



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Crucial for more businesses to join UN corporate responsibility pact, says Ban



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses a meeting of the UN Global Compact Board of Directors

21 June 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today stressed the need for more businesses to join the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative with 6,000 companies in 135 countries.

A growing number of businesses have signed up to the Compact since it was set up in 2000, pledging to align their business practices to 10 universally accepted principles concerning human rights, labour, environmental sustainability and the fight against corruption.

Addressing the Compact's Board Members in New York, Mr. Ban [noted](#) that the current number of participants in the initiative is just a fraction of the estimated 70,000 multinationals and millions of small businesses.

“It is important that the principles of the Global Compact are accepted by more businesses around the world,” stated the Secretary-General, who has set a goal of reaching 20,000 companies by 2020.

“Reaching a critical mass will be essential if we are to help retool markets and economies towards sustainability,” he added.

At the same time, it is not just enough to add more members, said the Secretary-General. “While it is important for more businesses to join the initiative, the Compact can only make a real contribution if these companies embrace and advocate its principles,” he stated.

“To date, we have removed more than 2,400 companies from the Compact for failing to report to their stakeholders on progress they have made. Of those that are active, we know that most are still at the beginner to intermediate level.

“Our challenge is to get the entire membership to do better,” said Mr. Ban. “We need to bring more companies from the lower rungs of sustainability to more advanced practices.”

While noting that this will not be easy, the Secretary-General said the Global Compact Blueprint for Corporate Sustainability Leadership that was introduced last year can help by creating more specialized guidance for smaller and less advanced companies.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Businesses keen on green issues, but lag on graft and human rights – UN survey](#)