Mobilizing business to create shared prosperity for all
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.

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

**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.
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.

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?

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**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.

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**PROPOSED COMMISSION STRUCTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commission co-chairs</th>
<th>Commissioners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory group</td>
<td>Multiple working groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funders</td>
<td>WBCSD</td>
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**PEOPLE LIVING WELL**

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

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**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.
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.

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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.

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

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.

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
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gomme@wbcsd.org

JULY 2021: LAUNCH
The Business Commission to Tackle Inequality launches.

May 2021
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.