

## MARY KAY, IN COLLABORATION WITH UN AGENCIES, LAUNCHES WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACCELERATOR

*Strategic Partnership Will Invest in Female Entrepreneurship  
Around the World*

**DALLAS, TX. – (September 23, 2019)** – Today, Mary Kay Inc., a leading advocate of women's empowerment and entrepreneurship, announced the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator, a multi-partner initiative designed to inspire, educate, and empower women entrepreneurs around the world. With no qualifying barriers to participate, the ground-breaking initiative is a strategic collaboration developed in consultation with six United Nations agencies: UN Women, United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Trade Centre (ITC), UN Global Compact (UNGC), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Accelerator will offer a guided digital curriculum supplemented by on-the-ground training and mentorship. In addition, it will serve as an advocacy platform to eliminate entrepreneurial roadblocks for women, ranging from digital literacy to legal reform—enabling women to fully participate in the growth of their local and national economies. The Accelerator will support global efforts to encourage businesses to establish and expand relationships with women-owned businesses, including corporate procurement. Future expansion of the program will include funding opportunities accessible to women who complete the curriculum.

“Mary Kay has empowered women through entrepreneurship and supported their aspirations for financial security and independence for more than 56 years,” said Deborah Gibbins, Chief Operating Officer of Mary Kay. “Private and public-sector organizations must work together to ensure all women entrepreneurs have access to the tools and education they need to make their dreams of financial independence a reality, lifting up their families and communities.”

The Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator initially will be available in six languages, with more to come as the program expands to 192 countries. The Accelerator also will convene an advisory committee of entrepreneurs, celebrities, and advocates to oversee the expansion and promotion of the program.

“An informed woman with money in her pocket, is an empowered woman. With the growing number of female innovators active today, women's entrepreneurship and empowerment are strongly on the rise,” said Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women. “The

IN SUPPORT OF



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advocates from across the world who are joining forces to create the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator will enable more women than ever to become knowledgeable entrepreneurs, cultivate financial independence, and support their local communities."

"At ITC we look forward to joining the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator through our SheTrades Initiative to achieve real progress on achieving SDG5 to empower all women and girls," said Arancha González, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre. "With this partnership we will empower women and girls to pursue their entrepreneurship dreams, and equip them with the skills needed to turn those dreams into business success."

The Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator is the latest in a series of recent steps taken by Mary Kay to empower women and improve their lives around the world. Earlier this year, Mary Kay added its name to a growing roster of businesses and corporations committing to the Women's Empowerment Principles, a joint project of the UN Global Compact and UN Women developed to emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality. Mary Kay is also a signatory of the UN Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative. During the United Nations General Assembly, Mary Kay will sponsor the WE Empower UN SDG Challenge, the first global business competition for women entrepreneurs convened by renowned fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg.

To learn more about the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator, visit [www.WE-accelerate.com](http://www.WE-accelerate.com).

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#### **About Mary Kay**

One of the original glass ceiling breakers, Mary Kay Ash founded her beauty company more than 55 years ago with three goals: develop rewarding opportunities for women, offer irresistible products, and make the world a better place. That dream has blossomed into a multibillion-

dollar company with millions of independent sales force members in nearly 40 countries. Mary Kay is dedicated to investing in the science behind beauty and manufacturing cutting-edge skin care, color cosmetics, nutritional supplements, and fragrances. Mary Kay is committed to empowering women and their families by partnering with organizations from around the world, focusing on supporting cancer research, protecting survivors from domestic abuse, beautifying our communities, and encouraging children to follow their dreams. Mary Kay Ash's original vision continues to shine—one lipstick at a time. Learn more at [www.marykay.com](http://www.marykay.com).

## About UN Women

[UN Women](#) is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women [lead, participate in and benefit equally](#) from governance systems
- Women have [income security, decent work and economic autonomy](#)
- All women and girls live a life free [from all forms of violence](#)
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in [building sustainable peace and resilience](#), and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and [humanitarian action](#)

UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality, and in all deliberations and agreements linked to the 2030 Agenda. The entity works to position gender equality as fundamental to the Sustainable Development Goals, and a more inclusive world.

## About International Trade Centre (ITC)

The International Trade Centre (ITC)'s SheTrades initiative aims to connect 3 million women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses to international markets by 2021. SheTrades works with governments, corporations and business support organizations to undertake research, shape

enabling trade policies and regulations, facilitate financing, and expand access to public tenders and corporate supply chains.

SheTrades provides women entrepreneurs with a varied learning environment with a flexible curriculum through shetrades.com. This includes free online courses, participation in face-to-face workshops, engagement through live webinars on a range of topics and a greater understanding of their markets. development within the frameworks of the Aid-for-Trade agenda and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, visit [www.intracen.org](http://www.intracen.org). Follow ITC on [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#)

#### **About the United Nations Global Compact**

As a special initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the United Nations Global Compact work is a call to companies everywhere to align their operations and strategies with ten universal principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Launched in 2000, the mandate of the UN Global Compact is to guide and supports the global business community in advancing UN goals and values through responsible corporate practices. With more than 9,500 companies and 3,000 non-business signatories based in over 160 countries, and more than 60 Local Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

For more information, follow [@globalcompact](#) on social media and visit our website at [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org).

#### **About United Nations Office for Partnerships**

The United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP) serves as a global gateway for catalyzing and building multi-stakeholder partnerships to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNOP provides a platform for effective partner engagement and works to leverage the assets and expertise of a broad range of partners in furtherance of the SDGs. The Office oversees the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, the United Nations Democracy Fund, the SDG Action Hub, and the Secretary-Generals' SDG Advocates.

For more information visit: <https://www.un.org/partnerships/content/welcome-united-nations-office-partnerships>.

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## **About the International Labour Organization**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a UN agency created in 1919 and devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that labour peace is essential to prosperity. Today, the ILO helps advance the creation of decent work and the economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. Its tripartite structure provides a unique platform for promoting decent work for all women and men.

The ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development programme (ILO-WED) is part of the Small and Medium Enterprises Unit (SME) and has been running for over a decade. ILO-WED works on enhancing economic opportunities for women by carrying out affirmative actions in support of women starting, formalizing and growing their enterprises, and by mainstreaming gender equality issues into the ILO's work in enterprise development.

Website: [www.ilo.org/wed](http://www.ilo.org/wed) | Twitter - @ILOWED | Facebook – ILO WED (International Labour Organization)