



**Remarks of Ms. Sanda Ojiambo,  
CEO and Executive Director of the UN Global Compact**

*Intervention at the High-Level Political Forum 2020  
Multilateralism after COVID 19: what kind of UN do we need at the  
75th anniversary?*

Thank you, Excellency.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Business can play a major role in reinvigorating multilateralism by demonstrating ethical leadership and good governance, addressing systemic inequalities and injustices in supply chains, and partnering with Government and civil society to strengthen institutions, laws and systems at the national and international level.

Although the global pandemic is shaking an already-strained world order, allow me to tell a more encouraging story about the impact of partnering with business to strengthen multilateralism:

This crisis shows that the UN can reinvent itself as a more diverse and inclusive force for international cooperation and sustainable development with business as a critical partner.

Let's start with the 2030 Agenda: Never before did so many different stakeholders, including business, have a seat at the table.

The resulting SDGs offer companies a powerful blueprint for societal transformation *and* business benefit.

Imagine if we had to design our COVID-19 recovery without the global goals?

Creating the 2030 Agenda was an incredible investment in inclusive multilateralism. By harnessing the energy, innovation and expertise of the private sector, the UN and Governments can now realize a great return on that investment.

Twenty years ago Kofi Annan called on the world's business community to form a Compact with the United Nations. In the two decades since, the UN Global Compact Compact, an initiative I lead, has been an important multi-stakeholder platform promoting responsible business practices. Today, we look to the future with ambition and optimism: Growing numbers of companies are awakening to the importance of responsible business. Responsibly managed companies - such as those who take seriously the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption - tend to be better market performers. Those same companies are natural allies in our quest to strengthen multilateralism.

To mobilize these allies as part of UN Development System reform - another important facet of UN renewal - the UN Global Compact is increasing its work with local business, including SMEs, in close partnership with UN Country Teams.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen: The success of our collective work - on crisis response, the development and equitable rollout of an eventual vaccine, and long-term recovery - all depends on how inclusive, creative and collaborative we can all be.

In that same spirit, we must all continue to challenge, inspire and unite business as an essential partner in our efforts to strengthen multilateralism and achieve a better world.

Thank you.