

Enterprise for Equal

Our Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy - 2020-2022

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Enhancing performance and fairness by promoting gender equality in supply chains and at the workplace

Our strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment revolves around our objective to

“Develop the tools and opportunities that effectively enable us to promote gender equality in supply chains and in the workplace so as to advance performance, sustainability and fairness.”

This strategy spells out the business case for this goal, its building blocks and the strategic objectives we want to achieve over the next three years. It is intended to be a living document that will be updated regularly to accommodate new actions and developments.

1. amfori's Commitment to Gender Equality

amfori's mission is to enable each of its members to enhance human prosperity, use natural resources responsibly and drive open trade globally. To achieve this, amfori provides services and tools to its member companies to tackle sustainability challenges in global supply chains.

amfori believes that by addressing some of those challenges, sustainable business can be an engine of fair and equitable development and therefore bring about positive societal changes.

Accompanying the amfori mission is our Vision 2030. Vision 2030 sees a world where all trade delivers social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone. Underpinning this vision are the following five objectives:

- 1) *Building our organisation to be future fit;*
- 2) *Supporting our members through insight, expertise and influence;*
- 3) *Inspiring action around the world;*
- 4) *Growing high performing people to become the leaders of a sustainable tomorrow;*
- 5) *Prospering by contributing to the SDGs and increasing human prosperity for all.*

Gender considerations are crucial to the achievement of both the abovementioned mission and vision. Not only do more women than men live in poverty globally according to the World Bank, women are also often disproportionately represented at the lowest tiers of the supply chain and subject to the worst kinds of discrimination and abuses. Furthermore, addressing gender equality is vital to amfori's vision's key objectives such as the development of our organisation, expertise, producing high performing people and the achievement of the SDGs. Specifically, regarding the SDGs, gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5) is one of the 10 SDGs that amfori has identified as central to its work.

2. amfori's Approach to Gender Equality

amfori's interpretation of gender equality draws from the UN Women definition of the term. This

“refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on

whether they are born male or female ... Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. »¹

With this in mind, we also recognize that gender is increasingly defined as non-binary with several gender identities other than men and women identified, including LGBTI+, and that many of these gender identities face systematic discrimination and violence. amfori stands in support of all members of the LGBTI+ community for justice and protection for all. However, the focus of amfori's work is on the gender identities that face the greatest challenges within the supply chains of our member companies and within our own organisation and stakeholder partners.

3. The Business Case for a Gender Responsive Approach

There is a clear business case associated with transforming into a more gender responsive organisation for amfori. This case rests on four pillars relating to our mission and vision. These are:

1. Enhanced social responsibility

An enhanced ability to effectively address the challenges facing women in supply chains – will inevitably improve amfori's chance to advance its mission on human prosperity, noting that women form the majority of vulnerable workers in supply chains.

2. The character of our organisation

By gaining recognition as a gender responsive organisation, amfori will better position itself as a reputable partner towards its members and other stakeholders, which amfori seeks to engage with, in order to inspire action around the world as set out by our vision.

3. The advancement of equality and fairness

Equal opportunities between gender identities in the workplace builds the sense of ambition, belonging, diversity and fairness amongst staff. Research shows this translates into improved performance and expertise, which is an objective of our vision.²

4. Addressing future global challenges

There is evidence that shows that women's leadership in business is critical to addressing future global challenges as well as maximizing employees' potential.³ This should further assist amfori in its vision to be a future-fit organization with high performing talents.

4. Gender Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve our abovementioned goal, the following six strategic objectives have been identified:

1. Developing amfori's expertise and positioning on gender equality

This objective involves actions such as rolling-out trainings for amfori leadership and key staff on gender diversity, reviewing gender parity in leadership roles within the organisation, as well as addressing gender pay gaps, and ensuring all amfori internal corporate documents utilize gender neutral terms.

2. Advancing projects on the ground that empower women in amfori sourcing countries

The objective represents one of amfori's most tangible contribution to social responsibility as it aims to empower women in global supply chains in the main sourcing countries of amfori's members.

3. Ensuring that amfori's standards and other tools used to tackle sustainability in supply chains are more gender responsive

This objective focuses on amfori's standard - amfori BSCI - and is at the heart of the strategy. The amfori BSCI Code of Conduct, which aims at setting up the values and principles that the amfori BSCI Participants should follow, already states the following:

¹ <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

² <https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/2013/06/29/employee-rewards-the-importance-of-perceived-fairness/>
<https://archive.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5493>

³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/leadership/when-women-lead-workplaces-should-listen>

“Business partners shall not discriminate, exclude or have a certain preference for persons on the basis of gender, age, religion, race, caste, birth, social background, disability, ethnic and national origin, nationality, membership in unions or any other legitimated organisations, political affiliation or opinions, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, marital status, diseases or any other condition that could give rise to discrimination.”

Further revision of amfori BSCI to deliver a more gender responsive system will contribute to our ability to promote sustainability in global supply chains.

4. Improving our capacity on data and research on Gender

This objective will involve the development, management and use of data and research on gender to enhance our ability to tackle gender concerns in our operations, advocacy and other services for our membership.

5. Leveraging gender responsive partnerships and engagements with stakeholders

The objective brings together actions such as engaging more gender focused organisations in our core activities and building gender awareness amongst yet unsensitized amfori’s partners and stakeholders. This will help in addressing our goal to make our standards environment more gender responsive.

6. Developing a more gender responsive advocacy and communication

This objective aims to ensure that any influence we have on the international, regional and national legislative frameworks and policy landscape has a gender lens. It is also a necessary component for influencing the wider standards on environment and enhancing social responsibility.

5. The Building Blocks of the Gender Strategy

In order to enable the above objectives, there are a number of work areas for amfori that serve as the building blocks for the Strategy.

5.1 The Women’s Empowerment Programme

In bridging the link between gender equality and sustainable supply chains, amfori launched a [Women’s Empowerment Programme](#) in September 2018. The goal of the programme is to:

- Raise awareness and understanding in companies on the persisting challenges that women face at work as well as on the business benefits of gender equality and women’s empowerment;
- Build management capacity to create a more enabling work environment for women through training;
- Increase career prospects for women by training them for positions beyond the factory level.

To this end, amfori launched projects addressing these issues in the three most significant sourcing countries for amfori members: China, India and Bangladesh.

Activities under the Programme include awareness raising events with multiple stakeholders, trainings and workshops for managers and workers; research and advocacy on legislation and the development of guidance and tools to embed a gender lens in due diligence processes.

While several project activities are still being rolled out, a second phase of the Programme is being developed as of January 2020 in the abovementioned countries. In addition, consideration is being given to the launch of new projects in other amfori member sourcing countries so as to scale up the positive lessons learnt from the initial three project countries.

An extension of this Programme will provide an effective vehicle to achieve our objective as described above to empower women on the ground in our members’ sourcing countries.

5.2 The UNECE Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards

In May 2019, amfori signed the [UNECE Declaration of Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development](#). The purpose of the Declaration is to provide a practical framework for standards bodies that aim to make the standards they develop and the wider standards development industry more gender responsive.

With the signing of this Declaration amfori commits to developing a gender lens on its main tools that tackle sustainability challenges in global supply chains across all countries, i.e. amfori BSCI and amfori BEPI.

In addition, all signatories are called on to develop a Gender Action Plan that sets out not only how its standards but also its own organisation and the wider standards industry they operate in could be made more gender responsive.

Advancing on these commitments will enable several the abovementioned objectives in positioning amfori as a gender responsive organisation, ensuring our tools are gender responsive and that we leverage our partnerships with gender focused actors to help transform the standards setting environment.

5.3 The Women's Empowerment Principles

In February 2020, amfori signed the UN Women and UNGC Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and is now promoting further signing of the WEPs among amfori's membership.

The WEPs are a set of principles for businesses and supporting industry associations offering guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and wider community. They consist of seven principles that CEOs sign up to addressing women's empowerment in corporate leadership, the workplace, education and training, supply chains and in the community. The WEPs also require companies to publish their policies and plans on gender, develop benchmarks, measure and report on progress on women's empowerment.

In effect, the signing of the WEPs provides opportunities and support for us to address gender in the entirety of our own and members' operations and supply chains – *from the C-Suite to the factory floor*. This should not only help boost credibility as a gender responsive association but provide us with first-hand knowledge of the various issues that arise with the empowering of women in the workplace and in supply chains.

6. The Gender Action Plan

This *Enterprise for Equal 2020-2022* gender strategy paper has been translated into a concrete action plan based on the six objectives mentioned above. Metrics are identified for each action. Progress in implementation of the actions will be monitored and evaluated by an amfori staff Gender Task Force on a quarterly basis. Biannual reports will be sent to the amfori Executive Team and amfori Board prepared by the Gender Action Task Force. Each year, the Gender Action Plan will be revised in accordance with the evaluation findings of the previous year. Specific deliverables for each year will be agreed by in the annual revision. These deliverables will be included as annexes to this Strategy.

ANNEX

2020 Deliverables

In 2020, the following deliverables are expected under the various objectives of the Gender Action Plan:

Developing amfori's positioning and expertise on gender equality

- ✓ All amfori internal corporate documents revised to employ gender neutral language.
- ✓ Transparency on salary scales in relation to grades with indications for gender distribution.
- ✓ Review of the training of amfori Persons of Trust officers on specific gender issues and communication to amfori staff on this resource as part of the staff onboarding process.
- ✓ Support and identification of individual staff members who could be leaders on gender equality in each Function/Network.
- ✓ Developing of recommendations for a new gender responsive value proposition and business development strategy for engaging new members.
- ✓ amfori's signing of the UN Women/UNGC Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs).
- ✓ Two amfori members signing the UN Women/UNGC (WEPs).

Enhancing our projects on the ground that empower women in amfori sourcing countries

- ✓ China:
 - Development of training materials on promoting gender equality in the workplace;
 - Roundtable on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.
- ✓ Bangladesh: Continue roll-out of the [Shobola Project](#) in 6 pilot factories;
 - Trainings for management and female factory workers in pilot factories;
 - Development of corrective action plans for producers in the pilot factories in response to 2019 baseline assessment;
 - Organisation of social dialogues in the pilot factories to discuss gender related challenges and opportunities;
 - Impact Assessment and development of case study booklet in pilot factories.
- ✓ India: Delivery of training workshops on the [POSH ACT](#).

Ensuring amfori's standards and other tools to tackle sustainability in supply chains are more gender responsive

- ✓ Gender analysis of amfori BSCI System Manual and Code of Conduct review with recommendations.

Improving our capacity on data and research on gender

- ✓ Introduction of gender data in the development of amfori's Country Due Diligence Report.

Leveraging Gender responsive partnerships and engagements with stakeholders

- ✓ Signing of MoU with UN Women.

- ✓ Developing an agreement with BSR/ISEAL Gender Working Group on the review of the amfori BSCI Code of Conduct.
- ✓ Recruitment of gender expert(s) in amfori's Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC).

Developing a more Gender responsive advocacy and communication

- ✓ Systematic practice of using a gender lens in the development of all amfori advocacy positions.
- ✓ Ensuring a gender balance amongst speakers at amfori-organised events.
- ✓ Developing communication plan to disseminate the work of amfori on gender.