The World Economic Forum’s Closing the Gender Gap project aims to create global and national action platforms to address current and emerging economic gender gaps and reshape economies and business to hardwire gender parity in the future of work.

The project brings together business, government and civil society to drive action and address critical economic gender gaps through multistakeholder collaboration at the global and national levels. By 2020, the Closing the Gender Gap project will catalyse systems reform in at least 10 new economies and reach 10 million women by creating equal opportunities for labour participation, leadership roles and equal pay.

The issue
At current rates of progress, it may take another 202 years to close the economic gender gap globally. Although many countries are well-placed to maximize women’s economic potential, they are failing to reap the returns from their investment in female education. In addition, too few countries are preparing to meet the challenges and harness the gender parity opportunities posed by the changing nature of work. The Forum takes a future-facing perspective on gender parity, addressing various factors that contribute to economic gender gaps and providing a platform for multistakeholder coalitions to accelerate progress at global and national levels.

Objectives
The Closing the Gender Gap project aims to create global and national public-private collaboration platforms to address current gender gaps and reshape gender parity for the future by:

- Serving as a platform for structured global exchange on avenues for reform, preferred methods and best practices
- Supporting public-sector leadership and public-private collaboration towards gender parity
- Consolidating new global and country-specific business commitments for closing gender gaps

Core activities
The project provides an exclusive platform for global exchange, business commitments and country implementation. Its core activities include:

- Global exchange: The project has established an informal global community of practice of relevant leaders and experts for global knowledge exchange on closing the gender gap. Leaders from these economies and businesses share the latest experiments and pilots for successfully addressing gender gaps, now and in the future.

- National action: The Forum serves as an accelerator for national task forces, which have been successful in addressing current gender gaps and reshaping gender parity for the future in 12 countries. Focus is on closing gaps in labour force participation, remuneration and leadership, and preparing companies and countries for gender parity in the future of work. The Forum’s insight products are used as guides for country-level issue identification, such as the annual Global Gender Gap Report and the Industry Gender Gap Report.

Task forces have been established in Chile, Argentina, Panama, Peru, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and France, with those in Latin America implemented in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank, following successful pilots in Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and Turkey (see Closing the Economic Gender Gap: Learning from the Gender Parity Task Forces). The Forum is discussing the expansion of these efforts with various countries and institutions and is seeking partners interested in collaborating to establish national task forces.

- Business commitments: The project calls for quantifiable commitments from leading companies to increase workforce opportunities and accelerate gender parity in the future of work. The Forum will guide companies to align their interventions through a menu of business actions.
These commitments will be broadly disseminated through the Forum network to amplify their impact. The project also compiles cutting-edge knowledge, insight and tools to inform commitments and assist companies in measuring, tracking and narrowing gender gaps, such as Accelerating Gender Parity: A Toolkit.

Knowledge and insight: Reports highlight and reframe the conversation about the future of education, gender and work using a systemic perspective, underpinning the design and implementation of the task force model. The Forum produces benchmarking tools, such as the Global Gender Gap Report and the Human Capital Report; in-focus issues and best practice reports, such as Accelerating Gender Parity in the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and forecasting tools exploring future trends, such as the Future of Jobs Report and Human Capital Outlooks.

Community engagement

Businesses, governments and civil society are core stakeholders in the project. They are engaged through:

Community of Practice on Closing the Gender Gap: The project gathers an informal global community of practice to drive dialogue and best practice exchange on closing the economic gender gap. The community is comprised of the World Economic Forum’s steering committee on Closing the Gender Gap under the auspices of the Centre for the New Economy and Society; leaders of pioneering countries and international organizations; co-chairs of country-level task forces; and select leading experts and practitioners.

Closing the Gender Gap Task Forces: Senior business executives and key representatives from government and civil society collectively form national-level Closing the Gender Gap Task Forces. Members of each task force participate in face-to-face and virtual meetings to develop national action plans and regularly assess progress and collaboration across the project component areas. The four objectives of the task forces are: Closing the overall labour participation gap; closing the leadership gap; closing the wage gap; and hardwiring gender parity into the future of work. Additionally, country task forces are responsible for ensuring alignment with the overall project vision, gathering information, providing feedback to stakeholders and driving progress on the national action plan.

Why engage?

Public sector

− Gather insight from the private sector on the policies and practices that will support economic gender parity
− Join a global network of like-minded public- and private-sector leaders to share best practices, and scale-up and shape existing gender initiatives

− Use the Forum’s media channels to showcase innovative public-sector projects and policies on gender parity, gaining additional visibility as a thought and action leader
− Shape the public narrative on gender parity issues (including on the future of work) and gain visibility as a thought and action leader

Private sector

− Act to narrow company gender gaps, benefiting from the “diversity dividend” that a more gender-balanced workforce brings
− Join a global network of like-minded businesses to share best practices, scale-up existing gender initiatives and engage with public-sector leaders at the highest level
− Communicate globally about business commitments on hardwiring gender in the future of work through the Forum platform

Centre for the New Economy and Society

The Centre for the New Economy and Society aims to build dynamic, inclusive economies and societies that provide a future of opportunities for all.

The centre provides leaders with a platform to understand and anticipate emerging economic and social trends, and shape the future through new policies, practices and partnerships.

It delivers on this mission by serving as an integrated hub for the most relevant insight and pioneering actions to accelerate impact for two systems, the Future of Education, Gender and Work, and the Future of Economic Progress, and their sub-systems.

For more information, please contact:

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