

14. Will participate in the United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights**Prof. Dr. Yasemin Aık will speak in Geneva on equality in supply chains.**

Turkish Business Confederation Vice President of the Board of Directors Prof. Dr. Yasemin Aık will attend the 14th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights, which will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 24–26 November. Participating as a speaker in the panel titled “Building Gender-Responsive Supply Chains”, Aık emphasized that women who want to take part in supply chains face numerous challenges ranging from contract conditions to access to finance. She stated: “Buyers acting in a gender-responsive manner forms the basis of sustainable growth for both businesses and economies. In Geneva, we will share the practices that empower women’s participation in supply chains as well as the collaborations we have developed in this field, contributing to a more inclusive global business culture.”

Access to supply chains plays a critical role in empowering women entrepreneurs in economic life. However, research shows that women-owned businesses receive no more than 1% of total global procurement. *Turkish Business Confederation*, which has carried out various projects and published books to strengthen women entrepreneurs in supply chains and raise awareness in this field, will draw attention to the issue once again at the 14th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights. **Turkish Business Confederation Vice President Prof. Dr. Yasemin Aık** will take part as a speaker on the first day of the Forum, to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 24–26 November, in the panel titled “Building Gender-Responsive Supply Chains.” In her speech, Prof. Dr. Aık will inform participants about the barriers faced by women-led SMEs in procurement processes, proposed solutions, and the role large buyers should play.

Prof. Dr. Yasemin Aık: “Buyers can make procurement processes more equitable”

Prof. Dr. Yasemin Aık stated that women entrepreneurs face obstacles in areas such as contract conditions, payment terms, certification requirements, and access to business networks. She said: “In today’s world, marked by multiple crises, establishing and sustaining a business requires courage for any entrepreneur. However, when women embark on this journey, they encounter more obstacles than men. The most concrete step buyers can take in this process is to act in a gender-responsive manner during supplier selection. This single change makes purchasing decisions more equitable, diversifies the supplier pool, enhances innovation capacity, and strengthens the resilience of supply chains. This forms the basis of sustainable growth for both businesses and economies. As *Turkish Business Confederation*, we carry out various initiatives to ensure that gender equality is established

in procurement processes, just as in every aspect of life. Through the Women Entrepreneurs' Power in Enterprise Project, which we have been running with İşbank since 2021, we have reached more than 11,000 women entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs to date. As part of this project, we also prepared the Gender-Responsive Procurement Guidebook in cooperation with UN Women in 2023. This guide explains step by step how companies can integrate gender equality into their procurement policies. We have also carried this vision to the international stage. In September, in collaboration with UN Women, we introduced the international edition of our guidebook at the Turkish House in New York. In Geneva, we will share the practices and collaborations we have developed to strengthen women's participation in supply chains, contributing to a more inclusive global business culture."