, regulators, stock exchanges, donors*

Only 38 per cent of WEPs signatory companies are reporting externally on gender indicators today. Nonetheless, just 28 per cent of WEPs signatories selected “Increasing transparency and accountability through aligned public gender reporting” as an area the private sector collectively needs to prioritize to accelerate building more gender-inclusive businesses in Asia and the Pacific in the coming five years.<sup>132</sup> Efforts are needed to increase this number.<sup>133</sup> If the potential of data to identify best practices, create benchmarks, establish new standards of transparency and uphold accountability are to be realized, companies will need to move from reporting general statements about their gender commitments to reporting the actual numbers or percentages, including reporting the number of employees disaggregated by sex, retention data disaggregated by sex, the pay gap between women and men, and supplier diversity.

**Stock exchanges** (in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore) **using sustainability reporting as the entry point** for listed companies’ disclosure of gender-related indicators is a welcome first step. It is also only the beginning of the process; stock exchanges should take further actions to have a more comprehensive set of criteria to incorporate gender in reporting structures and leverage the full business benefits of gender equality.<sup>134</sup> This should be complemented by stronger business incentives and mandates for publicly listed and non-listed companies to report on essential gender indicators. For specific recommendations on gender reporting indicators please see the [WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework: Creating Transparency on Gender Equality to Transform Business](#).

**There is strong private sector support for publicly reporting on gender equality advances.** More than 88 per cent of WEPs signatory companies reported that they agree or strongly agree that governments should set clear regulations and guidance for companies to report on gender indicators. Evidence from other sectors suggests that public reporting can encourage companies to make improvements.<sup>135</sup> (For example, a 2013 carbon disclosure mandate for UK-incorporated listed firms led affected firms to reduce their emissions by 8 per cent, while experiencing no significant changes in their gross margins.<sup>136</sup>)

132 “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”. Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

133 Ibid.

134 UN Women. [Ecosystem Landscaping to advance the Accountability to implement the Women’s Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#). UN Women, 2021.

135 Kilfoyle, M. “[Mandatory corporate reporting on sustainability: what is the likely impact?](#)”. Economics Observatory, Feb 22, 2022

136 Downar, B., Ernstberger, J., Reichelstein, S., et al. “[The impact of carbon disclosure mandates on emissions and financial operating performance](#).” *Rev Account Stud* 26, 1137–1175 (2021).



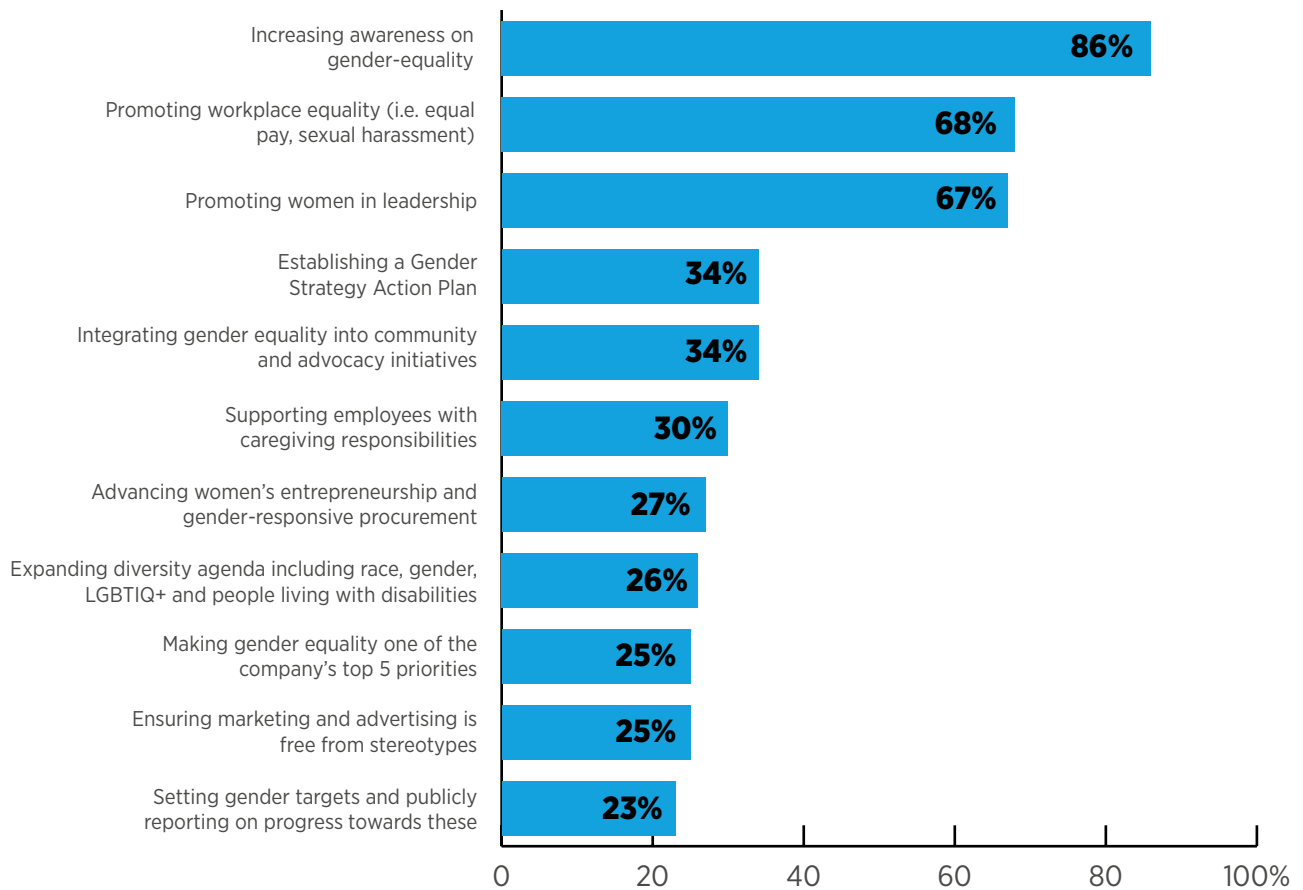
**CALL TO ACTION**

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**Much progress has been made since the introduction of the WEPs in 2010** and the launch of WeEmpowerAsia in 2019. Today, more and more companies are making commitments, with first-mover companies showing companies and policies the way on what good practices look like. **Yet, gender equality in the private sector is still not the reality for the majority of companies in Asia and the Pacific.** More action is needed to reach the tipping point where gender equality becomes commonplace in business from the factory floor to the C-Suite.

Some of this progress will come from actions that companies are already contemplating (see Figure 19), such as increasing awareness on gender equality, promoting workplace equality, and promoting women in leadership, and doing so through trainings, policies, and programmes. Meanwhile, other action areas do not appear to be priorities, such as expanding the diversity agenda into the marketplace through efforts around GRP and marketing and setting and reporting on gender targets (see Figure 19). For the latter, stock exchanges, policy makers, investors, and other stakeholders will need to drive the action.

**Figure 19.** Actions on which WEPs signatories plan to focus in the next three years to advance gender equality<sup>137</sup>



<sup>137</sup> "Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector – Implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific". Survey. UN Women, 2022. Unpublished.

WEPs provide a platform for galvanizing business actions on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. Below is our Call to Action for companies and the private-sector field builders that support them in Asia and the Pacific to continue and deepen actions that improve gender equality and business outcomes in the region. For regulators and policymakers, as well as private-sector field builders (such as the United Nations, support organizations, researchers, donors, and investors), that want more detailed recommendations, please see the WEA publication titled [Ecosystem Landscaping to advance the Accountability to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#).

**For companies that have not yet started advancing gender, start today** and get ahead of your competition. A strong place to begin is by joining the WEPs and using the [WEPS Tool](#)

to identify your companies' strengths and areas where further gender actions can be taken.

**For companies that have started advancing gender, continue to strengthen and deepen your actions.** Integrate a lifecycle approach to your gender actions from recruitment to retention (including maternity and parental leave) to advancement, and create workplaces free of violence and harassment. Begin to take actions around gender in your markets, value chains, and communities. And begin to report on your progress on gender equality. Visit [weps.org/resources](http://weps.org/resources) to find specialized assessment tools, policy templates, and guidance documents supporting WEPs action planning and implementation.

**For companies that want to be a cutting-edge leader,** report publicly on your progress on gender equality, join or create industry alliances, and apply to the [WEPS Awards](#).



**Figure 20.** Call to action for each type of organization

\* This figure indicates where the biggest levers can be achieved, though many of the actions are relevant for all organizations.

	COMPANIES	GOVERNMENTS	REGULATORS	STOCK EXCHANGES	FIELD BUILDERS	DONORS
<b>ACTION 1:</b> Move beyond commitment to institutionalize gender equality actions and outcomes in business	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>ACTION 2:</b> Incentivize action on gender equality by allocating capital with a gender lens	●	●			●	●
<b>ACTION 3:</b> Set public targets for women’s participation in leadership positions	●	●	●	●		
<b>ACTION 4:</b> Implement comprehensive approaches for reducing and distributing women employees’ disproportionate responsibility for caregiving	●	●			●	●
<b>ACTION 5:</b> Move beyond policies to prioritise holistic programmes that address violence against women in the workplace as a resilience and risk-mitigation priority	●	●			●	●
<b>ACTION 6:</b> Expand from promoting gender equality solely within the workplace to within marketplaces and value chains	●	●	●		●	●
<b>ACTION 7:</b> Design marketing strategies and campaigns – informed by women and designed for women –that redress harmful stereotypes	●				●	
<b>ACTION 8:</b> Establish more industry alliances to address persistent gender equality challenges that need collective action	●				●	●
<b>ACTION 9:</b> Report publicly on progress on gender equality	●	●	●	●		●



# APPENDICES

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# SOURCES USED

Primary Data Collection Method	Details
Survey to WEPs signatories	<p>(1) 2022 quantitative-qualitative survey completed by WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific titled <b>“Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector - Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific”</b></p> <p><i>Sample size: 152</i></p> <p><i>Region: Asia and the Pacific</i></p> <p><i>Year: 2022</i></p>
Existing WEPs database	<p>(1) <b>WEPs database of signatories in Asia and the Pacific and WEA countries</b> (Viet Nam, Malaysia, China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand), including data from pre-2019 up to Dec. 31, 2021.</p> <p><i>Sample size: 1,665</i></p> <p><i>Region: Asia and the Pacific</i></p> <p><i>Year: 2010-2021</i></p>
Existing WEA surveys	<p>(1) <b>WEA-Led Action-Impact Survey (“Satisfaction Survey”)</b> completed by WEA stakeholders and partners from 15 countries in Asia and the Pacific</p> <p><i>Sample size: 256</i></p> <p><i>Region: Asia and the Pacific</i></p> <p><i>Year: 2022</i></p> <p>(2) <b>WEA-Led WEPs Activator Malaysia Campaign Survey</b></p> <p><i>Sample size: 21</i></p> <p><i>Region: Malaysia</i></p> <p><i>Year: 2022</i></p>
Existing WEPs Awardees data	<p>(1) <b>Trends data from WEPs Regional and National Awardees of 2021</b></p> <p><i>Sample size: 115</i></p> <p><i>Region: Asia and the Pacific</i></p> <p><i>Year: 2021</i></p>
Case Studies	<p>(1) Selected good practices from WEPs signatories, compiled by WEA.</p>



- Focused Interviews
- (1) Forward-looking interviews with 7 selected companies, regional and country networks, advisors, and experts.
    - i. Unstereotype Alliance; India
    - ii. Asian Development Bank
    - iii. Bank of Ayudhya, Thailand
    - iv. Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE)
    - v. Indonesia Business Coalition for Business Empowerment
    - vi. LeadWomen, Malaysia
    - vii. Dr. Catheryn Khoo, professor of tourism
  - (2) Interviews with 8 company, stock exchange, and advocacy organization stakeholders and 6 UN Women staff members as part of the [Ecosystem Landscaping to advance the Accountability to implement the Women’s Empowerment Principles in ASEAN](#)

Secondary Data Collection Method	Details
<a href="#">The United Nations Global Compact Women’s Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool (‘WEPs Tool’)</a>	<p>Aggregate findings of the official WEPs self-assessment tool, which looks at the strengths of each to advance gender equality and where further actions can be taken, for 2,682 companies across 117 countries for selected indicators.</p> <p>Data reported here are for a subset of 400 companies that took the assessment tool in the Asia and the Pacific region; the region comprises more than 27 countries across Asia, Oceania, and Australasia.</p> <p><i>Year: 2017 - December 1, 2021</i></p>
<p>Analysis Corporate Survey “Care Entrepreneurship Landscape Asia” (Not published)</p>	<p>Qualitative Survey conducted by UN Women &amp; Bopinc</p> <p><i>Sample Size: 70</i></p> <p><i>Region: Over 13 countries in Asia and the Pacific, including 6 WEA countries</i></p> <p><i>Year: 2021</i></p>
<p>International and regional publications</p>	<p><i>See citations throughout the report</i></p>

# SURVEY COMPLETION RATES

**WEPs Tool** (n = 400 for Asia and the Pacific region, %)

WEPs Tool	per cent Completion Rate
Q1. Leadership commitment	38
Q2. Non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy	43
Q3. Recruitment	45
Q4. Professional development and promotion	37
Q5. Equal compensation	44
Q6. Maternity leave	43
Q7. Paternity leave	28
Q8. Parental caregiver support	26
Q9. Work-life balance	36
Q10. Violence, harassment & sexual harassment	54
Q11. Health, safety and hygiene	47
Q12. Access to quality health services	31
Q13. Women-owned businesses	11
Q14. Supplier performance on gender equality	14
Q15. Gender-responsible marketing	26
Q16. Product/service development with a gender lens	21
Q17. Applying gender lens to community	23
Q18. CSR, philanthropy, advocacy, and partnerships to support gender equality	30

**2022 quantitative-qualitative survey completed by WEPs signatories in Asia and the Pacific titled “Trends and Future Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality in the Private Sector - Implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in Asia and the Pacific” (n = 152, 10.8%)**

WEPs Signatories Survey	per cent Completion Rate
Reason for companies promoting gender equality	<b>73.2%</b>
Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on advancing gender equality	<b>73%</b>
Companies’ progress on advancing gender equality in specific areas	<b>73%</b>
Specific actions taken on advancing gender equality in companies in the last 5 years	<b>73%</b>
External reporting on gender indicators by companies	<b>71.4%</b>
Public reporting or internal tracking on specific gender indicators as part of business/ sustainability reporting	<b>73%</b>
Factors contributing to advancing gender equality within companies	<b>73%</b>
Focus on actions to advance gender equality in the next three years	<b>76%</b>
Areas for collective prioritization by the private sector to build gender-inclusive businesses in Asia and the Pacific in the next five years	<b>74.6%</b>
Actions by policymakers, regulators and governments to advance gender equality	<b>72.2%</b>



**WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
PRINCIPLES**

Established by UN Women and the  
UN Global Compact Office

