

## INCLUSION & DIVERSITY 2021 VIRTUAL SERIES

# Black Lives Still Matter: Where are we now?

Wednesday 26 May 2021, 1.00 – 2.00 pm BST

### Moving in the right direction but we are still on a journey

- The death of George Floyd reignited energy into the Black Lives Matter movement and sparked a call for action. From open conversations about race to acknowledging the mistreatment of Black people and the challenges they face, this focused many people on what needs to be done to make meaningful change.
- Although the issue of racial inequality is now a topic in the mainstream, there is a frustration that change is not happening quickly enough and concern that engagement has dwindled. We should acknowledge that racism is not an overnight issue and that we are progressing, but there is still a lot of work to do.
- We need to embrace that last year's events, although very challenging and painful, were a catalyst for change and have provided the opportunity to have these discussions. This is how we continue to inform and educate ourselves - we are all still learning about race.

### Keeping up the momentum and being active

- Where previously people felt an inability to get involved in the conversation of race, the equilibrium has shifted and we are collectively responsible for keeping the narrative going. Self-education is a key part of this.
- We understand that those most impacted by prejudice are often expected to take the lead, but we need to be careful not to disproportionately burden them - sharing the ground work and responsibility creates opportunities for understanding and ownership.
- Think of discrimination as a health & safety concern - identify the issue and work towards the solution.

### Focus on actions rather than words

- Is allyship a buzzword? Although it can be interpreted differently, we need to focus on the actions a person can take to be in support, such as:

- Recognising the pressures Black people face, both personally and within the workplace;
- Looking within your organization's framework and structure as well as its values, to identify the areas which need addressing e.g. safe spaces for discussions, purposeful recruitment and a focus on retention and progression of ethnic minority talent;
- Using your privilege, passion and position of power to amplify talent, through mentoring, developing talent to maintain retention and promoting those you develop - lack of progression = failure of the organisation to develop its ethnic minority talent.
- Celebrating cultural differences and creating a community;
- Reviewing existing programmes/initiatives and provide opportunities for exposure - a place at the table and a voice in the room;
- Using employee resource groups effectively and recognising in performance reviews the contributions made to those groups and the value added to the organisational culture; and
- Considering your talent as an asset - steer towards a culture 'add' rather than a culture 'fit'.
- The use of language is important, but if we focus too much on the types of words used such as "white privilege" and "unconscious bias" we move away from addressing the underlying concept, whilst potentially shielding those who need it from learning.
- We need to recognise that phrases or words have real impact on people so can't be dismissed because someone feels uncomfortable when it's used.
- We're now at a stage of accepting that things are changing and the traditional way of thinking has evolved. Acknowledge that we are all conscious with our actions and have biases, but we are also conscious when we discriminate.

There are no definite answers so it is key that we keep the conversation going, to eventually one day move away from labelling. Until then **#BlackLivesMatter**

### Chaired by:



**Yendi Gesinde**  
Partner  
Baker McKenzie

### Our Panel:



**Lara Oyesanya**  
General Counsel and  
Chief Risk Officer  
Contis



**Femi Thomas**  
Chief Compliance Officer  
Booking.com



**Jackie Uhi**  
Head of Network  
HSBC

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**#BlackLivesMatter**



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