The recent emergence of ‘transnational business feminism’ (Roberts, 2014) accompanied by numerous ‘transnational business initiatives for the governance of gender’ (Prügl and True, 2014) constitutes a significant area of debate in the feminist political economy literature. In this paper I focus on the confluence of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda with the visibility of gender issues in development and the resultant corporate agenda for the promotion of women and girls’ empowerment. The paper draws on two gender-focused World Bank collaborations with private sector actors: the Global Private Sector Leaders Forum and the Girl Effect campaign. The paper argues that the dominant model of corporate citizenship inscribed within the discourse of transnational business initiatives is framed in terms of capitalizing on the potential power of girls and women, achieving an easy convergence between gender equality and corporate profit. I suggest that the construction of an unproblematic synergy between these goals serves to moralise corporate-led development interventions and therefore does not challenge corporate power in the development process, but instead allows corporations to subscribe to voluntary, non-binding codes and cultivate a socially conscious brand image.

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