



INSIGHTS SUMMARY

TACKLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

GLOBAL EQUITY / HYBRID WORKSHOP / 7 MAR 2024

We would like to thank the following speakers:

Christel Adamou, Director, Office of Professional Ethics and Conduct, **Asian Development Bank**; **Susan Bright**, CEO, **Employers Initiative Against Domestic Abuse**; **Natalie Deacon**, Director Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, **Avon International**; **Katie O'Brien**, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, **Anglo American**; **Pamela Zaballa**, CEO, **NO MORE**; **Claudine McMahon**, Head of Culture and Inclusion, **Vodafone**; **Shabnam Hameed**, Gender Based Violence Specialist, **International Finance Corporation**

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

The Equity Summit 2024 outlined the important role businesses can play in addressing domestic violence. The insights provided by the speakers, who are leading experts in their fields, provide ideas on the strategies and commitments necessary to foster a safe and supportive workplace environment. The insights outline how leadership, global policies and an inclusive culture, can help create workplaces that can not only respond to but actively work to prevent domestic violence.

INSIGHT 1: **SECURE SENIOR LEADERSHIP BUY-IN**

As Dr Jane Pillinger noted, "It's a real breakthrough that domestic violence is recognised as a workplace issue in Convention ILO 190 and that employers have a responsibility to mitigate its effects". Business leadership support is crucial in putting this new global standard into practice and ensuring it is prioritised. Leadership support is also crucial in shaping an organisational culture that acknowledges and actively addresses domestic violence and encourages a culture of openness and safety, where employees feel valued and protected. As participants noted, for too long domestic violence has been viewed as a private matter not one that is addressed in public spaces including the workplace. Claudine McMahon stated: "Raising this as an issue on a constant basis helps to shine a light on a topic that thrives when it's hidden and not talked about." Christel Adamou added, "Traditionally, anything that happens at home was a private matter".

INSIGHT 2: **ADOPT A GLOBAL POLICY TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES IN MULTIPLE MARKETS**

Adopting a global policy to address domestic violence in the workplace demonstrates an organisation's recognition of domestic violence as a global issue affecting employees regardless of their location. Natalie Deacon shared, "We've been doing all of this work externally, and actually had that moment of thinking, but this happens to one in three of the women who work inside these walls as well." Katie O'Brien emphasised the inclusivity of such policies: "Whatever geography you're in, or jurisdiction you're in, if you work for us, this policy applies to you." Shabnam Hameed further emphasised the broader impact, stating, "The private sector often has a lot of power. Sometimes they're the biggest institution in any given region, and what companies do inside the fence has an effect outside the fence." A global policy not only ensures uniform support for all employees but also positions the company as a proactive agent of change within the wider community, leveraging its influence to promote safety and support beyond the corporate sphere.

INSIGHT 3: **MAINTAIN MOMENTUM TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND DELIVER ACTION**

The effectiveness of domestic violence policies hinges on their continuous reinforcement and integration into the organisation's culture. Susan Bright highlighted the need for persistence: "How do we make sure that this isn't just a one-minute wonder, but it is actually stitched into how we onboard people, how we train people, how we train managers, how we make sure that as new people join the organisation, they are also brought into it." This commitment to ongoing education and awareness ensures that policies remain relevant. Claudine McMahon underscored the importance of staff knowing how to effectively recognise, respond and refer to incidents: "Our role is to be there when they're [survivors] ready to take whatever action they deem necessary. The information is important to the police, to the judicial system. And if we haven't been taking detailed notes on that, we might not be in a position to respond and support them in that process." Pamela Zaballa noted that continuous reinforcement can help more people feel encouraged to stand up to violence: "People are speaking up and the more every company speaks up, the more you're breaking the silence and the chain that is attached to it."

CONCLUSION

The insights from the Business Fights Poverty Global Equity Summit challenge organisations to take decisive, sustained action against domestic violence, emphasising the need for leadership support, comprehensive policies, and enduring commitment to implementation. As businesses step forward to embrace these strategies, they not only safeguard their employees but also show how they are meeting their responsibilities to uphold new international standards to create workplaces free from violence and fear. In doing so, they contribute to the broader societal shift towards recognising and addressing domestic violence, paving the way for a future where every workplace offers safety, dignity, and respect for all.

RESOURCES

- [Toolkit: How Companies can Support Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse](#)
- [Toolkit: How Can Business Tackle Gender-Based Violence in the World of Work](#)
- [NO MORE](#)
- [NO MORE Global Directory of Services and Helplines](#)
- [Anglo American on GBV](#)
- [Avon on GBV](#)
- [Vodafone on GBV](#)
- [Employers' initiative on domestic abuse](#)