



The Voice of OECD Business

Media Release

BIAC Survey highlights

Business Actions Key to advancing Women's Economic Empowerment

Paris, 23 June 2014 – Private sector initiatives remain key to driving the advancement of women in the workplace. But, progress remains slow and uneven, according to [*Putting All our Minds to Work: An Assessment*](#), a business survey report released today by BIAAC and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (Deloitte Global).

The report is based on a survey following up the 2012 BIAAC/AmCham Report: *Putting All our Minds to Work: Harnessing the Gender Dividend*. Its objective is to assess recent changes in company practice to advance women into leadership positions.

Selected Survey Findings:

Over 66% of companies responding to the survey reported an increase in the percentage of women in executive leadership positions since 2010:

- 47% have introduced policy and practice changes aimed at women at the managerial level, and
- 44% have done so for women in executive leadership positions.

The most common practices cited by companies are the introduction of:

- High potential development plans: executives: 48 % / managers: 55 %;
- Workplace flexibility policies: executives: 43% / managers: 41%;
- Diversity and inclusive leadership development for current leaders: executives: 41% / managers: 36%;
- Mentorship: executives: 33% / managers: 36%; and
- The provision of parental leave: executives: 33% / managers: 41%.

Despite progress, more than half of the respondents had not recently introduced new plans to encourage the advancement of women in their workplaces.

“The survey results show that while progress is being made, more effort is required across the board before organizations can generate greater economic empowerment of women,” said **Bernhard Welschke, Secretary-General of BIAAC**. *“Neither economies nor companies can afford to miss out on the contributions of women. Progress depends on senior leadership in business and government, as well as in society working together to support women in the workforce and encouraging them as entrepreneurs.”*

The greatest catalysts for change within organizations are the CEO, senior managers and the Board, while laws, political leadership and corporate governance were seen as comparatively more

promising in markets without quotas, and the media and academia in markets with quotas, all pointing to the fact that more must and can be done.

The survey also found that 22% of companies responding had lost women from leadership positions through voluntary resignations. Reasons cited included better opportunities elsewhere or lack of promotion or career development challenges.

The reasons given for women leaving the workplace suggest the current business environment is not providing the majority of female employees' adequate support.

"Talented women are making their own choices - and too many are choosing simply to step off the corporate ladder believing further advancement is not available to them. This has to change and change needs leadership," said **Steve Almond, Chairman, Deloitte Global**. "Business leaders must own the issue of gender diversity instead of pushing the job off to Human Resources; they need to move beyond declarations to substantive engagement, providing sponsors, coaches and mentors to help talented women achieve their true potential. This is not about lowering the hurdle; it is about encouraging women to stay the course to give themselves the chance of clearing the hurdle."

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Notes to editors:

Founded in 1962 as an independent organisation, the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC) is the officially recognised representative of the OECD business community. BIAC's members are the major business organisations in the OECD member countries and a number of OECD observer countries.

For more information, contact [Maud Garnier](#), BIAC Communications Manager.

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