TRANSFORMING BUSINESS

Businesses shape much of daily life, and their choice to partner with UN Women is a powerful signal that change is coming. The global advertising industry, for instance, is renowned for its creativity and vast influence in shaping attitudes. But it also too often reinforces negative gender stereotypes. At the 2017 Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity, UN Women launched the Unstereotype Alliance and called on industry leaders to make a commitment to gender equality, and to portrayals that perpetuate progress, not discrimination.

The alliance, including founding members such as AT&T, Johnson & Johnson, IPG, P&G, WPP and Unilever, brings together a growing group of major multinationals that oversee the work of hundreds of advertising agencies around the world. Their commitment to set aside competition in favour of collaboration and to eliminate harmful stereotypes represents an unprecedented opportunity to truly transform entire industries. Initial collaboration has centred on adapting tools to measure gender equality and diversity in the workplace and business practices, and to develop a global standard to measure advertising content in efforts to create an unstereotyped world.

Media and advertising partners continue to play a pivotal role in sending UN Women’s gender equality messages to every corner of the globe. As part of the United Nation’s Common Ground initiative, WPP, the world’s largest multinational advertising holding company, helped secure more than USD 1 million in pro bono ads on major platforms such as Amazon and Spotify during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence in 2017 and on International Women’s Day in 2018. Over 23,500 news media reports featured UN Women during the course of 2017. As members of the steadily growing Step It Up Media Compact, more than 60 major media outlets have committed to boosting women’s representation in the newsroom and in news content, including Thomson Reuters, France 24, The Huffington Post, and Deutsche Welle.

Other UN Women partnerships with businesses have focused on women in science and technology. The Global Innovation Coalition for Change, formed in 2017, mobilizes 25 partners from private businesses, non-profit organizations and academic institutions to tackle the barriers to women’s advancement in innovation. The group is working on industry standards, as well as programmes to support women innovators and address the key challenges they face, with the aim of ensuring women and girls have equal roles in designing, shaping and benefiting from technology.

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To end the often blatant gender stereotypes in advertising, UN Women launched the Unstereotype Alliance. It mobilizes a number of multinational firms to transform advertising around the world to bolster gender equality and diversity.

To celebrate International Women’s Day, bells rang at 63 stock exchanges around the world, reminding businesses to do their part for gender equality. UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (centre front) rang the Nasdaq Stock Market closing bell, joined by Nasdaq President and CEO Adena Friedman (centre front, right of UN Women Executive Director).
the International Labour Organization, which has resulted in a number of UN Member States making commitments to strengthen policies around equal pay.

RAISING FUNDS AND AWARENESS
National Committees operate in 15 countries as staunch advocates for UN Women’s programmes and for achieving gender equality. In Germany in 2017, the National Committee raised awareness and funds for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women through sales of the UN Women Charity bracelet, which has featured in the German edition of Vogue and other leading women’s magazines.

In Singapore, at the HeForShe Impact Awards, the National Committee recognized individuals and businesses for promoting gender equality and diversity initiatives, such as the Women’s Voices project at Bloomberg to improve the representation of female newsmakers in print, television and radio coverage. The event also served as an opportunity to discuss, including with business leaders, the gender pay gap. Finland’s National Committee carried out a successful Face to Face Campaign that boosted its monthly donor base by 70 per cent.

Mobilizing with Civil Society
Civil society is at the centre of UN Women’s support to women’s rights and feminist movements as critical drivers of change. In 2017, UN Women played a central role in mobilizing a diverse array of civil society organizations through its Civil Society Advisory Groups at the national, regional and global levels, as well as in partnerships with a broad set of feminist actors. This included supporting the engagement of grass-roots civil society activists in reclaiming the United Nations as a peace organization, the creation of a faith-based alliance of progressive religious groups working for gender equality, and the inclusion of the voices of women human rights defenders and LGBTI activists in conversations on shrinking civic space.

Intergenerational events brought youth activists together with more experienced feminists and UN Member States. A high-level advocacy campaign on equal pay for work of equal value encompassed the setting up and launch of the Equal Pay Champions Platform as well as the multi-stakeholder Equal Pay International Coalition with