



The Business and Industry Major Group Paragraph 89 Report

The Major Group's Contribution to the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

07 June 2021

Background

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is issued in line with Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda, “The HLPF will support participation in follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders in line with resolution 67/290. We call upon those actors to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda.” The Business and Industry Major Group (B&I MG) paragraph 89 report provides a background on the Major Group and the crucial role of the private sector for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and outlines the B&I MG contribution to the 2030 Agenda, its Co-Chairs’ individual contributions, as well as contributions of selected members.

ABOUT THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP (B&I MG)

The [Business & Industry Major Group \(B&I MG\)](#) is one of the 21 major stakeholder groups whose engagement is considered by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) to be integral to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

B&I MG is co-chaired by the [International Organisation of Employers \(IOE\)](#) and [United States Council for International Business \(USCIB\)](#) and includes more than 180 members from around the globe, from developed to developing and least developed countries (LDCs). Members include individual companies, non-governmental organisations, academia, as well as industry-specific associations and national employer organisations that represent a multitude of companies, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The B&I MG offers its members and partners opportunities to bring the global voice of business and employers to formal and informal UN consultations and events. It also seeks to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda in the private sector and to build bridges for innovative public-private partnerships to achieve the SDGs.

2030 AGENDA AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) is a resolution by UN Member States in 2015 that established 17 interlinked SDGs to be achieved by 2030. The goals provide a



bold vision and a comprehensive framework for furthering sustainable development for the good of the “people, planet, and prosperity.” The SDGs have been operationalized with specific targets and indicators for monitoring progress.

PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE IN ACHIEVING THE SDGS

With only 9 years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and as efforts are currently falling short of the targets, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General has called for a Decade of Action to accelerate momentum on sustainable development to ensure that “no one is left behind.” Recovering sustainably in the Decade of Action and Delivery will require a stronger than ever commitment to multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership in inclusive intergovernmental deliberations. In particular, the private sector must be a meaningful partner in building back better – contributing not just funding, but innovation, expertise, technology, fresh ideas, and diverse perspectives of business and employers, particularly SMEs, who are so crucial to economic growth at the local level.

Business is committed to the SDGs, not only because implementing the 2030 Agenda is the right thing to do, but also because of the strong business case for doing so: companies can’t function in a world rife with poverty and climate change disasters. At the same time, the 2030 Agenda itself opens business opportunities, and the potential for decent job creation, which companies need to unlock with innovative approaches to tackle the challenges the world is facing.

Activities of The Business and Industry Major Group Contributing to the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

AWARENESS-RAISING OF THE 2030 AGENDA WITH B&I MEMBERS

The B&I Major Group organizes high-level events aligned with major UN fora and deliberations, as well as monthly discussions that highlight opportunities for private sector engagement in upcoming UN events, particularly HLPF, Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), UN General Assembly, statistical commission, and more. Events feature guest speakers from the UN system and other multilateral institutions, and from among the B&I members.

B&I MG Event topics have included:

- Maximizing the engagement and value of private sector as a partner in sustainable development
- Unleashing Private Sector Innovation, Enhancing the Science/Policy/Business and Society Interface (side event to the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum))



- Financing for Development (Fin4Dev)
- Building partnership for better data for SDGs
- Multilateralism Matters to Business: Partnership Solutions at UNGA 75 (UN General Assembly)
- Private sector engagement in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)
- Business and Gender Equality

The B&I Major Group provides inputs to UN processes and fora, including:

- HLPF and ECOSOC Review Resolution
- HLPF Ministerial Declaration
- HLPF Sectoral Papers
- HLPF Position Papers
- Paragraph 89 report

The B&I Major Group also provides private sector perspectives and expertise for official UN fora, deliberations, and dialogues, such as:

- SDG Expert Group Meetings (EGMs)
- Partnership Forum
- STI Forum
- HLPF Thematic Sessions
- High-Level Dialogue on Energy Ministerial Thematic Forums

Activities of B&I MG Co-Chairs

IOE and USCIB, the Co-Chairs of the B&I Major Group, are also committed to furthering the 2030 Agenda through the individual organizations' activities.

IOE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

IOE is one of the leading voices for business at the global level and on the ground. With more than 150 EBMO members in 145 countries, IOE represents the interests of over 50 million companies. For over 100 years, it has been a powerful and balanced voice of business and offers a diverse and unique perspective based on members that include companies ranging from large multinationals to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and a vast collection of industries. Together with trade unions, IOE plays a vital role in shaping labour markets and providing support to its members.



In its Centenary Manifesto, IOE fully supported the 2030 Agenda as the most effective path to sustainable human development. IOE is firmly committed to promoting the closer involvement of the private sector, including through its representative organisations, in the achievement of the SDGs. IOE provides awareness-raising of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to its members and facilitates peer-to-peer learning and sharing of best practices on how members can contribute to national action plans for the achievement of the SDGs, the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and a just transition in Climate Change policy.

Specifically, IOE activities that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 agenda include:

- IOE created a dedicated New York office tasked with fostering closer connections between IOE member organisations and the United Nations. The NY office leads on a collaboration between IOE, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), and the UN Development Coordination Office (UN DCO) to connect employer organisations with UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and promote employer engagement in UN sustainable development programming, including in the elaboration of UN Cooperation Frameworks, Common Country Analyses and VNRs. Working with partners such as the UN Global Compact, the initiative aims to help forge powerful collaborations between the UN and private sector at the national level to advance progress towards the SDGs.

Through a series of dialogues, deep dives, and regionally focused discussions, promising partners from the UN and the private sector were brought together for positive action at national level. The collaboration also launched a joint publication in May 2021 on the wings of the 2021 UN Partnership Forum, titled “Playbook: Building Momentum in the Decade of Action through Collaboration between Employers and UN Resident Coordinators”.

- The IOE’s Business Advisory Group on Migration provides a unique channel for member and corporate partner network to play an influential role in shaping migration and skills mobility policy, by advocating for transparent, predictable, and humane migration policies that support business, competitiveness, and job and wealth creation. Among the priorities discussed by the Advisory Group is how to foster partnerships to realise migration-related goals in the 2030 Agenda, how to manage the future of human mobility, and how to address gaps in migrant protection on fundamental principles and rights at work.
- IOE led a comprehensive exercise, involving surveys, interviews, and meetings, to gather the perspectives of members on implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). This resulted in the publication, with the support of the EU, of an IOE Position Paper that sets out the challenges and progress to date, as well as recommendations for achieving ongoing success. The position of IOE and its members and partners will contribute to the UN Working Group’s roadmap, to be presented to the Human



Rights Council on 16 June 2021, to advance the understanding and implementation of the UNGPs going forward. Other IOE/partner publications on the subject include, “How can employers’ organisations support business respect for human rights?”, “Business and Human Rights for Companies: Frequently Asked Questions”, and “Connecting the anti-corruption and human rights agendas.”

- IOE guidance on Covid-19 response and recovery provides members, corporate partners, governments, and trade unions with robust policy recommendations that support national and local paths to economic recovery and an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises. IOE has set up an online platform with resources to members, including a joint publication with the World Employment Confederation (WEC), titled “Policy Priorities for the Road to a Sustainable Recovery”.
- IOE, together with International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), IndustriALL, many global brands, local employers and unions, collaborated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the “Call to Action in the Garment Industry” to address the impact of the pandemic on this manufacturing sector. The IOE and ITUC serve as the global coordinating institutions for the initiative, which has already had several positive outcomes. For Bangladesh, US\$115 million was pledged to the garment industry in that country with the Call to Action using its leverage to ensure that the funds go toward ensuring workers’ income and business continuity. Funds were also raised for seven other priority countries. This innovative and powerful partnership is providing a lifeline to garment workers and businesses during the COVID-19 crisis and undoubtedly furthers multiple SDGs, least of which SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth).

USCIB CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

USCIB, founded in 1945 to promote an open world trading system, is now among the premier pro-trade, pro-market liberalization organizations. It has an active membership base of some 300 multinational companies, law firms and business associations. USCIB provides unparalleled access to international policy makers and regulatory authorities, specialized [policy committees and working groups](#), and is a U.S. affiliate of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Business at OECD (BIAC) and IOE.

The U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continue to serve as the framework for U.S. business planning and action to advance sustainability in partnership with the international community, notably with other business groups and other stakeholders. The U.S. private sector has been at the forefront of tackling the pandemic – from the historic race to develop vaccines, to repurposing facilities for production of PPE and vaccination campaigns, to training and educating employees on public health and safety.



Specifically, USCIB activities that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 agenda include:

- Participation and support in sustainability-related efforts and initiatives of USCIB’s sister organizations: BIAC, ICC, and IOE.
- USCIB participated in support of the UN Secretary-General’s Roadmap for Digital Cooperation.
- USCIB’s web platform, [Business for 2030](#) presents examples and blog posts of business actions, including those of USCIB members, to advance the 17 objectives and 169 targets of the SDGs.
- USCIB is a founder and leader of Business Partners to CONVINCe (BP2C), a multi-sector effort to empower a “vaccine-literate” public, based on trust in science and aligned commitment to future COVID-19 vaccines and other novel countermeasures. The initiative is the private sector arm of the global, multi-sector CONVINCe (COVID-19 New Vaccine Information, Communication, and Engagement) initiative that advances vaccine literacy and promotes vaccine acceptance. BP2C will mobilize the business community to engage employers and employees to accept COVID-19 vaccines.
- USCIB convened a Working Group on SDGs, which highlighted the following priority areas as critical to SDG implementation:
 - Essential enablers for action across the SDGs - the Decade of Delivery and Action should approach recovery from the triple shock of COVID-19 to healthcare, jobs, food security and economic activity on the foundation of good governance and rule of law as set out in SDG 16. For business, fundamental enablers for action have to do with inclusive and sustainable economic growth, supporting innovation and investment, and full and productive employment.
 - Crowding in experts and “do-ers” from the private sector and mobilizing countries and other stakeholders to rebuild “forward” throughout their COVID-19 recovery, working with their private sectors in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. This includes supporting new interfaces, institutional infrastructure and opportunities for the UN system, governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to work together towards delivering the SDGs as well as exploring innovative options for gathering useful information to track shared value and impact.
 - Calling for truly inclusive collaborative structures at national and global levels to share expertise, engage in dialogue and launch partnerships with business will be critical to strengthened implementation and impact, whether in developing and updating VNRs,



strengthening NDCs for the Paris Agreement, or framing sustainable development investment roadmaps.

- Focusing on synergies at national and global levels between COVID-19 response and recovery with the SDGs and mainstreaming private sector partnership and expertise.

Contributions of select members to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Many of the B&I Major Group members actively align their activities with the SDGs and engage in activities to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Below are just a few examples of the kind of innovative collaborations and solutions initiated by selected members to advance sustainable development and ensure that no one is left behind.

INTERNATIONAL AGRI-FOOD NETWORK

Recalling the words of the World Food Programme, it is time to focus urgently on food and nutrition security as a foundation for success of all the SDGs. We must ensure sustainable food systems for inclusive growth and ending global hunger. The COVID-19 pandemic has set the ambitious and elusive SDG targets even further off track for completion by 2030. In reality, since 2015, SDG 2 has been moving backwards, and yet agriculture, food, and nutrition interventions remain underfunded in the development context. The International Agri-Food Network, as focal point for the Private Sector Mechanism has been highlighting the important of multi-sectoral and multi-institutional approaches and inclusive multistakeholder engagement processes should be a priority in building sustainable food systems that deliver the ambitions of SDG2.

The International Agri-Food Network was actively engaged in the development and the uptake of the [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#). It has also conducted 3 High Level Dialogues on [Finance](#), [Innovation](#) and [Gender](#) on the cross cutting issues of the Food Systems Summit. This cross section of case studies shows a few examples of the work of B&I to help advance the SDGs: <https://agrifood.net/sustainable-development-goals/goal-2-implementation>.

WORLD BENCHMARKING ALLIANCE (WBA)

WBA's mission is to build a movement to measure and incentivize business impact and leadership towards a sustainable future that works for everyone. To this end, WBA has identified seven transformations – decarbonization & energy, financial, digital, food & agriculture, social, nature, and urban – that need to take place to put society and the worldwide



economy on a more sustainable path to achieve the SDGs by 2030. To turn these transformations into action, WBA develops a series of benchmarks assessing 2,000 of the world's most influential companies, ranking them on their contributions to the SDGs. This is done in close collaboration with its multistakeholder Alliance of more than 230+ organizations including financial institutions, business associations, NGOs, philanthropic institutions, and multilateral agencies which WBA strives to connect to UN processes and the work of the B&I Major Group.

The benchmarks WBA produces and methodologies it employs are free and publicly available for all to view and use. WBA regularly engages the B&I Major Group, HLPF, UNGA, and other UN groupings and processes through side events, submission of technical inputs, as well as impact-driven partnerships with civil society, companies, and UN institutions. Some of its recent efforts include:

- Participating in the “Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond” Initiative, and follow-on “Sustainability & Climate” Cluster led by UNDP
- Speaking at the B&I side event at UNGA75
- Convening a 2021 Financing for Development Forum side event on the harmonization of global sustainability standards aligned with the SDGs
- Collaborating with UN and civil society partners to organize an official 2021 HLPF learning, training, and practice workshop
- Contributing to the June 2021 UN-DESA online stakeholders’ thematic debate to inform the upcoming High Level Dialogue on Energy, with a focus on a framework for measuring a just transition