

Galvanising Africa to Move Forward Faster on the SDGs



Communiqué - UNGA79 CEO Roundtable Side Event

The CEO Roundtable, convened by the United Nations Global Compact Nigeria in collaboration with the Milken Institute, aimed to raise awareness, foster collaboration, drive concrete actions, and enhance accountability. The roundtable successfully concluded with a resounding call to accelerate Africa's progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and in collaboration with Nigerian businesses. The high-level event, held under Chatham House Rule, gathered C-level business leaders, policymakers, and development experts, as well as other key stakeholders from the private and public sectors in Nigeria to strategize on galvanizing Africa to move faster on five critical SDG themes: **Gender Equality, Climate Action, Living Wage, Water Resilience, and SDG Finance & Investment.**

Leading African business executives participated in the event, including Ubuntu Group, Sterling Bank, Exxon Mobil, MTN Nigeria, Bridge Partners, UTM Offshore Ltd, SEPLAT Energy, Woodhall Capital, and Equity Banque Commerciale du Congo. Additionally, the Governors of Benue, Nasarawa and Kaduna States, along with the Minister of Trade, Industry, and Investment, were in attendance.



In addition to highlighting the United Nations Global Compact's Forward Faster initiative, the roundtable also covered the strategic importance of Nigeria to the Milken Institute's Africa strategy and its ongoing engagement there. This engagement includes the Milken Institute The health team's recent participation alongside the National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT) around Nigeria's cancer control and research and its recent gathering of International Finance Corporation--Milken Institute Capital Markets Program Nigerian alumni for a roundtable on debt sustainability.

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Keynote Address

The keynote emphasized the importance of government policies that foster collaboration between the private sector and civil society. She called for bold steps in sustainable development and encouraged businesses to set ambitious targets that align with climate justice and gender equality.

Discussion Highlights

Moderated discussions centered on the urgent need for businesses across Africa to take a leading role in addressing the continent's most pressing developmental challenges. Participants agreed that businesses must step up efforts to align corporate practices with the 2030 agenda and implement actions that deliver long-term impact.

Gender Equality: Ensuring equal representation and leadership opportunities for women by 2037 emerged as a central theme. Discussions stressed the importance of setting clear, measurable targets for gender parity across all sectors. Participants committed to scaling initiatives such as gender-neutral job evaluations, leadership training, and maternity support programs.



Climate Action: The dialogue on climate action underscored Africa’s vulnerability to climate change. Calls were made for ambitious science-based targets to achieve net-zero emissions by 2030. Business leaders emphasized the need for public-private collaboration in climate resilience and climate justice, particularly for communities most affected by environmental degradation.

Living Wage: Achieving a living wage for 100% of employees by 2032 was a key takeaway. Participants discussed joint action plans with contractors and stakeholders to ensure fair compensation across supply chains, with a focus on supporting vulnerable workers.

Water Resilience: Given Africa’s increasing water scarcity, the need for sustainable water management practices was underscored. Business leaders agreed to integrate science-based approaches into water use and invest in innovative solutions to improve water security, particularly in rural areas.

SDG Finance & Investment: Mobilizing finance for sustainable development is critical to achieving the SDGs. The roundtable highlighted the need to align corporate investments with SDG priorities and develop financing strategies that attract institutional investors. Businesses were encouraged to integrate SDG-aligned investments into their core strategies and track progress through transparent reporting mechanisms.

United Nations Global Compact of Nigeria Outcomes and Next Steps.

1. **Commitments to Action:** Participating businesses pledged to integrate the Forward Faster initiative into their corporate strategies, aiming to drive meaningful progress across the five key SDG areas.
2. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Enhanced partnerships were formed, fostering collaboration between the private sector, governments, and civil society to address Africa’s unique challenges and opportunities.
3. **Action Plans:** Actionable strategies were developed to implement key initiatives in gender equality, climate resilience, living wages, water security, and SDG-aligned finance.
4. **Accountability Mechanisms:** Business leaders agreed to adopt robust monitoring frameworks to ensure transparency and accountability in tracking progress toward the SDGs.

The CEO Roundtable reaffirmed the importance of mobilizing collective action to address Africa’s developmental challenges. With only seven years remaining until the 2030 deadline,



Network Nigeria



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there is a renewed urgency for stakeholders to collaborate, innovate, and act decisively to ensure Africa's sustainable future.

For more information visit:

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This communiqué is issued to drive forward the momentum of Africa's efforts to achieve the SDGs, ensuring that the collective impact of all stakeholders helps to deliver on these crucial global goals.