



► A powerful partnership to drive disability inclusion in business: ILO GBDN and Valuable 500

1. Introduction

The ILO Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN) and Valuable 500 have long collaborated behind a shared vision of a disability-confident global business community.

An increasing number of leading multinational enterprises are capitalising on the distinctly different, yet complimentary ways in which the ILO GBDN and Valuable 500 add value, as business leaders around the world confront very similar challenges:

- How do we create the inclusive cultures which enhance talent acquisition, employee engagement, productivity, and our employer brand?
- How can our global teams best support regional and local efforts to position disability equality and inclusion as a priority, while promoting consistent good practice in every country in which we operate?

2. Valuable 500

Valuable 500 is a global non-profit organisation of over 500 multinational corporations working together to end disability exclusion in the business landscape. More than 530 C-suite leaders are publicly committed to putting disability on their board agendas.

Valuable 500's primary aim is to inspire action, integration and change among CEOs and executive levels of leadership. They drive change through Synchronised Collective Action: channeling the power of 500 partners working in harmony, they hold each other to account on Leadership, Reporting and Representation.



Caroline Casey (upper right corner), Founder of Valuable 500 and other colleagues speaking at the ILO GBDN webinar "Business leadership in disability-inclusive responses to COVID-19" in June 2020

3. ILO Global Business and Disability Network

Established in 2010, the ILO GBDN is a unique employers-led worldwide network of more than 40 multinational enterprises, more than 40 National Business and Disability Networks (NBDNs), including in



National Business and Disability Networks that are members of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network

developing countries, as well as a few non-business associate members. The development, identification and dissemination of globally applicable good corporate disability inclusion practices lies at the heart of the ILO GBDN's work – with the overall goal of increasing employment rates of persons with disabilities. In 2015, the ILO GBDN introduced its Charter which commits its company signatories to support ten disability inclusion principles.

The ILO GBDN is facilitated by the ILO, the tripartite United Nations (UN) agency for the world of work governed by the governments, workers' organisations and employers' organisations of its more than 185 Member States. It enables access to UN structures and processes worldwide, including the UN Global Compact and its local networks. It is uniquely placed to leverage the influence of the private sector, regionally and locally, to ensure investments in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 8 and 10, also benefit people with disabilities – so that “no one is left behind”.

4. Dual membership amplifies the value added

Membership by multinational enterprises in both the ILO GBDN and Valuable 500 enables companies to capitalise on Valuable 500's mobilization of C-suite commitment to disability inclusion as an economic and ethical imperative, while leveraging the ILO GBDN's unique capacity to help members translate such head office ambitions into consistent good practice locally.

Additionally, the ILO GBDN strongly focuses on NBDNs to promote the economic empowerment of people with disabilities, specifically in low- and middle-income countries of the Global South.

Indeed, the ILO GBDN serves as an exceptional connector, facilitating innovative local partnerships between global businesses, NBDNs, national employers' federations, public policy makers and organisations of persons with disabilities, to the sustainable benefit of businesses, people with disabilities and societies at large.

The ILO GBDN is uniquely placed to help Valuable 500 Partners and Companies to deliver on their public commitments. While Valuable 500 facilitates the C-suite engagement that empowers local leaders to improve their disability performance, the ILO GBDN builds the capacity of the NBDNs' movement “on the ground” to provide practical support, peer-to-peer learning and business-relevant resources to local employers, including Valuable 500 Partners and Companies, and ILO GBDN members.

Valuable 500 Partners and Companies can turn to the ILO GBDN for assistance as they seek to convey to their local colleagues the business and ethical case for improving their disability inclusion performance, and to share achievements in one market or region, to inspire replication in another.

The ILO GBDN's unique Self-Assessment Tool, valid and applicable in any jurisdiction, enables Valuable 500 members to benchmark best practice in every market and then use this data when reporting on The V500's accountability campaign's five priority KPIs: Goals, Workforce Representation, Training, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) on disability, and Digital Accessibility. The ILO GBDN's strong focus on employment, economic empowerment, and labour market standards strategically augments Valuable 500's three priorities for collective action, as the two initiatives continue to ensure that they reinforce and amplify each other's work.



Stéphane Leblois (third from the left), Chief Community and Programmes Officer, Valuable 500, speaking on a panel at the 10th Global Annual Conference of the ILO GBDN in November 2023

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