

13 Ugandan Companies attend 3rd Global Forum on Gender Equality



Ugandan Delegation at the forum discussing the implementation strategy for the Gender Equality Seal

13 Ugandan Companies attended the 3rd Global Forum “**Business for Gender Equality: Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals**” which took place from 20th -23rd November 2016 at the Convention Center City of Knowledge Panama City.

The forum brought together business leaders, Governments, academia, labour associations and civil society to share best practices for reducing the gender gaps in the workplace and to celebrate the role of the business sector as a key player in advancing gender equality and building inclusive work environments.

The forum was organized by the Government of Panama and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Ugandan Delegation was led by Mr. Gideon Badagawa Executive Director Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU). The 13 participating Companies from Uganda included; Nile Breweries, Alam Group, Graphic Systems, Simba Telecom, Eye to Eye Consult Ltd, Delight Uganda, Aloesha Organic, Victorious Education Services, Finance Trust, DFCU Bank, Hostalite, NBS TV and Standard Chartered Bank. The team was also joined by Ms. Jane Ekapu from the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, Mr. Nicolas Barunde United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Ms. Sarah Nakibuuka Bakehena Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU). The delegation was supported by the United Nations Development programme (UNDP).

The Gender Equality Seal for Public and Private Enterprises (GES) is a collective effort involving national governments, private sector companies and civil society to establish and achieve standards that empower women. Participating companies that successfully complete the certification requirements are awarded the Seal – a recognized symbol of gender equality in the workplace that certifies a company actively promotes equality among its employees.

The Gender Equality Seal presents opportunities for both implementing governments and the companies with which they partner. For governments, the seal represents a concrete means of mainstreaming gender equality to achieve progress reducing gender gaps. And private companies that have participated in the initiative report numerous advantages, including greater staff performance and commitment and a positive public image as a leader in corporate responsibility.

Since 2007, UNDP has supported governments and companies in Latin America participating in the Gender Equality Seal program. Beginning with Costa Rica, Uruguay, Brazil, Panama and Chile, the Gender Equality Seal program is now active in 12 countries in the region, involving over 400 companies. Designed as a means for the private sector to embrace gender equality and enhance women's economic and social empowerment, the Seal offers help to a growing number of corporations to make their human resources management systems more equitable and gender sensitive.

The Gender Equality Seal Certification Programme for Public and Private Enterprises seeks to eliminate gender inequalities in the workplace while improving the lives of all employees and their families.

A number of companies in Latin America recognize that promoting gender equality makes good business sense. A number of them are witnessing a broad range of benefits, including a better work environment, greater productivity and efficiency, and improved relationships among staff members. Furthermore, companies reported that adopting measures related to the certification requirements has resulted in an increase in employee commitment, a reduction in absenteeism, and attracting a greater diversity of talent. And by leveling the playing field for women, economies also prosper, driving national GDP growth. Some of the elements of the programme include: Address and Eliminate Gender Pay Gaps; Increase Women's Role in Decision-Making at Middle and Upper Management Levels; Develop and Implement Policies that Enhance Work-Life Balance; Recognize Women's Work in All Fields; Eradicate Sexual Harassment at Work.

While speaking at the forum, Mr. Gideon Badagawa Executive Director Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) said that the private sector in Uganda was committed to the full implementation of the Gender Equality Seal Certification Program and this is expected to increase productivity.

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