



BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY: REBUILD BETTER

THREE INSIGHTS: WHAT IS THE BUSINESS ROLE IN RESPONDING TO THE SURGE IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

DATE: **THURSDAY 03/12**

THEME: **GENDER**

FORMAT: **WEBINAR**

SPEAKERS

- **Natalie Deacon**, Executive Director, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, President, Avon Foundation for Women
- **Nomsa Fulbrook-Kagwe**, ESG Impact Executive, CDC Group
- **Joe Sutcliffe**, Senior Adviser, Dignified Work, Care International

- **Lindsey Block**, Head of Partnerships and Capacity Building, Primark

Moderator:

Zahid Torres-Rahman, *Business Fights Poverty*

IN THIS WEBINAR, HOSTED WITH CDC GROUP AND CARE INTERNATIONAL UK, OUR PANELLISTS DISCUSSED THE ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN TAKE TO TACKLE THE INCREASING LEVELS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WITNESSED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, INCLUDING IN THE WORKPLACE. OUR SPEAKERS TOUCHED ON TOPICS RELATED TO HOW INVESTORS AND BUSINESSES CAN TACKLE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DIRECTLY, THROUGH THEIR OWN ACTIONS ACROSS THEIR CORE BUSINESS, AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH THEIR POLICY AND ADVOCACY INITIATIVES.

KEY INSIGHTS

1. THE FIRST STEP IS TO RECOGNISE THAT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EXISTS AND IS WIDESPREAD

Joe Sutcliffe stressed that we will not rebuild better until we ensure that women can live their lives and progress in their careers free from violence. In this respect, companies must recognise how gender-based violence is spread around workplaces, marketplaces, and in homes. Moreover, in times of economic stress and social confinement, research has shown that episodes of gender-based violence around the world increase significantly. Natalie

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Deacon remarked that companies need to offer dedicated support to their female employees, and raise awareness of the issue among stakeholders and embed diversity and inclusivity within their cultures.

2. ENGAGING A BROAD COMMUNITY IS ESSENTIAL TO TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Lindsey Block highlighted the challenges that exist to transmit initiatives of women empowerment and non-discrimination to companies' value chains and that as a result, many women face unique challenges progressing their careers. Similarly, Nomsa Fulbrook-Kagwe explained that practical steps to ensure that investors do not invest resources in companies not committed to this issue include contractual safeguards against gender-based violence risks and a clear, enforceable definition of what this type of violence means. The panelists emphasised some key steps: specific training sessions for employees, democratising the issue to ever wider audiences, educating younger demographics, and investing in campaigns that help create leaders that will be role-models.

KEY STEPS: SPECIFIC TRAINING SESSIONS FOR EMPLOYEES, DEMOCRATISING THE ISSUE TO EVER WIDER AUDIENCES, EDUCATING YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHICS, AND INVESTING IN CAMPAIGNS THAT HELP CREATE LEADERS THAT WILL BE ROLE-MODELS.

COMPANIES CAN LEVERAGE THEIR PARTNERSHIPS AND INVOLVE THEIR STAKEHOLDERS IN MAKING COMMUNITIES A SAFE SPACE.

3. THERE IS A BUSINESS CASE FOR TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Joe Sutcliffe talked about the crucial role businesses play in advocating for policy changes and in adopting ILO Convention no. 190 as a framework for how to eliminate gender-based violence in the world of work. Nomsa Fulbrook-Kagwe argued that besides the ethical argument, that workplaces must be safe for everyone, companies must consider the financial, legal, and reputational costs they will incur by not observing the highest standards expected from society. Besides, an inclusive workplace attracts and retains talent. All panellists called businesses to continue to share, speak up, and speak out about tackling gender-based violence. Companies can leverage their partnerships and involve their stakeholders in making communities a safe space.

RESOURCES

- [Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#)
- [End Violence Against Women](#)
- [Private Equity and Value Creation: A Fund Manager's Guide to Gender-smart Investing](#)
- [Ending Gender-based Violence](#)
- [How Business Can Tackle Gender Based Violence in the World of Work: A Toolkit for Action](#)