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## Opportunities for Women: Challenging harmful social norms and gender stereotypes to unlock women's potential

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#### PRODUCED

by Unilever Chief Sustainability Office

#### CONTACT

Global Partnerships and Advocacy for Women and Livelihoods

Katja.Freiwald@unilever.com

Sandra.Fontano@unilever.com

#### AUTHORS

Adrian Hodges Advisory Ltd (AHA Ltd)

[www.hodgesadvisory.biz](http://www.hodgesadvisory.biz)

#### DESIGN

The Ayres Design Company Ltd

[www.theayres.co.uk](http://www.theayres.co.uk)

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# FOREWORD

**The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, shaped by both public and private sectors and the voices of civil society, was adopted by world leaders two years ago as a blueprint for making our world more equitable, sustainable and livable. Its goals and targets are jointly agreed as solutions to the inequality, conflict and unrest that we see worldwide.**

A key target in the 2030 Agenda is to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, everywhere. This is so important because of the crushing impact of laws and policies that explicitly restrict women's ability to engage economically and socially, coupled with the less visible but equally powerful cultural and social norms that portray women as unequal to men - and make them so in the process.

Negative stereotypes of women have become deeply rooted, even in countries with strong anti-discrimination legislation. Confronting and changing stereotypes is therefore central to evolving how both women and men are able to operate in society and in the economy. This is a responsibility that touches every facet of people's lives, from what they see and experience at home, to what they learn at school, and how they are treated at work or on the street. Everyone has a role in shaping - and re-shaping - those stereotypes. This is a shared goal, whose success has an impact on us all.

That is why at UN Women we are working to secure transformative commitments from partners across governments, corporations, media, and many other sectors to remove structural barriers, discriminatory social norms and gender biases that impede women's ability to engage economically, politically and socially. Part of this is demonstrating the ways in which women's representation - or the lack of it - confirms and deepens cultural biases. A major element is also working with partners like Unilever who are actively seeking to change those biases in their own places of work, and throughout their chain of influence.

**PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UN WOMEN



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# PREFACE

**In many ways, the world in 2017 is freer and fairer than ever before. People have more freedom to choose the career they dream about and marry the person they love. Yet there are still many human rights challenges that are limiting our daily lives, and one of them is the inequality of men and women.**

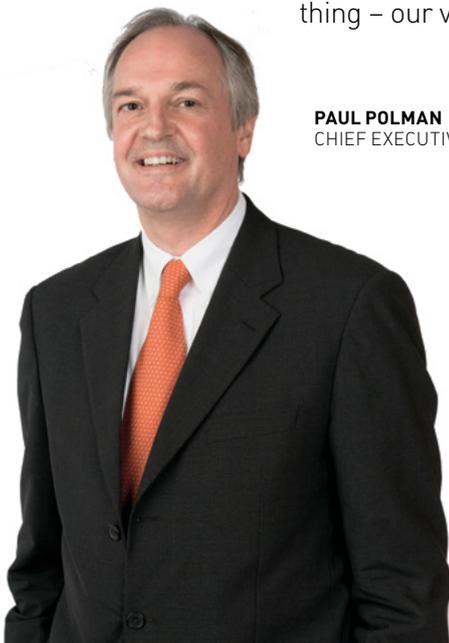
At the current rate, it will require another 170 years before we have full economic gender equality, according to WEF's Global Gender Report, taking us all the way to 2187. We cannot and should not wait that long. Numerous barriers are preventing women from actively participating in the economy and realising their full potential, from discrimination in hiring and unequal pay to the risk of harassment and physical violence – underpinned by harmful social norms and gender stereotypes.

I've always believed that women have been undervalued. When we empower women, society and the economy benefit, grow and thrive. That's why this topic is called out specifically in the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5. But we also know that Goal 5 actually permeates all the others. If we fail to tackle gender inequality, the rest of the goals are likely to fail too.

Fortunately, the private sector has an opportunity to make a real difference – in employee policies, in hiring practices and through the value chain. And it makes enormous economic sense too, with an overwhelming number of studies showing time and time again that gender equality is good for talent development, culture, innovation, leadership and performance.

As this report demonstrates, there is no single solution to tackling gender inequality. It requires a holistic approach, from equal pay and representation in our workforce to supporting female smallholder farmers in our supply chain, and ultimately to how we represent our brands to consumers through removing gender stereotypes. Underpinning these efforts, it's crucial that we continue to forge and deepen partnerships that will drive broader systemic change and benefit all women, everywhere.

This kind of approach is needed now more than ever. As a society, we remain a long way away from achieving gender equality of outcomes – at home, at work and in the public sphere. If business works in partnership with governments and civil society and leverages the size and scale of global value chains like ours, we can achieve a breakthrough. It isn't just about empowering women and girls because it's the right thing – our vision of a prosperous, poverty-free world depends on it.



**PAUL POLMAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, UNILEVER

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral and social issue... as much as \$28 trillion, or 26%, could be added to global annual GDP by 2025

MCKINSEY GLOBAL INSTITUTE

If present trends continue, it will take 170 years to reach gender equality

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

**Today, women and girls enjoy greater rights and opportunities than at any time in history – and yet full gender equality remains a distant goal. Authoritative sources suggest it will take 170 years to achieve.**

It is significant, then, that nearly 200 governments have signed up to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, and have recognised that this is critical to progress across the entire 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. According to the United Nations High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, "the global commitment to gender equality has never been stronger".<sup>1</sup>

Unilever shares this commitment.

We recognise that gender equality is first and foremost a matter of human rights. We also believe that increasing gender equality will be one of the most powerful enablers of economic growth and of human development in the coming decades.

This is why we have made our 'Opportunities for Women' commitment a key part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP), with an initial goal to empower 5 million women by 2020 and an ambition to positively impact many more in the future in our value chain and beyond. The benefits for society are clear, and they will help us grow our business.

## Understanding the challenge

Studies by leading experts, coupled with our own research, suggest that some of the strongest forces behind persistent gender gaps are harmful

social norms and stereotypes about women and men. These norms and stereotypes shape the perceived value of girls relative to boys, determine what is considered 'appropriate' work, burden women with disproportionate shares of unpaid household and family care, normalise the idea that men should have control over women's choices, justify restrictions of all kinds and in some places appear to sanction violence against women.

It is increasingly recognised that shaping more supportive social norms and challenging outdated stereotypes will be a powerful driver of progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. At Unilever, we call this 'unstereotyping', and we believe business has a strong role to play.

## Unilever's vision and commitment

We envisage a world in which every woman can create the kind of life she wishes to lead, unconstrained by harmful norms and stereotypes. It is a vision in which women and girls have the same opportunities as men and boys, without fear of prejudice, harassment or violence and regardless of age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

It is a vision in which men are free also from the confines of adverse social norms and stereotypes of manhood, and in which economies are growing and creating opportunities for men and women alike.

We are working toward this vision by adopting a holistic approach that leverages a full range of assets and expertise along our extended value



## Changing norms should be at the top of the 2030 Agenda to expand women's economic opportunities

UN HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

## We envisage a world in which every woman can create the kind of life she wishes to lead, unconstrained by harmful norms and stereotypes

UNILEVER

chain. We start with progressive policies and practices in our own **workplace** and **supply chain** operations. Building on this foundation, we collaborate with businesses and civil society organisations to create opportunities for women in our extended supply chain, in our sales and **customer development** operations and, via products and brands, for **consumers**. By engaging in partnerships, thought leadership and advocacy across all that we do, we aim to unleash the power of collective action for sustainable, transformational change for **society at large**.

We are on track to achieve our initial goal of empowering 5 million women in our value chain by 2020 via programmes focused on promoting rights and safety, building skills and capabilities, and creating economic opportunity through jobs and livelihoods.

Our ambition, though, is much greater.

Recognising that harmful norms and stereotypes are a drag on equal opportunity and on the broader sustainable development agenda, we intend to ramp up our efforts to 'unstereotype' our workplace and, over time, our extended supply chain and customer development networks.

In addition, as a leading global consumer goods company and one of the largest advertisers in the world, we have the opportunity to touch the lives of millions of people every day. We will activate the power of our brands by 'unstereotyping' our advertising and portraying diverse images of women and girls, while collaborating with trusted partners to cultivate more positive and supportive social norms.

### Priorities for business action: changing the way the world works for women

The fight for gender equality and women's empowerment is not Unilever's alone. All stakeholders – both individuals and institutions – have roles to play in making the changes necessary to close persistent gender gaps. We will continue to collaborate with international agencies, civil society groups and governments. At the same time, we will leverage our position to promote change in the business community.

Drawing on insights and expertise from leading organisations, we highlight priority areas for accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment in the private sector. Specifically, we call on business to:

- Be gender aware, by ensuring they have the right information and data in place to inform policies
- Be gender active, by having the right policies and practices in place that respect women's rights and empower professional and personal development
- Be the new norm, by ensuring that harmful norms are not perpetuated through outdated business practices, while actively promoting more positive portrayals of women along the value chain to challenge stereotypes.

We call upon other companies to be part of a movement to make gender equality a reality. Join forces with us and other businesses in collective action initiatives. Be gender aware. Be gender active. Be the new norm. Together we can change the way the world works for women.

# INTRODUCTION

## Studies show that women and girls have made great strides – and yet gender equality remains a distant goal.

**The World Economic Forum estimates that if present trends continue, it will take 170 years to reach gender equality across economic, political, health and educational dimensions.<sup>2</sup>**

It is significant, then, that nearly 200 governments around the world have signed up to the concrete goal of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by 2030: Sustainable Development Goal 5. In addition, they recognise that “gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Goals and targets” of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.<sup>3</sup>

According to the United Nations High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, “the global commitment to gender equality has never been stronger”.<sup>4</sup>

Unilever shares this commitment.

### We recognise that gender equality is first and foremost a matter of human rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

### We also believe that gender equality and women’s empowerment are powerful enablers of economic growth and human development

The McKinsey Global Institute has estimated that if women played identical roles in the labour force to men – employed at the same rate, for the same

number of hours, in the same industry sectors – it would add US\$28 trillion, or 26%, to global GDP by 2025.<sup>5</sup> Western Europe could increase its GDP by 23% and South Asia by 48%.<sup>6</sup> According to bankers Goldman Sachs, the return on investing in women and girls is one of the highest available in the developing world.<sup>7</sup>

In developing and developed countries alike, gender equality and economic opportunity for women are associated with higher growth and per capita incomes. And they trigger a virtuous cycle. Greater labour force participation and production generate greater income. Greater income facilitates greater demand for products and services. Women, in particular, spend their income on products and services that build human capital, laying the foundations for even greater growth in the future.<sup>8</sup> Research shows that women reinvest 90% of their income into their families, compared to 30–40% for men.<sup>9</sup> The impacts are immediate, and they last – improving the health, education and incomes of future generations.

### And the business case for Unilever is clear

We depend on women as discerning consumers with rising incomes and full freedom to choose how they spend. It is reported that women control 64% of consumer spending and are the fastest-growing group of consumers in the world today.<sup>10</sup>

We depend on women as creative, engaged employees with the insight to meet the needs of a predominantly female consumer base and the skills and leadership styles to succeed in a changing operating environment.

And we depend on women as empowered, sustainability-minded partners in our supply chain and route to market.

**70%**

**OF THE PEOPLE making the decisions to buy Unilever brands are women**

**64%**

**OF CONSUMER SPENDING is controlled by women**



“The Global Goals cannot be achieved without ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment.”  
**BAN KI-MOON** FORMER UN SECRETARY-GENERAL



**Unilever has a long track record of supporting different aspects of sustainable development.**

Our approach was formalised in 2010 with the launch of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP), which serves as our blueprint for sustainable growth. The USLP includes three big goals and sets stretching targets, including how we source agricultural raw materials and how consumers use our brands. USLP activity is aligned with and contributes to the UN SDGs.

Many of the programmes in place to deliver against these goals engage and positively impact women and girls, whether through increased access to safe drinking water, better availability of soap to prevent the spread of bacterial infections, improved nutrition for families or techniques to mitigate the effects of climate change on smallholder farmers, many of whom are women.

**In 2014, we made gender equality and women’s empowerment a specific part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan.**

We now have an explicit commitment on women under the Enhancing Livelihoods pillar: to empower 5 million women by 2020. And our ambition is to empower many more by activating the power of our brands and triggering the transformative effect of collective action.

We call our work in this area ‘Opportunities for Women’.

This paper outlines our understanding of the challenge and our vision for change. It describes the holistic approach we are taking to empower women in our extended value chain by promoting rights and safety, building skills and capabilities, and creating economic opportunity through jobs and livelihoods. And it describes our emerging work to combat the underlying norms and stereotypes responsible for many of the barriers women face, thereby driving systemic change that enhances opportunities for all women, everywhere.

The benefits for society are clear, and they will help us grow our business.

Yet none of this is easy. It requires us to find new ways of measuring and managing our social impact cost effectively and at scale. It requires us to find new ways of partnering with others, including government and civil society. In particular, it requires us to harness the collective influence of the wider business community. In conclusion, the paper highlights three priorities all businesses can pursue to help change the way the world works for women.

# UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

## Troubling gender gaps persist around the world, with life-shaping consequences for women and men.

**Girls are still less likely to be in primary school than boys.<sup>11</sup> In some places, it is still common to see child brides. Women are burdened with disproportionate shares of unpaid care and domestic work<sup>12</sup> and fewer than half have jobs, compared to nearly 80% of men.<sup>13</sup>**

Women earn less<sup>14</sup> and remain vastly under-represented in the senior leadership ranks of both business and government.<sup>15</sup> Women trail men in access to other services that people need to be productive, like banking, credit, telecommunications and the internet. Most women entrepreneurs go into business out of necessity, rather than opportunity, and operate in the informal, unregulated and unprotected sector.<sup>16</sup>

Women and girls often face sexual harassment in public spaces, reducing their ability to participate in school, work and in public life, limiting their access to essential services and enjoyment of cultural and recreational opportunities, and threatening their health and well-being. Many women today are not physically safe, either in public or in private: an appalling 70% of women around the world experience violence at some point in their lives.<sup>17</sup>

### Some of the strongest forces behind these gender gaps are harmful social norms and gender stereotypes.

A timely report by the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment identifies four systemic constraints facing women and girls. Adverse social norms is at the top of the list, and it permeates and contributes to the other three: discriminatory laws and lack of legal protection; the failure to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid household work and care; and a lack of access to financial, digital and property assets.<sup>18</sup>

Harmful social norms and the outdated gender stereotypes that accompany them have serious consequences for women and girls. They help create environments in which it is considered 'ok' for husbands to harm their wives,<sup>19</sup> in which it is 'ok' to pay women 20% less than their male colleagues for the same job,<sup>20</sup> in which it is 'ok' that women cannot own land or open a bank account without a

**Norm** (\'nɔːrm): a principle of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behaviour

**Stereotype** (ste-reo-type): something conforming to a fixed or general pattern, especially: a standardised mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgement

MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

husband's permission, in which it is 'ok' that women do two and a half times as much unpaid household and child care work as men,<sup>21</sup> while at the same time increasingly being expected to earn a greater share of the family income.<sup>22</sup> While outright discrimination is increasingly unacceptable and even illegal in many places, it has simply given way to double standards and unconscious bias that reflect and continue to fuel harmful norms and stereotypes.

Harmful norms and stereotypes are deeply embedded – in law, politics, corporate culture, popular culture, religion, and family life. They are also deeply psychologically ingrained, rooted in the fierce human desire to belong. People conform because they believe most other people conform, and that others think they should conform, too.<sup>23</sup> The social rewards for doing so – and the social sanctions for failing to do so – are very real.<sup>24</sup>

Norms and stereotypes around womanhood are only half of the problem; norms and stereotypes around manhood are also detrimental. Together, they shape the perceived value of girls relative to boys, normalise the idea that men should have control over women's choices, justify violence and restrictions on women's mobility or ability to own property, determine what is considered 'appropriate' work, and prevent men from taking on equal shares of traditionally female work, whether in the labour market or in the home. Equally, ideas of male identity will have to change for gender equality to be achieved.

## Sound familiar?

Many people fail to realise just how much they are influenced by social norms and stereotypes, a phenomenon that researchers call 'unconscious bias'.

Do any of these sentiments sound familiar?

- A woman's place is in the home
- Men who show their emotions are not 'real men'
- Women are better with children
- Men don't cry
- Mothers aren't fully committed to their jobs
- Men are better drivers
- Women aren't physically or emotionally strong enough for some jobs
- A good man provides for the family and his wife shouldn't need to work
- Women should conform to traditional – male – ideals of beauty.



## People tell us harmful norms and stereotypes affect them every day in different ways.

In research by Unilever brands, when asked what concepts like feminism and gender equality mean to them, women and girls stress that they do not want to be the same as men and boys. Neither do they want to be the same as one another. They are a heterogeneous group, and they want to be themselves – to make their own life choices, big and small, unconstrained by preconceived notions of what is and is not 'ok'.

Societal expectations of how women and girls should behave and what they should look like can have serious consequences. Our brands are engaged with women and girls all over the world who feel they do not measure up to traditional standards of beauty, who feel they have to work twice as hard to prove themselves and who feel they have insufficient control over important parts of their lives.

These sentiments and their ramifications are illustrated by findings from interviews Dove undertook with 10,000 women and girls in 13 countries over 2015-16, published in *The Dove Global Beauty and Confidence Report, 2016*.

"I am super optimistic about my future, but there are invisible forces in life which I simply don't have control over."

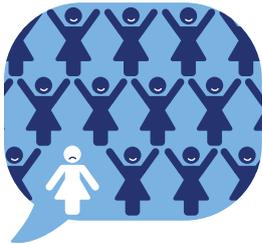
**YOUNG WOMAN**  
UNILEVER CONSUMER RESEARCH

"From bosses to husbands, it is still rare to see men who really consider that women are partners in every journey."

**BRAZILIAN WOMAN**  
UNILEVER CONSUMER RESEARCH

*Dove* The Dove Global Beauty and Confidence Report

When women and girls don't feel good about the way they look...



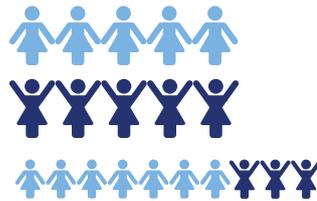
**9 in 10 women**  
**8 in 10 girls**

opt out of **important life activities** such as engaging with friends and loved ones



**9 in 10 women**  
**7 in 10 girls**

stop themselves from eating or otherwise **put their health at risk** (e.g. avoid going to the doctor)



**5 in 10 women**  
**7 in 10 girls**

have **not been assertive** in their opinion or **stuck to their decision**



**6 in 10 women** believe **social media pressures** people to look a certain way

**7 in 10 women** and **girls** believe **media and advertising set an unrealistic standard of beauty** most women can't ever achieve



**8 in 10 women** and **girls** feel **under pressure to never make mistakes or show weakness**



**8 out of 10**



**7 in 10 women** and **girls** wish the media did a better job of **portraying women of diverse physical attractiveness**

EXTRACT FROM THE DOVE GLOBAL BEAUTY AND CONFIDENCE REPORT, 2016

In addition, research by the Unilever corporate brand sought to understand how issues of social norms and stereotypes are commonly experienced by workers around the world, surveying a random sample of 9,000 employees across different industry sectors in eight different countries (non-Unilever employees).

Undertaken in association with partner The Female Quotient, the research revealed that adverse norms and outdated stereotypes are impeding positive change at work. Men are increasingly engaged in the challenge of gender equality on an intellectual level, but stereotypes still pose a major problem in practice. For example, an overwhelming 77% of men and a majority (55%) of women believe that men are the best choice for high stakes projects.

Some 60% of women and 49% of men reported that stereotypes impact their career, their personal life, or both. For instance, women and men both hesitate to speak up about workplace discrimination and inappropriate behaviour. A strong majority (67%) of women feel that they must simply 'get over it'. Just over half (55%) of men and even more women (64%) believe that men do not challenge each other when they witness such behaviour. Unequal division of housework and childcare also stifles progress: almost half of women see this as a barrier to attaining equality in the workplace.

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**Shaping more supportive social norms will be a powerful driver of progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.**

Unsupportive social norms and their consequences are unhelpful to Unilever's employees and suppliers and to our business. Female employees may have to leave the company because their partners' employers do not offer the flexibility they need to fulfill equal shares of the household and family care work. We see women running farms who are unable to borrow funds for productivity-enhancing measures because the land required as surety is not registered in their names. Women shop owners may decide not to attend training sessions because they are afraid of being harassed on the journey to the training location.

It is instructive then, that a number of international organisations have recently pinpointed shaping more supportive norms as a priority for action.

The World Bank has reported that "gender equality is about changing the norms and expectations about female and male roles and ultimately changing power relationships."<sup>25</sup> The McKinsey Global Institute has written that "attitudes and social norms exert a heavy influence on gender equality issues and these cannot easily be budged. But acting on this front is a priority if barriers to closing the gender gap are to be removed."<sup>26</sup> And the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women concluded that "changing norms should be at the top of the 2030 Agenda."<sup>27</sup>

Social norms are considered in a constant state of flux, as they are shaped by human interaction. In some societies, for example, gender is already starting to be viewed and embraced as fluid, with nascent acceptance of those who do not conform to standard definitions of male and female.

Intervening deliberately to affect norms is not straightforward. There is a range of broad structural drivers, including education, demographic and economic change, and legal reform. These combine with individual factors such as personal beliefs, agency and resilience in the face of negative reactions from others to behaviour considered 'different'. The literature suggests that leaders, role models and exposure to counter-stereotypical images – for example in the media – can all help to change attitudes and expected behaviours. It is generally accepted that a society-wide approach is needed, including, importantly, among men and boys.

**At Unilever, we call this 'unstereotyping' – and we believe business has a strong role to play.**

Companies have a significant impact on the lives of employees who may spend large proportions of their waking hours at work, on the entrepreneurs who depend on securing business orders to support their families, on the consumers who see and hear advertising virtually every day. From recruiting and employment to procurement and sales, to marketing and advertising, companies have a wide range of levers they can use to cultivate more positive and diverse images of women and enable new behaviours that level the playing field for all.

**"Stereotypes and social norms have a huge impact on gender equality issues globally. Whether consciously or unconsciously, we are all subject to the biases in our mindsets. Our view, informed by our research and direct experience, is that finding ways to 'unstereotype' mindsets and 'unstereotype' our value chain will be key to making equal opportunity the new norm."**

**KEITH WEED** CHIEF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, UNILEVER

# UNILEVER'S VISION AND COMMITMENT

Unilever envisages a world in which every woman can create the kind of life she wishes to lead, unconstrained by harmful norms and stereotypes.

**It is a vision in which women and girls have the same opportunities as men and boys, and can choose among them without fear of prejudice, harassment or violence, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, disability, religion or sexual orientation.**

A vision in which social and cultural norms help, rather than hinder, women as they work towards their personal and professional goals. A vision in which women have equal rights and access to the knowledge, skills, networks, financial resources and services, land and other productive assets they need. A vision in which women are healthy and safe from harm.

Necessarily, this is a vision in which men are also free from the confines of traditional gender norms and stereotypes. And it is a vision in which economies are growing and creating opportunities for all.

Our approach to unlocking women's potential is illustrated opposite, framing the why, the what, and the how of realising Unilever's vision.

**We believe that gender equality and women's empowerment are powerful enablers for human development and economic growth.**

In the *Introduction* we explained why we think gender equality and women's empowerment are important. First and foremost, as a matter of fundamental human rights. Secondly, as enablers of global social and economic progress that underpin all SDGs. Thirdly, as drivers of business opportunity for Unilever.

In *Understanding the challenge*, we laid out our interpretation of the barriers and obstacles that women and girls face based on insights from trusted partners and our experience. This has informed our commitment and ambition.

**Our commitment is to empower 5 million women by 2020, but our ambition is to create opportunities for many more.**

In 2014, we announced our Opportunities for Women USLP target areas. As well as striving to achieve a gender-balanced organisation for management, we focus on three areas where we as a business are well positioned to make a tangible difference: promoting rights and safety, offering skills training, and creating economic opportunities through jobs and livelihoods.

When engaging with women in different settings, we observed that some social norms and gender stereotypes create real and practical impediments to progress. However, as a leading global consumer goods company with operations and extensive networks and relationships in over 190 countries, and as one of the world's largest advertisers reaching millions of people every day, we believe we are well placed to have a potentially transformational impact on how some norms and stereotypes play out.

Consequently, our commitment will expand to find ways to challenge harmful norms and outdated stereotypes.

**We will realise our vision by leveraging a range of assets along our extended value chain and in society at large.**

We start with progressive policies and practices in our own **workplace** and **supply chain** operations. Building on this foundation, we collaborate with others to create opportunities for women in our extended supply chain, in our sales and **customer development** operations and, via products and brands, for **consumers**. By engaging in partnership, thought leadership and advocacy across all that we do, we unleash the power of collective action for sustainable, transformational change in **society at large**.

As we promote equal access to rights, build skills and create economic opportunities, programmes like our Shakti door-to-door sales model and our training of smallholder farmers already shift expectations about women and challenge long-established norms. We are already making a difference with our brands. The Dove Real Beauty campaign has been challenging stereotypes of female beauty for nearly 15 years. The Dove Self-Esteem Project has reached over 20 million young people globally with body confidence and self-esteem education since 2004 and aims to reach more. Additionally, in an industry first, in 2016 we made a groundbreaking commitment to 'unstereotype' all of our advertising and feature more progressive portrayals of women and men.

Going forward, we intend to ramp up our efforts to 'unstereotype' our value chain, starting with our own workplace and, over time, reaching across our extended supply chain and customer development networks.

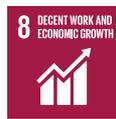
# OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN: UNILEVER'S APPROACH TO UNLOCKING WOMEN'S POTENTIAL

Framing why gender equality and women's empowerment is important to Unilever, what practical action and difference the company is committed to making under the umbrella of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) and how this will be delivered through our extended value chain and beyond.

## The Why

**Human development and economic growth through gender equality and women's empowerment**

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable **economic growth**, full and productive **employment** and decent **work** for all



**Reduce inequality** within and among countries

Achieve **gender equality** and **empower** all women and girls

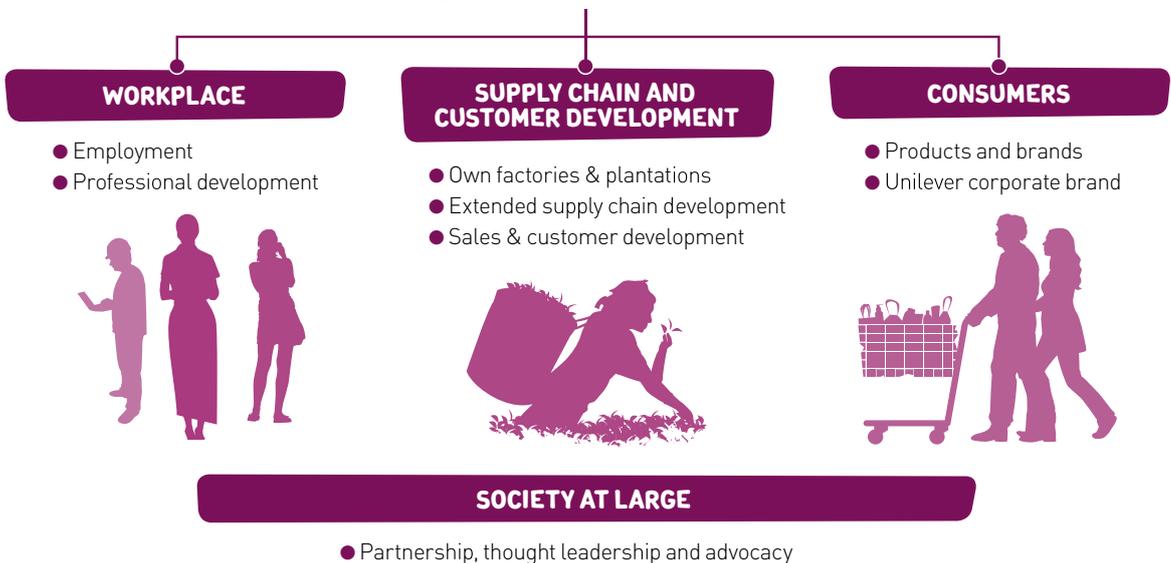
## The What

**Unilever's commitment: Opportunities for Women**



## The How

**Through our extended value chain**





“We work with women in the workforce to help build the confidence needed to navigate a biased world. We work with men to increase their understanding that a balanced workplace is good for them and for business. We work across the whole organisation to ensure we build a corporate culture in which women and men can thrive together.”

**LEENA NAIR** CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, UNILEVER

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## Our commitment to furthering gender equality and women's empowerment starts firmly in our own workplace.

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We currently employ some 169,000 people in over 100 countries.

Our employees come from different cultures, races, religions, age groups and genders, and have different sexual orientations, personalities, viewpoints, work styles, and mindsets. We value these differences and believe that they enrich our teams, help us to make better-informed decisions and contribute to the success of our business.

There are comprehensive studies and data sources that prove the business case conclusively: a more diverse and inclusive workforce can boost financial performance, reputation, innovation and staff motivation.<sup>28</sup>

Of the various dimensions of diversity, we focus especially on gender. Women bring skills and leadership styles that are important to innovation, customer connection, success in the marketplace, financial results and reputation – such as emotional intelligence, collaboration, authenticity and an ability to operate in a world of increased transparency and to embrace purpose-driven, long-term thinking. And we can make a big

difference in women's lives by offering equal opportunity, enabling them to bring their whole selves to work, valuing their unique contributions, and helping them overcome systemic disadvantages to climb the corporate ladder – where they can help make our corporate culture even more inclusive, and serve as role models shaping the aspirations and expectations of future generations. We commit to report publicly on progress.

### Our current priorities include:

- Achieving gender balance in management
- Strengthening processes and policies for recruiting, retaining and developing female talent across the business
- Creating an inclusive culture by building awareness, embedding diversity and inclusion into processes and measuring progress
- 'Unstereotyping' mindsets in our workplace

### Spotlight on achieving gender balance in management

Gender balance in management is a key priority. We believe that the leadership styles and perspectives that both genders bring to teams are an important ingredient in business success. To achieve this, we combine policies and processes with a focus on cultural and behavioural factors that influence women's retention and development.

Our approach includes:

- **Senior leadership accountability:** The Global Diversity Board led by our CEO and with our most senior as its members drives the gender balance agenda. Quarterly reviews examine progress and drive focused actions.
- **Clear targets and measurement:** Metrics such as inflow and promotion rates are monitored closely. Targets drive progress, and all stages from recruitment to exit are monitored.
- **Internal communication** about the role gender balance plays in our collective success.
- **External engagement** showcasing our initiatives and our progress to help attract more and better female talent.
- **A network of diversity and inclusion champions** who, on top of their day jobs, help the global Diversity and Inclusion team by brainstorming ideas, co-creating plans and generating local interest.

We have made significant progress, with the proportion of women in management increasing from 38% in 2010 to over 45% in 2016, while at Board level, the proportion of female Non-Executive Directors is at 50%.

At the most senior managerial levels, however, there is more to do, as only 23% of managers are women. We are offering special mentoring for high-potential women to try to close this gap.

Going forward, Unilever will strive for equal representation not only in management but across all roles in the company.

### Spotlight on recruiting, retaining and developing female talent

Programmes across the business help to attract, retain and develop female talent. Programmes are based on a global framework and tailored to meet the needs of particular functions, countries and regions. For example, in the UK, women want agile working so they can avoid long commutes and fulfil care responsibilities; in Pakistan, where multiple family members may be at home, women would rather work in the office but need security for their commutes. Our programmes include:

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*"Job-sharing has allowed me to continue my career in a role I find challenging, while giving me the flexibility to have time with my son. For our team, they have access to two people's different experiences. For the business, I think there's benefit in having two minds working on the one role."*

**SENIOR CUSTOMER MARKETING EXECUTIVE**  
UNILEVER AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

- **Agile working:** Unilever's award-winning agile working policy allows workers to work anytime, anywhere as long as business needs are fully met.
- **Balanced slates:** Hiring managers must attract equal numbers of male and female applicants for at least 80% of job openings.
- **Mentoring and networking:** Mentoring relationships provide ongoing feedback and advice on career progression and personal development plans, and can play a key role in helping individuals achieve their full potential. Unilever also fosters strong local and global networks that provide valuable opportunities for personal and professional growth, building relationships and interacting with role models and mentors.
- **Leadership development:** Unilever offers high-performing women the chance to participate in leadership programmes that help them build the skills needed to access the senior management ladder.
- **Maternity and paternity support:** Unilever provides holistic support to expectant and new parents as they move into their dual responsibility stage of life. A specially designed Maternity and Paternity Support (MAPS) portal provides guidance to help new mothers and fathers prepare for and manage the transition back to work. It also provides guidance to help line managers manage the transition for their teams. There are a variety of arrangements being planned to support breastfeeding mothers on their return to work and access to crèche facilities.
- **Equal pay:** This is a cornerstone of our remuneration policy. In the US, we have signed the White House Equal Pay Pledge. Even though the Equal Pay Act of 1963 requires equal pay for equal work, women working full time in the US earn only 79% of what men earn. The Pledge

### Partnering to develop female engineering talent

To increase the percentage of women in engineering roles in South Africa, Unilever has partnered with WomEng, a non-profit organisation focused on attracting and retaining women in engineering. WomEng was founded in 2005 by two University of Cape Town civil engineering students and is now expanding in a number of countries.

Unilever provides WomEng with financial support, hosts workshops and offers fellowships for participants. As a result, we have helped develop female engineering talent in South Africa, formed relationships with up-and-coming women engineers and improved its profile as an employer of choice. We have hired 32 WomEng graduates in Africa to date and are piloting the programme in Mexico and Brazil.



includes steps intended to help companies achieve and demonstrate compliance: conducting an annual gender pay analysis across occupations, reviewing hiring and promotion processes to reduce unconscious bias and structural barriers and embedding equal pay efforts into broader equity initiatives in order to close the gender pay gap.

### Spotlight on unstereotyping mindsets in our workplace

Our research with partner The Female Quotient summarised on page 10, suggested that unconscious bias and stereotypes limit career development and progression in business generally; going forward, we intend to explore how much they impact women and men working at Unilever, and identify practical measures to neutralise them. We want to make 'unstereotyped' mindsets the norm in our workplace.

We are taking some steps in this direction already. For example, we are working with neuroscience and technology firm Pymetrics to strip structural

advantage and unconscious bias out of recruiting by gamifying the first stage of the process, and matching candidates to departments based on the aptitudes they demonstrate in a series of online games. This technology also allows us to provide feedback to each and every candidate, whether successful or not, helping them refine their career direction and enhance their prospects for the future. We are currently piloting this technology in our graduate training programmes.

In addition, we are taking steps to engage male employees as champions for women in the workplace. Men can advocate for women's voices to be heard, take a stand against harassment and violence, and model new norms in which men and women share household and family care duties more equally – enabling both to progress in their careers. As part of our efforts, we are promoting the UN Women HeForShe campaign, which aims to engage men and boys as agents of change by encouraging them to take action against inequalities faced by women and girls. Unilever is helping to raise awareness of the campaign and inviting employees to pledge their support.

“Although most business leaders think equal pay is a no-brainer, there are barriers and biases that create gaps. Signing the White House Pledge commits companies like Unilever to collect data to determine if pay gaps exist, close the gaps, and adopt policies that lead to the empowerment and advancement of women.”

**VALERIE JARRETT** FORMER CHAIR OF THE WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL ON WOMEN AND GIRLS AND SENIOR ADVISER TO PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA



“In many of the geographies that we source from, traditional views of women as homemakers and child-carers dominate. Actively identifying and engaging with women as producers and entrepreneurs can help break down these views to change perceptions and reshape the roles women can play in society.”

**MARCENGEL** CHIEF SUPPLY CHAIN OFFICER, UNILEVER

## SUPPLY CHAIN AND CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT: UNILEVER'S OWN OPERATIONS AND EXTENDED SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATIONS

# We believe gender equality in all our operations will help make our business more sustainable and secure.

Unilever owns and operates some 300 factories globally as well as tea estates in Kenya and Tanzania. We also source more than 200,000 different materials ranging from fruit and vegetables to paper, board and office supplies from some 70,000 suppliers across 190 countries.

Gender equality and women's empowerment will help enhance quality, productivity and price stability in the face of risks in the sourcing of agricultural ingredients and produce, and so help ensure business continuity.

At the same time, our extended supply chain offers women entrepreneurial opportunity and employment – providing regular earnings and the means to create jobs for others, gain voice and standing in their families and communities, and demonstrating a wide range of professional paths.

In accordance with the USLP, we are working through our supply chain to achieve human rights, labour standards, and livelihoods targets that exist regardless of gender. At the same time, we are applying a gender lens to ensure that our work towards these targets engages and benefits women, who might be left behind without deliberate measures to overcome structural barriers to their participation. For example, to ensure that women are free from violence and discrimination, we need to work with our suppliers to implement policies

and processes that women trust, with a focus on addressing norms and behaviours that can leave women at risk. Similarly, to enhance the skills and capabilities of women in farming, we need to ensure that training sessions are held at times compatible with family responsibilities and places that are easy and safe to reach.

### Our current and future priorities include:

- Promoting respect for women's rights and safety in supplier operations and the communities where we operate
- Enabling women farmers, particularly smallholders, to improve their skills and capabilities
- Ensuring blue collar jobs in our operations are as open and attractive to women as to men
- Enhancing women's land rights to enable greater access to finance and ability to invest to improve productivity and incomes
- Increasing the diversity of our supply base by sourcing from more women-owned and women-operated businesses

### Spotlight on enabling women farmers to improve their skills and capabilities

In developing countries, women already comprise 43% of the agricultural workforce, and this proportion is growing.<sup>29</sup> But farms worked by women tend to be smaller and less productive.<sup>30</sup> This presents an opportunity for us to build capacity in certain regions, such as Africa, where we have a focus on developing our business.

Most of our relationships with smallholders are indirect, through our suppliers. We work with them to provide a range of training opportunities, striving to ensure that sessions are held at convenient times in accessible locations and that women have access to support structures such as childcare to improve attendance.

In Sudan, one of the poorest countries in the world, we are developing a sustainable supply chain for hibiscus for our herbal infusions, such as Elephant Red Fruits, Saga Forest Fruit and Lipton Strawberry Raspberry. With our supplier Martin Bauer, we are training 5,000 women smallholders in 30 villages to increase yields. We also are supporting better health, for example through providing the women with access to clean drinking water and health and hygiene programmes.

In Madagascar we started collaborating in a public-private partnership with our supplier Symrise and German development agency GIZ in 2014, with the aim to improve the livelihoods of vanilla farmers, many of whom are women. Nearly 3,000 farmers, including women, have participated in training aimed at improving agricultural practices and the quality of their livelihoods across 32 farming villages. Building on this work, Unilever, Symrise and GIZ were joined in a new partnership in 2016 by international NGO Save the Children.

This three-year initiative will provide continued support for farmers to improve their farming practices and business skills, improved access to fair financial services to ensure households have more stable incomes to meet basic needs, as well as a safety net to fall back on. In addition, community education on health, hygiene and child protection practices will be made available to help improve the lives of children. The programme aims to reach 50,000 people in 10,000 households, across 70 villages.

In 2016, we enabled over 800,000 women to access initiatives aiming to develop their skills and expand their opportunities in our extended agricultural supply chain.

### Spotlight on promoting respect for women's rights and safety

In many parts of the world, social and cultural norms foster an environment in which discrimination, harassment and even violence against women are tolerated. This creates problems for women, communities and companies. When women are free from discrimination, harassment and violence, they can be productive at work, transform their families and communities, and fuel their economies.

Our approach to promoting women's rights and safety includes zero tolerance for discrimination, strengthening management capabilities, providing training and raising awareness and, in some cases, improving infrastructure such as street lighting and sanitation facilities. Central to all is the need to work in partnership to tackle root causes successfully. This is illustrated by our work in the tea sector in Kenya, described overleaf.

# 35,000

WOMEN have been targeted by the programme.

# 30%

YIELD INCREASES in women-led households, compared to 20% for households run by men, leading to a 50% increase in net income per crop.





### Closing the productivity gap for female gherkin farmers in India

In 2015, Unilever launched the Enhancing Livelihoods Fund (ELF) in partnership with Oxfam and the Ford Foundation. The Fund provides a mix of loans, guarantees and matching grants for Unilever suppliers to incentivise investment in new processes that aim to improve agricultural practices and crop yields, and at the same time empower women.

One of the first Unilever suppliers to receive ELF investment was Marcatus QED. Marcatus QED used this investment alongside its own funding and funding from its suppliers to research, develop and partially launch a gender-inclusive responsible farming curriculum designed to help double the yield in its Indian gherkin supply chain within three years.

The Indian gherkin supply chain is fragmented, with more than 18,000 farming families in more than 2,000 villages supplying nine different companies that in turn supply Marcatus QED. Women-run farms generally experience lower yields than those run by men. And only 20% of traditional training sessions were reaching women, even though women were doing more than 50% of the farming work.

In this context, the company developed the new Marcatus Mobile Education Platform (MMEP) along with NGO Digital Green. The MMEP includes the industry's first interactive Master Digital Textbook, distributed to field officers on tablets, and videos made locally by field officers themselves. These videos star local farmers, speaking local languages in the local context – and many feature women as decision-makers, leaders and teachers on their farms. The videos, scripted to appeal to female farmers, enable flexible viewing hours and help break down the literacy barrier. "The way the culture is here, women [at training sessions] tend to say, 'Oh well, the men are here, so we don't have to be here,'" says Sona Kalra, Marcatus QED Sustainability and Communications Global Lead. "We wanted... the head person in the video to be the woman explaining how to do the work."<sup>31</sup>

While it is early days, pilot results show a 300% increase in reach overall. 35,000 women have been targeted and now outnumber men at most training sessions. Women-led households participating in the MMEP video programme are seeing 30% yield increases as result of the programme, compared with 20% for households run by men. Combined with a higher proportion of premium grades in the harvests, and lower costs per kilogram, this corresponds to at least a 50% increase in net income per crop.

## Ensuring the safety of women and girls in the tea sector – in Kenya and around the world

Unilever's tea estate in Kericho, Kenya has over 12,000 permanent employees and over 4,000 seasonal workers, with up to 50,000 people living in company villages on the estate. Unilever provides workers with pay and working conditions significantly above the norm for agricultural workers in Kenya, and also offers housing, paid annual leave, transport allowances, maternity and paternity leave, free health care, nursery, primary and secondary school education, potable drinking water and free meals during working hours.

In 2010, a study by the Center for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) reported allegations of sexual harassment of female workers. In response, Unilever introduced a range of measures to provide greater protection. But in August 2013 a programme by ARTE, a Franco-German TV channel, reported that sexual harassment still took place at Kericho.

Unilever commissioned an extensive independent review that resulted in a number of practical recommendations. These have since been implemented and developed. We have expanded and strengthened our management team to better tackle sexual harassment issues. We have increased the percentage of female team leaders from 3% to 30% so far and eliminated responsibilities likely to lead to abuses of power. We have instituted policies on sexual harassment, child protection and violence prevention and management, all developed with the participation of local employees and community representatives. We have set up a Dignity Enhancement Committee through which female employees identify concerns and suggest the best ways of addressing them. We have conducted different types of training for management, employees, village elders and specialised groups such as medical personnel. We have also improved our grievance reporting process with a dedicated, confidential, toll-free and local language hotline.

We have learned several important lessons through this challenging process:

- Proactive engagement with women workers – we must listen, engage, evaluate and only then create targeted solutions
- We must ensure workers can maintain trust in the effectiveness of grievance mechanisms to ensure cases are actively reported
- Peer-to-peer awareness-raising and awareness-raising by community leaders, external partners and the company all have roles to play
- It is helpful to create opportunities for girls to participate in social activities and mentorship.



For example, in response to a concern about teenage girls raised through the Dignity Enhancement Committee, we partnered with Digital Opportunity Trust Kenya on a digital skills training programme intended to reduce their susceptibility to violence through empowerment.

We are now working to share these lessons and engage with other organisations such as IDH, the Sustainable Trade Initiative, and UN Women to ensure women's rights and safety in our tea supply chain and the broader tea sector. With UN Women we launched a partnership to strengthen, monitor and evaluate the women's safety programme in Kericho and to develop and implement an evidence-based violence prevention programme aimed at women outgrowers and workers in our extended supply chain. Both these initiatives will help to inform the development of a Global Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls which can be rolled out in Unilever's tea supply chain across the world.

**30%**

**FEMALE TEAM LEADERS** in our management team, up from 3% before the scheme started.

**100%**

**IN KENYA** we have brought training to employees in all of our 66 factories.

## 02 SUPPLY CHAIN AND CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT: UNILEVER'S OWN OPERATIONS AND EXTENDED SUPPLY CHAIN OPERATIONS

"... Since the programme started, I have learnt how to interact better with people. I have... been empowered...to resolve conflicts including family disputes...after training on conflict resolution...my leadership skills have improved. I'm now more confident to face any challenges both at work and in my personal life..."

PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

"...girls who had dropped out of school have now been able to go back thanks to this mentorship programme..."

MOTHER OF PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT

### Spotlight on enhancing women's land rights

Unilever sources from increasingly large numbers of smallholder farmers, many of whom are women. In some cases, women are denied the ability to own the land they work due to gender-biased laws. This affects access to finance and other resources, impacting their ability to invest to increase productivity, and leaves them dependent on men for basic economic survival. This also adds risk to our agricultural supply chain.

We recognise that land ownership helps empower women, offers stability and can enable them to lead secure and sustainable lifestyles. Recognising that land rights are critical for inclusive development, we have committed to creating a set of Global Land Rights Principles.

We have already taken a number of measures to ensure respect for land rights in general, for example through our Human Rights Policy, Responsible Sourcing Policy and Sustainable Palm Oil Sourcing Policy.

"Women are key to driving growth and sustainability. More work needs to be done, though, to advance women's rights and tackle how they are perceived and treated in some communities. Take the tea industry, for example, where we are engaged with a number of tea companies, including Unilever, to create a joint agenda for action to address gender-based violence, starting initially in Kenya."

JOOST OORTHUIZEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IDH

# 75%

**OF THE WORLD'S POOR** live in rural areas. More than half lack either access to land or a secure stake in the land they till.<sup>32</sup>

# 5-25%

**COMPARED TO MEN**, women comprise less than 5% to less than 25% of agricultural landholders in the main developing regions of the world.<sup>33</sup>

# 30%

**IF WOMEN HAD THE same** access to productive resources as men, their yields would increase by 20-30%... gains in agricultural production could lift some 100-150 million people out of hunger.<sup>34</sup>





“When we provide women with training and entrepreneurial opportunities, they not only become ambassadors for Unilever and our brands, but also role models for other women and girls, showing it is possible to challenge limiting norms and stereotypes, and succeed.”

**GERALD KUEHR** CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER, UNILEVER

# Through our sales and customer development operations, we expand economic opportunities for women as business owners, managers and employees.

Unilever's products reach consumers through distributors serving hundreds and thousands of retailers – our customers – operating 8 million stores in more than 190 countries.

Our Customer Development function manages this network to maximise product reach and availability. Gender equality and empowerment are important to these objectives because millions of women participate in it, whether as retail business owners, managers or employees.

For example, nearly 40% of our customers belong to what is called 'traditional trade' – the mom-and-pop shops, corner stores, kiosks, open market stalls and street carts that predominate the retail landscape in many developing countries. In South East Asia, Latin America and Africa, an estimated 30–40% of these outlets are owned or operated by women. Many of them are on low incomes. They have often inherited their shops or opened them for lack of other employment opportunities. And while running a business can be challenging for anyone, women can face particular difficulties owning property, developing skills and accessing financial services. In some places, it runs counter to prevailing social norms for a woman to run a business at all. Giving these women the tools to grow their businesses helps to grow our own. We also aim to empower 1 million entrepreneurs to create new retail businesses.

In accordance with our USLP, we are leveraging and building upon our customer network to achieve livelihoods targets that exist regardless of gender. At the same time, just as we do in the supply chain, we are applying a gender lens to ensure that we engage and benefit women, who might be left behind without deliberate measures to overcome structural barriers to their participation. For example, we work to ensure that training programmes are accessible in terms of timing and location, provide help with childcare and encourage positive family attitudes towards women's participation.

### Our current priorities include:

- Providing opportunities for retailers to improve their skills and capabilities for mutual business growth
- Developing new distribution models to increase the reach and penetration of our brands in rural areas and big cities, such as door-to-door selling
- Providing opportunities for merchandisers and distributors to improve their skills and capabilities in order to increase their incomes while becoming strong sales brand ambassadors

### Spotlight on developing new distribution models

Unilever aims to engage greater numbers of women-owned and women-operated micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to increase the penetration of our products in rural and low-income urban markets. Women can be reliable long-term partners because of their strong sense of responsibility to earn income to provide for their families. In some environments, women make better door-to-door salespeople than men due to cultural taboos against women opening the door to a man or inviting one into the home.

**Shakti, India.** Shakti, meaning 'power' or 'empowerment', is Unilever's long-running door-to-door selling operation in India, where it provides work for over 70,000 women in low-income rural communities. Its success has brought a new level of respect for many of these women, called *Shakti ammas*, especially in communities where the norm was traditionally for men to be responsible for any commercial enterprises. Conscious of the need to engage men so they were not alienated by the success of the *Shakti ammas*, the initiative expanded in 2010 to include *Shaktimaans*, typically husbands or brothers of *ammass*. They sell Unilever products by bicycle to surrounding villages, covering larger areas than *ammass* do on foot. Overall, the programme contributes to over €225 million of turnover for our Indian business and has grown consistently 12–14% year on year over the last decade. Since Shakti was launched, we have adapted the model in several other markets, including Nigeria, where it is called Gbemiga.

**Project Guddi Baji, Pakistan.** We partnered with the non-profit organisation Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi and TEVTA, a public vocational training institute, to develop Project Guddi Baji, or Good Sister, which trains women to become home-based entrepreneurs selling Unilever hygiene and personal care brands and providing beauty services. Between 2012 and 2016, we trained more than 4,000 female entrepreneurs, enabling us to reach more than 37,000 people in 135 towns and 2,400 villages.

**Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership (CGEP), Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria.** CGEP creates social businesses that enhance the livelihoods of women by equipping them as entrepreneurs. Through these women, CGEP also serves remote populations by creating 'last-mile' distribution networks for products. Unilever is partnering with CGEP in Ethiopia, Haiti and Nigeria to create and scale 'last-mile' inclusive businesses that bring people from low-income communities into the company's value chain. This partnership was established in 2015. It builds on our experience with the Shakti-type model and extends it by collaborating with other suppliers to expand the basket of products women can sell, and offering microfinance loans. Taken together, these measures are intended to enable women to increase their incomes even further.

"We see women as a significant untapped source of entrepreneurial potential in developing countries. Many women have dreams of owning and growing a small business, ensuring their children have a good education, and bringing their families out of poverty. The opportunities provided through inclusive distribution businesses help their dreams become a reality."

MARK GUNTON CEO, CLINTON GIUSTRA ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (CGEP)

## 02 SUPPLY CHAIN AND CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT: SALES AND CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT



### Innovation in Nigeria: last-mile distribution with women micro-entrepreneurs

During 2016, Unilever collaborated with the Growing Business Foundation in the innovative Gbemiga initiative aiming to empower 2,000 women across the states of Oyo, Ogun, Enugu and Imo, providing training, loans and inventory to enable the sale of a basket of fast-moving consumer goods.

Many of these enterprising women have become business-savvy, raising opportunities for increasing earnings and building positive track records in savings and loan repayments. Furthermore, thanks to additional partnerships with Population Services International/Society for Family Health, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and the BOP Innovation Centre, a growing number of these women now offer not only products but also essential health messages – triggering additional ripple effects in their communities.

**IMOLE AYO AKANDE (left), an aspiring fashion designer, sells Unilever products, among others, to her neighbours door-to-door, saving them the trouble of having to travel long distances on foot to get to the nearest market.**

In her training, Imole learned to use an illustrative flip chart. She explains that she teaches other women about how the effects of anaemia can be exacerbated by menstruation, malaria and malnutrition. A remedy, she has learned, is to use Knorr iron-fortified bouillon cubes while eating more green leafy vegetables to increase iron intake. Imole's neighbour, Tayo, has experienced the benefits: she attributes changes in her daughter's strength to increased iron consumption.

“If we are one day held up as an example of a company with brand communications that reflect the full diversity of women in society, and not out-of-date stereotypes, then we will know we are making progress.”

ALAN JOPE PRESIDENT, PERSONAL CARE, UNILEVER



## We strive to accelerate progress on gender equality by harnessing the power of global brands with purpose.

Every day, two and a half billion people use Unilever products to look good, feel good and get more out of life. We spend nearly US\$9 billion a year on advertising, and approximately 80% of our advertisements, worth US\$7 billion, feature women.

A wide body of evidence, including our own proprietary research, shows that consumers have high expectations: they want a good product, at a good price, with social and environmental benefits. We are focusing on what we call Sustainable Living brands. A Sustainable Living brand is a brand that has integrated sustainability into both its purpose and its products. 'Purpose' captures how the brand makes a positive difference to society through activation programmes, including on-the-ground partnerships, advertising campaigns and advocacy efforts. And the 'product' contributes to one or more USLP goals, whether those involve improving health, well-being or nutrition, reducing environmental impacts, or using sustainably sourced ingredients.

In 2015, Sustainable Living brands delivered nearly half of our growth, and grew 30% faster than the rest of the business. Many of our Sustainable Living brands have developed or are developing initiatives linked to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Brands in Unilever's Personal Care category have identified purposes which increase opportunities for women and address stereotypes and barriers that hold women back in the areas of self-esteem,

body confidence, skills and capabilities, and employment, including cultural and structural barriers. Our male-targeted brands are looking at how they can shape cultural norms to liberate men from restrictive and damaging stereotypes, which hold them back from taking on so-called women's work, roles or qualities – encouraging men to express their individuality and to have the strength to care for themselves and others. Brands in the Home Care category are largely clustered around helping to reduce the burden of household chores and unlocking women's time. Brands in our Food and Refreshment categories are helping to improve health and encouraging better nutrition.

Examples of how some of our sustainable living brands are tackling issues and themes related to gender equality and women's empowerment are illustrated overleaf.

### Our current priorities include:

- Identifying and activating sustainable living purposes for women's empowerment for selected global brands
- Eliminating gender stereotypes from our advertising across all brands, not only sustainable living brands

BRANDS WITH PURPOSE

An illustration of some Unilever sustainable living brands that have developed or are developing initiatives linked to gender equality and women's empowerment/economic empowerment.



**DOVE is a leading Unilever personal care brand with a sustainable living purpose to make beauty a source of confidence, not anxiety, for women everywhere.**

Dove's purpose comes to life in two ways: helping girls build positive body confidence and strengthen their self-esteem, through the Dove Self-Esteem Project, and fuelling social change by championing a new social norm for beauty through the communication of its brand mission and its messages like those in the Campaign for Real Beauty. The Dove Self-Esteem Project produces educational programmes that are delivered through partners such as the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) as well as parents, school teachers, youth leaders, mentors and employees. The Dove brand devotes a significant portion of its marketing spend to raising awareness and stimulating conversation around the issue of real beauty through award-winning advertising campaigns such as Real Beauty Sketches, Dove: Patches and Dove Change One Thing.



**POND'S, a Unilever skincare brand, is pursuing a social purpose related to its belief that the world needs more softness, empathy and compassion.**

It believes that it takes greater strength to be soft today than ever before. Pond's is committed to improving the lives of millions of people by catalysing alternative leadership solutions to the challenges of today's harsh world. In a partnership with the women's organisation Vital Voices, it is developing an educational and fellowship programme that equips the next generation of 'change-makers' with the strength to amplify the impact of their solutions through the power of softness – a 2016 Clinton Global Initiative commitment.



**TRESEMMÉ, Unilever's affordable professional hair and salon product, is working to help young professional women improve their presence and impact in the workplace.**

In partnership with partner Levo League, TRESEMMÉ has developed a Confidence Curriculum of professional tools and coaching to help millennial women in the US and UK to present themselves in a confident way that has a positive impact for their careers.

Life-  
Education  
Vocational skills  
Health  
Nutrition  
Safety  
Well-being  
Unlo  
Acce  
Labou  
Redu  
Make househ  
chores



**KNORR is Unilever's leading food brand and a sustainable living brand with an ambition to unlock flavour and goodness from everyday food from farm to fork.**

In 2015 Knorr launched a nutritious cooking behaviour change programme to help combat iron-deficiency anaemia, a health issue particularly impacting young women and women of child-bearing age, which can be helped by eating a more iron-rich diet. Through the launch of an iron-fortified bouillon cube and embarking on an in-school and community based behaviour change programme, Knorr is aiming to help teach young girls and their mothers how to cook iron-rich meals, which can improve their health and well-being.



**LIPTON is Unilever's leading tea brand.**

In 2007 Lipton became the first major tea company to commit to sustainably sourcing tea on a large scale. By 2020 all of Unilever's tea will be sustainably sourced. Lipton, along with other Unilever brands, is committed to helping improve the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers and to promoting safety for women.



**FAIR & LOVELY, a leading Unilever personal care brand, has a social mission to empower women through improved access to career guidance, education and skills for self-reliance before marriage.**

Our research found that when women have their own identities before they get married, they enjoy greater agency in their homes and communities. Education and skills are widely recognised as contributing to a confident self-identity. However,

millions of women in Asia and Africa are denied the opportunity to complete their education because of cultural pressure to marry early and take on household responsibilities. Fair & Lovely delivers its social mission through the Fair & Lovely Foundation, which has a long history of providing scholarships, vocational training and seed capital. We are also adding a mobile education platform to help women access employability skills.



**BRILHANTE, a Unilever laundry brand in Brazil, has a mission to help young people, particularly women, to shine in the world of work.**

The brand has always stood for dazzling, bright clothes that give people the confidence to shine and is providing young people with the necessary tools to progress in life. 'Ciclo Brilhante' – or the Brilhante Cycle – is a web-based entrepreneurship skills enhancement programme with a time commitment of only a few minutes per day. Business readiness among participants has more than doubled.

-skills  
Business start  
Body-self up skills  
esteem  
confidence  
locking time  
ess to water  
our saving devices  
lucing unpaid  
hold care work  
easier



**SURF is a global laundry brand with a social purpose to help unlock the possibilities for millions of women by reducing the burden of household chores.**

Surf has a proud heritage of helping lighten the load and brighten the lives of millions of households around the world. The social purpose will be achieved through product innovation, like product formulation that reduces the amount of water needed for clothes washing by hand, social innovation initiatives, like the development of accessible water centres in Africa or piloting time-saving laundry equipment in South East Asia, and a new partnership with Oxfam that addresses unpaid care work (see page 37 for more information).



**SUNLIGHT, Unilever's liquid hand dishwash brand, is dedicated to developing solutions that help liberate women's time and change their lives for the better, particularly in water-scarce areas.**

The brand is doing this in two ways: first, through superior and faster liquid de-greasing products and, second, in partnership with NGOs Oxfam and TechnoServe, through opening Sunlight Water Centres in peri-urban communities in Nigeria. Ten Sunlight Water Centres were operational by 2016, providing an accessible and sustainable supply of clean water for domestic tasks to thousands of families, helping women save time and effort in collecting water. Local women entrepreneurs are trained with skills to run the centres, providing work experience and an opportunity to generate an income. Water is sold at affordable cost, as are food and household products. Selling Sunlight, other Unilever products and providing supplementary services has been a key component of making the Water Centres sustainable. Proceeds go towards management of the centres.

## UNILEVER'S VISION AND COMMITMENT

### Spotlight on eliminating gender stereotypes in our advertising

Research by our brands shows that advertising can be a powerful force for cultural change, and yet it continues to perpetuate unhelpful gender stereotypes, especially for women. Women's lives and expectations have changed, and advertising has not kept up.

The good news is that research also shows that progressive portrayals of women and men are not only socially imperative, they are also better for business – generating stronger engagement and talkability, and delivering better brand awareness.

Through our #Unstereotype initiative, we are now working across our marketing function and with

our creative agencies to disrupt the default behaviour that perpetuates gender stereotypes in advertising, with a focus on:

- **Role:** portraying roles that represent aspirations and broader achievements.
- **Personality:** building characters that are characterful and distinctive.
- **Appearance:** presenting beauty that is enjoyable, noncritical and creates a positive interest in being whoever you want to be.

AUDIT done of industry advertising over a one year period (2015):

**40%**

OF WOMEN do not relate at all to women they see in advertising.

ONLY **3%**

OF ADVERTISEMENTS showed women in leadership, managerial, or aspirational roles.

ONLY **20%**

OF VOICEOVERS featured women's voices.

### Cultivating positive norms and challenging stereotypes: Axe/Lynx

Axe's new 'Find Your Magic' positioning aims to fight the limitations of traditional masculinity. Today, many men are not able to express their individuality because they are confined by a set of limits on who they can be and how they can feel, act and look. This leads to frustration, bullying, violence, mental health issues and even suicide as men face pressure to keep problems to themselves and not to ask for help or show their emotions. Axe is taking on these prevailing male stereotypes and encouraging men to define 'man' for themselves. The brand has partnered with NGO Ditch the Label to create online support materials for young men facing a tough time – doubling traffic



in the UK and launching new sites in the US and Mexico. Axe is also working with the Brazilian based NGO Instituto Promundo to produce a 'Mandex' study that exposes the pressures on men and their consequences, and propose what can be done to alleviate them.

“Gender identity is changing. Our advertising has not changed enough – up until now. We've asked every one of our brands to challenge itself to move away from unhelpful stereotypical portrayals of gender, especially for women, and to deliver fresh campaigns that are more relevant to today's consumer. We call this movement #UNSTEREOTYPE.”

ALINE SANTOS SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GLOBAL MARKETING, UNILEVER





“Gender equality and women’s empowerment are the key to achieving all SDGs. It is for that reason that Unilever is passionate about collaborating with others to accelerate the pace at which norms and stereotypes are changing. Only together can we have a truly transformative societal impact.”

PAUL POLMAN CEO, UNILEVER

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## We partner with others to achieve sustainable, transformational change. Our focus going forward: ‘unstereotyping’ our value chain and beyond.

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Cultivating fair and balanced gender norms and progressive portrayals of women – as well as men – will be vital to gender equality. Gender equality underpins the entire 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Concerted effort by individuals and institutions in different sectors, around the world, is needed to drive progress.

At Unilever, we seek to facilitate this concerted effort by embedding a gender lens into our work on pressing issues such as sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, financial inclusion, deforestation and climate change, as well as by promoting gender equality in its own right. We commission research that helps set direction (like The Female Quotient research into gender stereotypes in the workplace described on page 10); we partner to develop ‘proof point’ programmes that encourage dialogue and replication (like the violence prevention programme with UN Women described on page 22); and we participate in platforms designed to mobilise entire industries or create movements (like UN Women’s HeForShe campaign, described on page 17). We invest time

to exchange experiences and insights, and we share what we learn. Collaboration and partnership improve our effectiveness, bring thought leadership to bear on seemingly intractable problems, and enable us to advocate for others to get involved.

In working with so many others, our intention is to secure the systems-level change required to achieve the SDGs and realise our vision in which every woman can create the kind of life she wishes to lead.

To aid this, we support the development of partnerships across operational functions and brands to promote ongoing business objectives and USLP targets.

### Our current priorities include:

- Forging global partnerships as a means to ‘unstereotype’ our value chain and address a variety of adverse norms
- Championing collective action to drive change across systems and industries

### Spotlight on forging global partnerships to help unereotype our value chain

Following research on the impact of stereotypes in advertising and the workplace, it is clear to us that gender-related norms and stereotypes cause problems not only for consumers and employees, but also all along our extended value chain and in society at large.

We have committed to 'unsterotyping' our US\$9 billion worth of advertising each year. Now, we are embarking on further research and enquiry, consultation and dialogue with our employees and with farmers, with entrepreneurs and with consumers, to better understand the extent to which norms and stereotypes present barriers in different settings. We aim to identify effective partnerships and collaboration that can help 'unsterotype' mindsets, business policies and practices, like those profiled on previous pages and in the panel opposite:

- **In the workplace**, our partnership with neuroscience and technology firm Pymetrics, collaborating on new technology to reduce unconscious bias in hiring by gamifying the first stage of recruitment for our graduate training programmes.
- **In the supply chain**, our partnership with UN Women and IDH, creating a global violence prevention framework that sends a clear message that violence against women is not 'ok'.
- **With consumers and society at large**, our partnership between personal care brand Axe/Lynx and Ditch the Label and Instituto Promundo, tackling the bullying of young boys that results from stereotypical views of what it means to 'be a man' – important given the need to address not just outdated stereotypes of women and girls but also those of men and boys; our partnership between laundry brand Surf and NGO Oxfam, which aims to tackle pervasive norms and behaviours that perpetuate the inequitable distribution of unpaid care work – as described opposite.

### Spotlight on championing collective action to drive change across systems and industries

We recognise that the task of cultivating fair and balanced gender norms and progressive portrayals of women and girls calls for broad, collective action and a mix of capabilities and resources. Stakeholders across sectors need to work together, and business must be part of the solution. As a result, we participate in platforms that help us bring insight into Unilever and share our own insights with the wider world. For example:

- Unilever is one of ten founding members of **UN Women's Private Sector Leadership Advisory Council**, supporting UN Women on its global mission to further gender equality and women's empowerment, where we are represented by our CEO. Members have committed to strive for equal representation of women and men in their respective workforces, provide equal pay for equal work, and offer innovative and flexible ways of working
- We have aligned with the **UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment**, where we currently participate in working groups focused on tackling adverse norms and changing business culture
- We strongly support the **World Economic Forum's System Initiative on Gender, Education, and Work**, which aims to help leaders understand the current state of gender parity and develop mechanisms to close gender gaps.

Given our size and reach, we believe we have a special role to play in the business community. We therefore seek to encourage companies to adopt good practices in key priority areas, which we have summarised in the final section of this paper.

"Gender equality will not be achieved without a far-reaching shift in gender norms. These kinds of norms are shaped in the home, in communities and across mass media, and it takes a concerted, collaborative and deliberate effort to successfully change them."

KATJA IVERSEN PRESIDENT, WOMEN DELIVER

**40 BILLION**

CURRENTLY, WOMEN IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA spend an average of about 200 million hours per day collecting water – which adds up to 40 billion hours per year.<sup>37</sup>

**39%**

THE ESTIMATED MONETARY VALUE of women’s unpaid care work is between 10% and 39% of global GDP.<sup>38</sup>

**15%**

THE ESTIMATED INCREASE in agricultural labour if the household time burden was reduced for women in some countries.<sup>39</sup>

**Tackling the inequitable distribution of unpaid care work**



Most household work and family care responsibilities like cooking, cleaning and looking after children are done by women and girls. This is the social norm for women in virtually all walks of life, from the executive juggling work and childcare responsibilities to the smallholder farmer tending her fields, collecting water for domestic chores, caring for children and elderly family members and doing the cooking and washing.

Unpaid care work matters to Unilever because it directly and daily impacts women in our workplace, supply chain and distribution network, as well as our consumers.

According to the OECD, unpaid care is a time- and energy-consuming occupation that limits women’s access to the labour market, often relegating them to low-income and insecure employment.<sup>35</sup> As a result, many women do not realise their full potential.

The UN High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment has identified unpaid care as “one of the most pervasive and significant barriers to women’s economic empowerment”.<sup>36</sup>

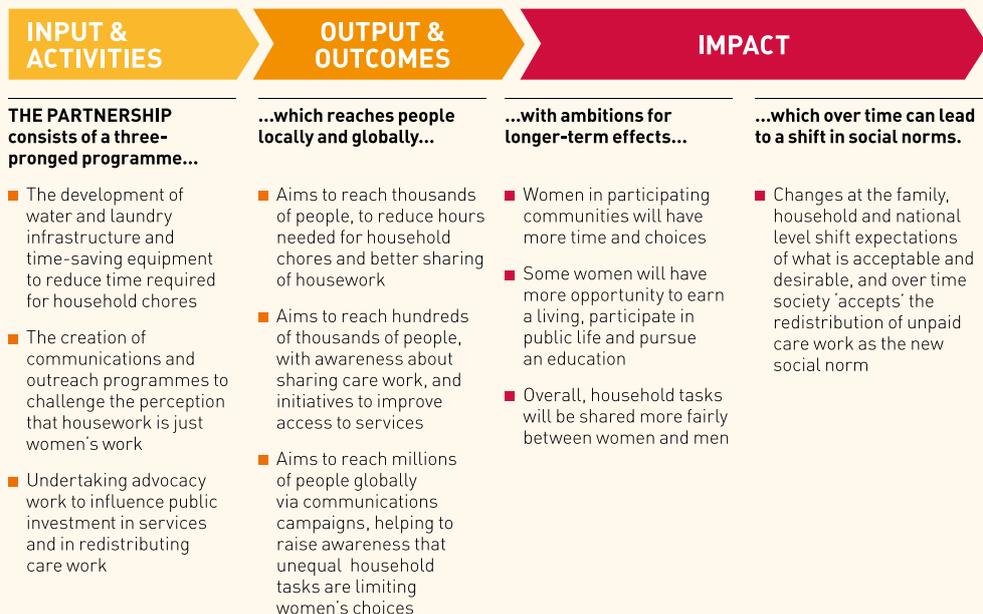
In 2016, Unilever’s laundry brand, Surf, launched a three-year partnership with Oxfam that aims to recognise, reduce and redistribute the

amount of time women and girls spend on unpaid care work. The partnership will be active in the Philippines and Zimbabwe and aims to directly help change the lives of thousands of people, many of whom will be women, through a three-pronged programme:

- Providing better access to water and laundry infrastructure, with new or improved communal laundries, household laundry facilities and water systems/centres
- Challenging and seeking to change harmful social norms that currently mean women bear the brunt of household chores with a communications programme involving local agents and household visits, and local radio, TV and social media campaigns
- Advocating for public policies that change the distribution of unpaid care work, by building a body of research evidence to inform policy-makers and building the capacity of women leaders and women’s organisations for more effective stakeholder engagement.

Globally, the partnership aims to reach millions of people through associated communications and outreach activities linked to on-the-ground operations in the Philippines and Zimbabwe.

The Surf and Oxfam partnership aims to have a positive impact at a number of levels.



# PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESS ACTION: CHANGING THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS FOR WOMEN

“If you want to travel fast, travel alone;  
if you want to travel far, travel together.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

## All stakeholders – individuals and institutions – have roles to play in making the changes necessary to close persistent gender gaps.

Unilever will continue to collaborate with international agencies, civil society groups and governments. At the same time, we will leverage our position to promote change in the business community.

Drawing on insights and recommendations from leading organisations, including the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, we have identified three priorities for accelerating gender equality and women’s empowerment in business, described below.

Unilever is committed to working with others to further progress across these three priority areas. Our particular ambition is to help spread an ‘unstereotyped’ mindset throughout our business

networks – for example, in the consumer goods sector and the advertising and retail industries.

The time is right. We know what needs to be done. The business case is well argued and evidenced by organisations such as McKinsey, Citi, the World Bank and IFC, if not widely appreciated. Effective policies and practices are well documented, if not widely adopted.

“If you want to travel fast, travel alone; if you want to travel far, travel together.” We place great store by this old African proverb. We call upon other companies to be part of a movement to make gender equality a reality. Join forces with us and with other businesses in collective action initiatives, such as those organised by UN Women and the World Economic Forum and those based locally. Be gender aware. Be gender active. Be the new norm. Together we can change the way the world works for women.

## Three priorities for accelerating gender equality and women’s empowerment in business



### BE GENDER AWARE

Listen to and learn from women and men about the barriers women experience along the value chain, identifying the social cost and business cost of inaction and the social benefits and business benefits of action for everyone.



### BE GENDER ACTIVE

Establish policies and practices that respect women’s rights and empower professional and personal development, starting in the workplace; work alongside business partners to ensure those rights and opportunities are available for women all along the value chain.



### BE THE NEW NORM

Wake up to the dangerous effects of unconscious bias and actively challenge harmful norms and stereotypes wherever they occur. Start by identifying the most powerful levers for change available as a business, given industry sector, employee demographics, customer base, and other factors. Then look more systematically for opportunities along the value chain.

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## Priorities for business action: changing the way the world works for women



### BE GENDER AWARE

**Action:** Listen to and learn from women and men about the barriers experienced by women along the value chain, identifying the social cost and business cost of inaction and the social benefits and business benefits of action for everyone.

**Current situation:** Few companies have good data on the role women play – or do not play – in their operations and extended supply chains. For example, how many women occupy what kinds of positions, not only in the workplace, but also among suppliers, distributors and customers? What barriers to equality do they experience, at what cost to them, to the business and to society? How do men perceive barriers that women face?

This matters because company policies and investment decisions are being made without insights into where inequality and disempowerment are holding women back from realising their aspirations and making full contributions to the business and to wider society.

**Change required:** Better data collection and more thoughtful, deliberate management are required to increase understanding of women's current and potential contribution to business along the value chain, to appreciate challenges and so inform effective policy and practice interventions. Support can be provided by business to international agencies mainstreaming gender into public policy and to national government forecasting, planning and budgeting processes.



### BE GENDER ACTIVE

**Action:** Establish policies and practices that respect women's rights and empower professional and personal development, starting in the workplace.

Then work alongside business partners to ensure those rights and opportunities are available for women all along the value chain.

**Current situation:** Most companies will have basic workplace practices in place to ensure compliance with equal opportunity legislation. However, few have moved to introduce the comprehensive set of policies and practices that are necessary to help women overcome institutional and societal barriers to progress and advancement in different value chain settings.

This matters because the lives and livelihoods of millions of women around the world are impacted every day by the policies and practices of the companies they interact with, whether as employees, producers and suppliers, distributors, retailers, consumers or neighbours in the local community. And this matters because business benefits such as access to an untapped talent pool and new routes to market are left on the table.

**Change required:** Next-generation corporate policies and practices that promote gender

equality and women's empowerment in business – such as the United Nations Women's Empowerment Principles – need to be adopted by more business leaders and actively spread through their spheres of influence. The active participation and engagement of women in policy design, implementation and monitoring of performance are critical.



### BE THE NEW NORM

**Action:** Wake up to the dangerous effects of unconscious bias and actively challenge harmful norms and stereotypes. Start by identifying the most powerful levers for change available to you as a business, given your industry sector, employee demographics, customer base and other factors. For example, advertising is critical for a large consumer goods company like Unilever; programming and editorial choices may be critical for a media company; and product design and marketing may be critical for a clothing or toy company. Then look more systematically for opportunities along the value chain.

**Current situation:** Harmful gender-related social norms and stereotypes permeate many aspects of life in which companies play a big role – as employers, as manufacturers and retailers of goods people use every day, as lenders and insurers, as sources of information and entertainment. Yet few companies are conscious of the influence they have either to perpetuate harmful norms and stereotypes or to change them. Companies continue to recruit, measure performance and promote in ways that overlook women's unique strengths or force them to the sidelines when they become mothers. They continue to 'gender' products, ranging from clothing to toys. They continue to release movies and television shows featuring heroic, strong men rescuing helpless women.

This matters because it limits the expectations that men and boys have of women and girls, and the expectations that women and girls have of themselves. These expectations are then also institutionalised in the community groups, churches, companies and government bodies people participate in as members, voters, employees, leaders. The human and economic costs of the inequality and disempowerment that result have been well documented.

**Change required:** Business leaders and managers need to become conscious of and take measures to eliminate unconscious bias in the workplace and supply chain and resist the tendency to perpetuate harmful norms and stereotypes in product design, marketing and advertising. Commit to cultivating fair and balanced norms in your operations and to featuring positive, progressive portrayals of women and men in both internal and external communications.



### Being Gender Aware @ Unilever

Historically, data disaggregated by gender has not been readily available, so Unilever is working to rectify this in its own operations, for example by tracking compensation levels for women and men to help ensure equal pay for equal work. We monitor female representation in our workforce at all levels, and are also working with assurance experts PwC to monitor programme participation by gender. Unilever is able to draw on a significant body of consumer insights into the attitudes and experiences of millions of women and girls – and indeed men and boys – around the world, and we will continue to data mine this resource to better understand challenges and opportunities to accelerate gender equality.



### Being Gender Active @ Unilever

Unilever has signed up to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles and takes a holistic approach to promote rights and opportunities for women throughout our value chain, collaborating actively with other business, NGOs and governments to ensure progress is sustained – as described throughout this paper. As members of UN Women's Private Sector Leadership Advisory Council, we have committed to strive for equal representation of women and men in our workforce, provide equal pay for equal work and offer innovative and flexible ways of working. We are also campaigning with organisations like UN Women, the UN Global Compact and the World Economic Forum to raise awareness and participation by more companies in business and gender equality initiatives.



### Being the New Norm @ Unilever

Unilever is proactively taking stock to better understand the effect of harmful norms and stereotypes throughout its business, and developing a comprehensive approach building on programmes in our workplace and value chain, brand initiatives and our commitment to 'unstereotype' our advertisements. We are also working through product innovation, partnership and advocacy to address the pervasive and harmful norm that unpaid care work is women's work. And we are supporting collective action on norms championed by the UN High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment.

“Changing norms should be at the top of the 2030 Agenda to expand women's economic opportunities. Everyone has a role to play in challenging adverse social and economic norms – girls, women, men and boys within families, communities, businesses, civil society organisations and government.”

UN HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND, 2016

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At Unilever, we believe gender equality and women's empowerment are powerful enablers of economic growth and human development. We know that gender gaps persist, fuelled by unequal access to productive resources, by unconscious bias and discriminatory social norms. These and other forces hold women back from personal and professional development and negatively effect men and boys.

We envisage a world in which every women can create the life she wishes to lead, unconstrained by harmful norms and stereotypes. We work toward this vision by empowering women along our extended value chain, with a focus on promoting rights and safety, building skills and creating economic opportunities through jobs and livelihoods.

Recognising that harmful norms and outdated stereotypes are a drag on equal opportunity and on the broader sustainable development agenda, we commit to 'unstereotype' our advertising and portray more diverse images of women and girls. We intend to ramp-up efforts to 'unstereotype' mindsets in the workplace and supply chain. Through brands with purpose, we will help cultivate more positive and supportive social norms with consumers and in society at large.

For further information on our Unilever Sustainable Living Plan and our Opportunities for Women work, please visit our website: [www.unilever.com/sustainable-living](http://www.unilever.com/sustainable-living)



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