



## BREAKOUT SESSION

### **Women's rights as an essential cooperation: What we can do**

Wednesday, 16 October 2013 – 15:30-17:00

Moderator:

**Marissa Wesely**, Partner, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, and Board Member, Global Fund for Women

Speakers:

**Rena De Sisto**, International CSR and Global Arts & Culture Executive, Bank of America

**Amina Doherty**, Founding Coordinator, FRIDA, and Board Member, Global Fund for Women

**Angela Joo-Hyun Kang**, Founder and Executive President, Global Competitiveness Empowerment Forum, and Jury Member, Cartier Women's Initiative Awards

**Theo Sowa**, CEO, the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)

**Melanne Verveer**, Executive Director, Institute for Women, Peace and Security, Georgetown University

Less than a decade ago very few companies were interested in promoting women and women's issues. But now more actors in the private sector are investing substantial time, energy and money in women and girls. They are partnering with grassroots and other women's groups because they recognize that women's ability to earn an income has a huge impact on the private sector. To ensure their investments are successful, corporations need to work closely with groups that understand the cultural context of where they seek to invest. Women's economic empowerment is vital but is most effective when it is linked to programs that help women understand that they have reproductive, property, education and other rights. Women's rights are human rights and vice versa. Any program or project will have more chance of success when governments, academia, the private sector and faith groups work together to achieve a common goal. Corporations must recruit and promote more women, and should set an example so that it is seen as the norm.

Good communication is another issue critical to successful partnerships between the corporate and social sectors. This means using language that both understand, since certain words may not have the same meaning to each of them. Both should also showcase in their respective communities the corporations or NGOs that are succeeding in promoting women's rights.

### **QUOTES**

"Corporations are recognizing more and more that women are the chief breadwinners and the chief consumers."

**Rena De Sisto**

“One paradigm shift that has happened over the years is that women are no longer seen as victims but rather as agents of change.”

**Melanne Verveer**

“The really crucial thing we need to realize is that women’s rights are indivisible. We need to look at them as a package – human rights, economic rights, social rights.”

**Theo Sowa**

“When corporations hear the word ‘solidarity’ they don’t understand what it means in the social sector. We need to improve communication between the two sectors.”

**Angela Joo-Hyun Kang**

“Social and private sectors should recognize that they have much to give each other when they work together.”

**Angela Joo-Hyun Kang**

“Accountability is multidirectional. It’s not just for multinationals.”

**Amina Doherty**

“Collaboration is extremely important. Find businesses that align with your mission. To move any of this work forward requires very strong shared learning. Our innovation right now is to be able to work together and build successful partnerships.”

**Amina Doherty**

**Key fact**

Women are important accelerators of a country’s GDP.

**Key figures**

Of the **70** new public and private development initiatives in the past five years, **60%** involve corporations.