

United Nations Global Compact Communication on Engagement

November 2020



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From the global chief executive officer

Sightsavers became a signatory of the UN Global Compact in December 2018 and I am pleased to confirm that we will continue our support for the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

We remain committed to embracing and embedding the principles of the UN Global Compact throughout our organisation and the work we do. The principles are reflected in our culture and strategy, particularly those relating to human and labour rights, which forms the core of our advocacy work. We will continue to promote the principles through our actions and ensure that Sightsavers supports other organisations in their work to embody the principles, particularly for those who are not themselves signatories.

Since becoming a signatory Sightsavers has achieved numerous goals associated with the Ten Principles. While our Annual Report goes into greater detail about our delivery against each of these, I will highlight some key areas as they related to the Ten Principles.

Sightsavers' advocacy and influencing work is guided by human rights. This includes our work on promoting the rights of people with disabilities, whether that is with domestic governments or multilateral agencies, and our aim is to work in partnership with organisations of persons with disabilities where possible in all the countries where we operate. Our influencing work is particularly focused on the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals which are themselves reflected in the UN Global Compact particularly Guiding Principles 1 and 2. In addition, our advocacy and influencing work on health and education promote the human rights principles and aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We have robust monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that all our influencing work is not only compliant with domestic reporting requirements and safeguarding policies, but also the overarching human rights frameworks. Demonstrating our commitment to the principles on Human Rights and Labour, we were awarded Disability Confident Employer Level 2 accreditation in 2017 for our work promoting disability inclusion in the workplace. We made great strides, building on this accreditation throughout 2019, and achieving Level 3 status in 2020. This is the highest level an organisation can achieve and is handed out to a select group of employers who have shown themselves to be leaders in this field.

The capacity of our resilience function has been vastly increased, particularly in the area of safeguarding of our staff, partners and beneficiaries. Sightsavers has employed a dedicated safeguarding manager and trained a network of designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), who form the core of our safeguarding network. These DSLs provide support for the delivery of training but also as a resource for ensuring that our staff and partner organisations have the support they need, such as supporting them with the development policies and identification

of their own safeguarding leads. This has been reinforced by the development and delivery of mandatory e-learning training for all staff and trustees.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and human trafficking, including forced and child labour. This is supported by our Global Anti-Slavery Policy, which continues to develop with our implementation of measures to combat these human and labour rights abuses in line with the Ten Principles. We communicate our position throughout our programmatic supply chain, requiring organisations to operate in line with the UN Global Compact Guiding Principles 1 and 2.

This zero-tolerance approach extends to fraud, bribery and corruption. We launched a mandatory e-learning course in 2019 for all staff to support our Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy. We have also developed a mechanism to ensure that we do not work with any organisation who is subject to UK, EU or US government financial sanctions or those proscribed as organisations supporting terror. This is supported by our new Counter Terrorism Financing Policy, which was adopted in 2020.

We published our first annual Environmental Report in 2019, a key step in promoting greater environmental responsibility. We have partnered with an environmental consultancy to embark on a project to understand our carbon footprint, implement a new environmental policy, environmental management system and strengthen our programme resilience to climate change. This project, which started in October 2020, involves the acquisition and analysis of data concerning waste and emissions across our global operations, including that of our suppliers. This will then inform the creation and implementation of our new environmental policy, management system and programme resilience strategy through 2021.

We have seen great change within our sector and beyond and we look forward to being part of the driving force by this continued progress.



Dr. Caroline Harper, CBE
Global chief executive officer