RESPECTFULLY DISRUPTIVE: SUPPORTING UN WOMEN HEFORSHE ACROSS THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Last month, I had the opportunity to attend the United Nations (UN) Women HeForShe Summit in New York, accompanied by BMC Chief Financial Officer Marc Rothman. At the Summit, UN Women unveiled the powerful theme of #RespectfullyDisruptive, calling for a collective disruption of global inequalities. This theme emphasizes the urgent need to challenge the status quo and chart a new course toward gender equality, with men as active partners in this journey.

The significance of male allies like Marc in propelling gender equality forward cannot be overstated. In a world grappling with complex challenges, their involvement is crucial. As Sima Bahous, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, puts it, "We must challenge the portrayal of toxic masculinity and promote positive male role models who champion gender equality."

The power of respectful disruption

Respectful disruption translates into tangible actions that contribute to transforming gender equality into a reality. These actions include active allyship, concrete commitments to advance gender balance, intensifying efforts towards gender parity, standing up against biased attitudes and

behaviors, countering gender discrimination, implementing Women's Empowerment Principles, closing the gender pay gap, advocating for more women in leadership positions, and designing workplace policies that foster equality and inclusion.

Targets of respectful disruption

The call for respectful disruption addresses critical fronts that include:

- **Gender social norms**: These norms perpetuate biases against gender, hindering individual progress and potential.
- **Struggle**: Harmful models of masculinity oversimplify the image of men, restricting their ability to embrace their full range of emotions and roles.
- **Gender pay gap**: The persistence of unequal pay for work of equal value perpetuates economic disparities.
- **Violence against women**: Violence remains a pervasive issue, affecting the lives of countless women globally.
- **Active allyship**: Taking proactive steps to bolster gender equality initiatives.

Why gender parity and female leadership matter

While women are making inroads into corporate leadership, there's still much to do. According to McKinsey's *Women in the Workplace 2023* study, "Since 2015, the number of women in the C-suite has increased from 17 to 28 percent, and the representation of women at the vice president and senior vice president levels has also improved significantly," but "women—and especially women of color—have remained underrepresented across the corporate pipeline."

Organizations that prioritize gender parity and female leadership consistently outperform their competitors. Studies show that diverse teams lead to higher innovation, increased profitability, and improved decision-making. *Women Count 2022*, a UK study of Financial Times Stock Exchange companies by The Pipeline, a diversity consultancy, revealed that corporations that have over 25 percent of women on their executive committees realized a profit margin of 16 percent—more than 10 times higher than those without any female board members. The study suggests that those in the latter category could be forfeiting billions of dollars of revenue with that exclusion.

UN Women HeForShe is championing thriving communities

Research from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reinforces the notion that when women thrive, communities thrive. According to their findings, gender equality is associated with improved economic performance, enhanced competitiveness, and increased social progress. Beyond economic indicators, thriving communities benefit from greater innovation, resilience, and overall well-being when women are actively engaged and empowered.

The UN Women HeForShe movement, through its commitment to respectful disruption, actively supports the IMF theory that when women thrive, communities flourish. By engaging over three million supporters worldwide, UN Women HeForShe channels resources and advocacy toward programs that uplift and empower women while concurrently mentoring men. These initiatives, funded by UN Women HeForShe, span various sectors, including education, healthcare, economic empowerment, and leadership development. Through targeted investments, the organization drives

tangible progress towards creating thriving communities across the globe.

BMC's commitment to HeForShe

BMC recognizes its critical role in influencing gender equality, especially in the tech sector, and is focused on creating inclusive workplaces where women thrive, without diminishing the role of men. Throughout the year, BMC supports UN Women HeForShe initiatives such as policy advisement, employee training, volunteering, awareness, and our annual **Global Move event in October**.

During Global Move, BMC uses its influence to fundraise and drive awareness for UN Women HeForShe by encouraging its entire workforce and ecosystem to move, walk, run, or roll for 132 minutes. That time is intentional, driving awareness that throughout the world, gender parity will take 132 years to achieve unless we all work together toward progress, and that equality is achievable through taking action. BMC's support for UN Women HeForShe seeks to elevate the visibility of women, empower allies of gender equality, inspire women to pursue their goals, celebrate their achievements, and inclusively support those who identify as women in their careers.

Join the movement

We invite you to join us on October 21 for Global Move 2023 as we strive to help eliminate bias and create a more equitable world for women in the workforce and beyond. Every action matters, and together, we can be agents of positive change, respectfully disrupting the norms that perpetuate gender inequality. By doing so, we not only advance the cause of gender equality but also foster a more inclusive, innovative, and prosperous world for all.

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