

Big Corporations Speak Out on Murder of George Floyd



Your organization may want to consider doing what so many companies have done in response to the George Floyd tragedy: Crafting a statement from a high-level officer to all employees condemning racism and reaffirming your organization's commitment to promote inclusion and diversity and ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect. Here are some 4 examples of actual statements issued by 4 leading corporations that you can use to create your own statement.

EXAMPLE 1: Andrew Steer, CEO, World Resources Institute

"This is a heartbreaking moment for the United States. We've recently seen many examples of racism and police brutality, most notably the tragic death of George Floyd, which has triggered a wave of protests across the country. There's a lot of confusion right now, but one thing is absolutely clear: We cannot tolerate racism of any kind. We must do our part by speaking out and actively working to overcome systemic and institutional racism, especially directed toward Black people, that has been ingrained in the United States for far too long.

"Right now, trust between citizens and governments is severely frayed. Government and institutional leaders at all levels must act with much greater determination. They must listen more, bring more voices to the table, and do more to reduce the gross inequality at the root of many of today's problems.

"WRI is focused on creating a safer and better world by addressing global environmental and development challenges. To solve global challenges—whether it is climate change, environmental degradation, or extreme poverty—we must ensure that solutions benefit all members of society, especially communities of color who are disproportionately impacted. The environmental movement has done far too little to address these issues. We are committed to doing more."

EXAMPLE 2:

Tim Cook, CEO, Apple

"Right now, there is a pain deeply etched in the soul of our nation and in the hearts of millions. To stand together, we must stand up for one another, and recognize the fear, hurt, and outrage rightly provoked by the senseless killing of George Floyd and a much longer history of racism.

"That painful past is still present today – not only in the form of violence, but in the everyday experience of deeply rooted discrimination. We see it in our criminal justice system, in the disproportionate toll of disease on Black and Brown communities, in the inequalities in neighborhood services and the educations our children receive.

"While our laws have changed, the reality is that their protections are still not universally applied. We've seen progress since the America I grew up in, but it is similarly true that communities of color continue to endure discrimination and trauma.

"I have heard from so many that you feel afraid – afraid in your communities, afraid in your daily lives, and, most cruelly of all, afraid in your own skin. We can have no society worth celebrating unless we can guarantee freedom from fear for every person who gives this country their love, labor, and life.

"At Apple, our mission has been and always will be to create technology that empowers people to change the world for the better. We've always drawn strength from diversity, welcomed people from every walk of life to our stores around the world, and strived to build an Apple that is inclusive of everyone.

"But we must do more. We commit to continuing our work to bring critical resources and technology to underserved school systems. We commit to continuing to fight the forces of environmental injustice – like climate change – which disproportionately harm Black communities and other communities of color. We commit to looking inward and pushing progress forward on inclusion and diversity, so that every great idea can be heard. And we're donating to organizations including the Equal Justice Initiative, which challenge racial injustice and mass incarceration.

"To create change, we have to reexamine our own views and actions in light of a pain that is deeply felt but too often ignored. Issues of human dignity will not abide standing on the sidelines. To the Black community – we see you. You matter and your lives matter.

This is a moment when many people may want nothing more than a return to normalcy, or to a status quo that is only comfortable if we avert our gaze from injustice. As difficult as it may be to admit, that desire is itself a sign of privilege. George Floyd's death is shocking and tragic proof that we must aim far higher than a "normal" future, and build one that lives up to the highest ideals of equality and justice.

"In the words of Martin Luther King, "Every society has its protectors of status quo and its fraternities of the indifferent who are notorious for sleeping through revolutions. Today, our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change."

"With every breath we take, we must commit to being that change, and to creating a better, more just world for everyone."

EXAMPLE 3:

Arvind Krishna, CEO, IBM (excerpts from video statement)

"I want you to know: IBM will not condone racism of any kind, and we are committed to fighting discrimination in all its forms and wherever it exists.

"Like you, I'm pained and appalled by the deaths [of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor]. These events are tragic. They have shaken us to our core...and although they happened in the US, they have caught the world's attention.

"They bring to light the inequality, bias, prejudice and racism that people have dealt with for far too long and continue to deal with on a daily basis."