



## INSIGHTS SUMMARY

# WORKING TOGETHER TO TACKLE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GLOBAL GOALS / HYBRID WORKSHOP / 20 SEPT 2023

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We would like to thank the following speakers:

**Jane Pillinger**, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Department of Social Policy and Criminology, **Open University**

**Natalie Deacon**, Director Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, **Avon International**

**Hermien Botes**, Head of Sustainability Engagement, **Anglo American**

**Thokozile Mcopele**, Vice-President – Global Corporates and Development Organisations, **ABSA**

***Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a pressing challenge across society and in the workplace, where it affects productivity, absenteeism and presenteeism. Businesses have started to address the issue more concretely, including through workplace policies and community projects – but deeper, more robust collaboration with a variety of usual and unusual partners is required to accelerate progress in the long term.***

### INSIGHT 1: KEEP MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

While the moral, ethical and societal facets of the issue are clear, the panel underscored the need to also continue to make and evolve the compelling economic justification. By weaving in the commercial advantages of

proactively countering GBV, especially in the private sector, the narrative undergoes a transformative shift. Companies are poised to recognise that their efforts against GBV extend beyond societal goodwill; they hold tangible repercussions for financial outcomes, operational sustainability and overarching brand perception.

***If three companies like us, that are seemingly totally disparate, have got this much in common on this issue, then there's so much more that we can all do together beyond this group.***

Natalie Deacon, Director Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, *Avon International*

***All of these issues cost companies and governments billions. It deprives women and men who may be affected by gender-based violence of their livelihoods, of choices to progress in their careers.***

Jane Pillinger, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Department of Social Policy and Criminology, *Open University*

***People are inclined to work on tangible initiatives. It makes us feel good to see that quick progress. And response work is critical. The prevention work is intangible, it is difficult and it can take absolute generations – and that runs counter to how business does things.***

**Hermien Botes, Head of Sustainability Engagement, Anglo American**

### **INSIGHT 2: BUILD STRONGER COLLABORATION WITHIN AND ACROSS SECTORS**

Given the complex nature of addressing GBV and the fact that no single group of actors can solve it, the workshop emphasised the importance of seeking multi-stakeholder partnerships, including humanitarian NGOs, local and national government actors, and other companies. Finding ways to deepen collaboration and learn from each other was highlighted. An example of sector-wide collaboration provided in the breakouts included RISE – a garment sector initiative that has brought together the ILO, multiple brands and factories, and NGOs to address GBV and labour standards in factories across Asia, thereby pooling expertise, infrastructure and training and avoiding duplication of effort.

### **INSIGHT 3: SEEK OUT THE EXPERTS TO HELP OVERCOME SOCIAL AND CULTURAL NORMS**

Social and cultural norms pose significant barriers to addressing GBV and make universally standardised approaches impossible. However, with the right partners, change is possible – both within workplaces and in the wider community. There is expertise available on engaging men and boys on building culturally aware workplaces that support survivors of GBV and more. It is important that corporations don't feel that they have to have all the answers themselves; there are experts available that can assist.

***The perception of Gender-Based Violence is not the same everywhere, and even for women themselves. So I think [it's about] educating staff and understanding that it is a long game.***

**Thokozile Mcopele, Vice-President – Global Corporates and Development Organisations, ABSA**

## **RESOURCES**

- **TOOLKIT:** [businessfightspoverty.org/report/action-toolkit-gender-based-violence-and-covid-19](https://businessfightspoverty.org/report/action-toolkit-gender-based-violence-and-covid-19)
- **REPORT:** [businessfightspoverty.org/report/how-can-business-tackle-gender-based-violence-in-the-world-of-work-a-toolkit-for-action](https://businessfightspoverty.org/report/how-can-business-tackle-gender-based-violence-in-the-world-of-work-a-toolkit-for-action)
- **PODCAST:** [businessfightspoverty.org/gender-based-violence-is-a-work-issue](https://businessfightspoverty.org/gender-based-violence-is-a-work-issue)
- **ISSUE BRIEF:** [womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/strengthening-sexual-violence-approaches-for-diverse-adolescent-boys-and-male-youth-affected-by-crisis/](https://womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/strengthening-sexual-violence-approaches-for-diverse-adolescent-boys-and-male-youth-affected-by-crisis/)
- **BOOK:** [agendapub.com/page/detail/stopping-gender-based-violence-and-harassment-at-work/?k=9781788215732](https://agendapub.com/page/detail/stopping-gender-based-violence-and-harassment-at-work/?k=9781788215732)