

1 May 2017

**Re: Letter to Academic Institutions**

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), an initiative of the UN Global Compact, we wish to inform you about an important initiative that the PRME Working Group on Business and Human Rights intends to present to the Deans of business schools around the world to develop curricula that are directly relevant for the principles and practices of corporate responsibility, especially in the area of human rights. We believe it is particularly important now that students graduating from business schools have a full understanding of how companies can address such issues. We would appreciate your focus on the following:

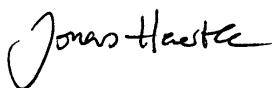
In 2014, the UN Global Compact circulated an [open letter](#) for the purpose of obtaining corporate signatures to bring human rights issues to the attention of academic institutions educating tomorrow's business leaders. We are re-emphasizing the significance of this invitation and strongly encourage you to join other major corporations by [signing this letter](#). The letter shows your company's support of and commitment to responsible business practices, so that we can make the strongest possible impression upon business schools that these are issues that companies want to see addressed in business school education and research. This general expression of commitment by the corporate community is vital to communicate effectively with business schools and enhance their mission for the corporate managers of tomorrow.

This initiative is particularly relevant as the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) were launched in September 2015 to provide focused guidance for attaining sustainability by 2030. The remarkable consensus achieved for these 17 goals, their corresponding targets, and the fact that people are placed at the heart of Agenda 2030 emphasize the critical importance of acting now on this initiative.

*Background:* From our review of business school curricula, most schools have not incorporated the most compelling societal issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, particularly corporate engagement with social issues and humanitarian crises. Yet, business realities have changed as 83% of senior corporate executives agree that "human rights are a matter for business as well as governments," according to a survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit. We have a long way to go to fully educate and train the graduates of the world's leading business schools regarding, for example, important human rights principles directly relevant to corporate operations. This is the right moment to make the case to business schools that it is important to cover these topics in their curricula. Today's headlines remind us that it is an ongoing process for companies to define their role in society and deal effectively with an ever-growing regulatory environment and global challenges. Business school graduates should know how to focus on human rights and other societal issues in order to shape a viable and sustainable business environment in which firms can prosper long-term.

We therefore ask that you seriously consider signing the open letter to demonstrate your company's support for this initiative. You can access the open letter in five other languages [here](#).

Thank you and best regards,



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