




Mobilizing
business to
create shared
prosperity
for all

BCTI The Business
Commission to
Tackle Inequality

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Today, WBCSD perceives inequality to be one of the three most pressing challenges facing our society globally, the other two being the climate emergency and nature loss.

INTRODUCTION

Why create a Business Commission to Tackle Inequality?

Tackling inequality and creating shared prosperity for all must be at the heart of business's agenda for sustainable growth.

Today, WBCSD perceives inequality to be one of the three most pressing challenges facing our society globally, alongside the climate emergency and nature loss.

Three decades of mounting inequality have brought us to a tipping point. Around the world, we are seeing increasingly wide swaths of people that are dissatisfied with their circumstances and pessimistic about their futures. Social cohesion is breaking down, trust in key institutions is eroding, and protest movements are gaining strength—in some cases, causing violent conflict.

For business, inequality is a great source of risk and missed opportunity: limiting productivity and innovation, constraining consumer spending and growth, destabilizing supply chains, breeding political instability, and jeopardizing license to operate. Inequality also acts as a threat multiplier, making other problems worse—something we have witnessed all too clearly as the COVID-19 pandemic has both fed on and fueled inequality globally.

At this critical juncture, business has an essential role to play in reducing inequality and in generating shared prosperity that can be enjoyed by all.

Facets of this role are already being explored and advanced under a number of headings, such as diversity and inclusion, the operationalization of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the

adoption of living wages. But to realize WBCSD's vision of a world in which 9+ billion people can live well, within planetary boundaries, by mid-century, there is an urgent need to integrate, elevate, and accelerate these various strands of work as part of a compelling overarching narrative and agenda for business action on inequality.

This is the need that WBCSD and its partners propose to fill with a new Business Commission to Tackle Inequality (BCTI). We hope that you will join us in our efforts to explore and articulate the multi-faceted role and responsibility of business in tackling inequality, and that together we can catalyze business action in support of a more inclusive and equitable society.



Peter Bakker
President & CEO, WBCSD

STRATEGY

What will be the Commission's key focus?

The Business Commission to Tackle Inequality will rally the global business community to shape, elevate, and mainstream a common narrative on the role of business and an agenda for action at scale.

Tackling inequality requires urgent action from all corners of society, and business has a critical role to play. BCTI seeks to put inequality on a par with climate change in terms of awareness, attention, engagement, and ultimately investment, leveraging the reach and influence of forward-thinking global companies and their leaders.

The Commission will rally global companies and key stakeholder groups to collectively define why it is important for business to tackle inequality, what business can do, and how, developing a common narrative and shared agenda for action for the business community.

The Commission's proposed mission and strategic approach are laid out below:

VISION: What is our desired end state?

MISSION: What role will BCTI play in achieving our vision?

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: How will BCTI fulfill its mission?

FOUNDATIONS: What core values underpin our work?

PEOPLE LIVING WELL

Mobilizing the global business community to tackle inequality and generate shared prosperity for all.

CHANGING MINDSETS

- Building recognition that inequality is not a fact of nature, but a product of our systems and practices that can change.
- Demonstrating that inequality has serious consequences for business's license to operate, innovate, and grow, and that business has a key role to play in reducing it.
- Showing that shared prosperity is in everyone's best interests.

CULTIVATING SHARED VISION AND DIRECTION

- Facilitating dialogue about the kind of society business would like to see in the future, and what it will take to get there.
- Articulating the complementary roles of business, government, and civil society, and ensuring they're commonly understood.
- Setting the agenda for business action and cross-sector collaboration.

CATALYZING AND SUPPORTING COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Mapping and making connections between companies and the constellation of existing initiatives providing practical support for tackling inequality.
- Scoping and incubating new initiatives to fill gaps.
- Liaising with government and investor groups to inform efforts to strengthen incentives and level the playing field for business.

OWNERSHIP

AGENCY

ACTION

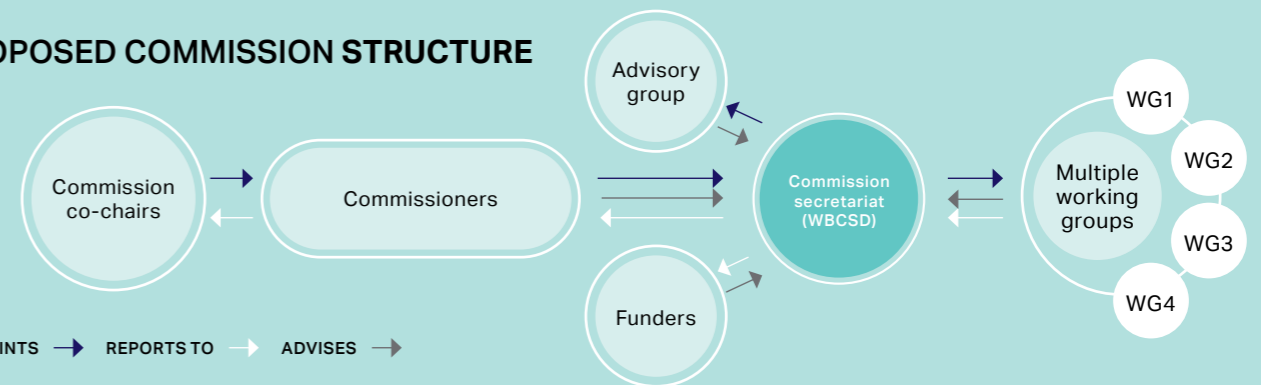
COLLABORATION

STRUCTURE

How will the Commission work?

The Commission will bring business leaders and representatives from key stakeholder groups together to shape, elevate, and implement a new agenda for business action to tackle inequality.

PROPOSED COMMISSION STRUCTURE



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Co-chairs

Individuals who will chair key Commission meetings and act as public figureheads and champions for the initiative, helping to recruit Commissioners, partners, and funders, and elevating the Commission's messages and findings.



Commissioners

C-suite business leaders and representatives from key stakeholder groups who will shape and elevate the Commission's narrative and agenda for action. Commissioners will appoint colleagues to participate in relevant working groups; review emerging content and ideas; and help represent and publicize the Commission's findings.



Advisory group

Experts from government, civil society, and the investment community who will provide strategic guidance, input, and feedback on emerging content and ideas.



Secretariat

WBCSD's People & Society Program will coordinate participants, facilitate discussion, produce key deliverables, and liaise with other relevant initiatives and stakeholders. WBCSD will also leverage valuable insights from its Global Network, an alliance of more than 60 CEO-led business organizations encompassing some 5,000 companies worldwide, to ensure that the Commission's work is grounded in a truly global set of perspectives.



Working groups

Groups of company representatives that will focus on advancing thinking around specific components of the Commission's narrative and agenda for action. Working groups will engage in dialogue, consult stakeholders, and develop problem statements, perspectives, and research for Commissioners to review.

TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

What next?

The Commission launched in July 2021, with the intent to operate for an initial period of two years.

In Year 1, the Commission will focus on business dialogue, stakeholder consultation, and engagement to develop a flagship report that establishes a **common narrative on the role of business in reducing inequality, an agenda for business action, and key government policy asks**. Other activities will likely include:

- Developing problem statements, perspectives, and key messages
- Participating in relevant dialogues and global conferences
- Mapping, engaging, and brokering connections with global initiatives providing practical support for companies working to tackle inequality.

In Year 2, the Commission will focus on communications and engagement to bring the narrative and agenda for action to a wide global audience, and help companies bridge into implementation. Illustratively, its activities could include:

- Coordinating a collective communications campaign around the Commission's flagship report and its findings
- Participating in relevant conferences and events
- Systematically engaging in relevant forums for business–government dialogue
- Deepening dialogue and research on topics of interest to Commissioners
- Making connections between companies and initiatives providing practical support
- Scoping new initiatives where gaps exist.

PROJECTED MILESTONES

JULY 2021: LAUNCH

The Business Commission to Tackle Inequality launches.



YEAR ONE: SETTING THE AGENDA

Development and publication of flagship Commission report establishing a common narrative on the role of business in tackling inequality, an agenda for business action, and key government policy asks.



YEAR TWO: FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Continued elevation of the Commission's key narrative and advancement of initiatives and platforms to accelerate business action.

ABOUT WBCSD

WBCSD is a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working together to accelerate the transition to a sustainable world.

We help make our member companies more successful and sustainable by focusing on the maximum positive impact for shareholders, the environment, and societies.

Our member companies come from all business sectors and all major economies, representing a combined revenue of more than USD \$8.5 trillion and 19 million employees. Our global network of almost 70 national business councils gives our members unparalleled reach across the globe. Since 1995, WBCSD has been uniquely positioned to work with member companies along and across value chains to deliver impactful business solutions to the most challenging sustainability issues.

Together, we are the leading voice of business for sustainability: united by our vision of a world in which more than 9 billion people are all living well, within planetary boundaries, by 2050.

Follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn

www.wbcds.org

How to get involved

Companies wishing to get involved with advancing the work of the Commission can:

- Nominate a senior executive to serve as a Commissioner
- Participate in one or more of the emerging working groups to help shape the Commission's thinking.

To register your interest or to find out more, please contact the WBCSD secretariat:

Contact Point
James Gomme
Director, People & Society, WBCSD
gomme@wbcds.org

At this critical juncture, business has an essential role to play in reducing inequality and in generating shared prosperity that can be enjoyed by all.



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