



# RA INTERNATIONAL

## UN GLOBAL COMPACT REPORT 2018

- Communication on Progress



**We deliver. Regardless.**



Mar 5th, 2018

### Statement of Continued Support

On behalf of RA International, I reconfirm our company's commitment to the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti- Corruption.

When we first became a signatory in 2008, we did so out of the belief that the Ten Principles truly reflect our operating philosophies, standards and processes. In this annual Communication on Progress, we will describe the actions RA International has taken over the past year to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact into our business strategy and daily operations. For 2018, we have stepped up our commitment to the "Participant" tier, which means that we are looking forward to an even more active approach to engaging with the values put forth in the UN Global Compact, as well as a more active engagement with the UNGC local networks in UAE and Kenya.

Yours sincerely,

SORAYA NARFELDT  
CEO, RA INTERNATIONAL



**WE SUPPORT**

**We deliver. Regardless.**



## Who we are and what we do

RA International provides construction, logistics, life support and maintenance services for clientele operating in remote and demanding environments. We focus on serving those involved in humanitarian operations and have gained significant experience through operating predominantly in crisis and post-crisis areas. RA International is headquartered in Dubai, with regional offices across Africa. We have grown into a multifaceted firm, employing over 1500 people from more than 30 different countries. This blend of cultures has led to a deep understanding of people from all sorts of backgrounds, and we believe that this is what has allowed our organization to flourish.



It is, and always has been, our objective to combine our business projects with sustainable outcomes for the local environment and for the people we employ. Arguably, RA's largest contribution to the sustainable development of the communities in which we operate is the provision of stable employment and on-the-job training to local unskilled or semi-skilled employees, as well as the creation of jobs by contracting local suppliers wherever possible. We believe that running a sustainable business should bring benefits for everyone, and this forms the foundation of all our business strategies and daily operations. On top of this, we have a social responsibility fund, to which we commit a percentage of our profits each year. Over the last decade, this fund has been used to carry out more than 30 outreach initiatives in seven countries.

**We deliver. Regardless.**



HUMAN RIGHTS

- In the past year, RA International has actively promoted its commitment to the UN Global Compact through its social media channels and webpage. Not only have we made public our achievements and efforts - such as our attendance to various events related to or organized by the UN Global Compact networks -, but we have also made efforts to promote the UNGC to companies who may not yet be signatories. As such, we published the below infographic on our social media channels in November 2017, which clearly points out the benefits to a company who is a signatory of the UN Global Compact. Our continuous goal is to influence that our employees, our business partners and any other parties we interact with respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

## WHY EVERY ORGANIZATION SHOULD SUPPORT THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT PRINCIPLES



### HUMAN RIGHTS & LABOR

↑ MONITORING & EVALUATION OF LABOR RIGHTS

↑ LOCAL JOB CREATION



### ENVIRONMENT

↑ DRIVES SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

↑ GUIDES CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING



### ANTI-CORRUPTION

↑ ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

↑ ANTI-CORRUPTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

## COMPANIES WHO ARE COMPLIANT BENEFIT FROM



↑ BOTTOM LINES



↑ COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



↑ TRANSPARENCY



↑ ACCOUNTABILITY



↑ PUBLIC TRUST



↑ EMPLOYEE CONFIDENCE



**We deliver. Regardless.**



## HUMAN RIGHTS CONT.

- Each year, RA International commits a percentage of its profits to its CSR fund. Over the past year, we have taken steps to formalize our CSR agenda by appointing a dedicated CSR Coordinator and formulating a clear CSR Mandate. Working in some of the most vulnerable communities in the world brings with it a responsibility that RA International takes very seriously. RA's CSR efforts are focused on providing assistance to institutions, organizations and/or groups – preferably located in or active in our countries of operation - that support the most vulnerable in society, with a special focus on women's health and empowerment, as well as children's welfare and education. Our aim is to find and support organizations that have a good initiative, but are lacking the funds/ resources, connections or organizational skills necessary to fulfil their vision.
- RA International continues to be committed to equality of opportunity in employment, irrespective of gender, gender reassignment, marital status, disability, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion and belief. We put strong focus on hiring locally wherever possible. We see this as one of the best ways to contribute to the development of the communities in which we operate and create stability for the families of those we hire, and thereby contribute to long term peace in society in general. In 2017, an average of **59 %** of our staff in Somalia were local nationals.
- Our industry is generally a male-dominated industry, however, at RA International we have made it a priority to hire as large a proportion of female staff as is possible. In Somalia, a country where women traditionally have limited access to long term employment, we permanently employ 22 local women on our operations, as of February 2018. This is up from 18 local female staff in February 2017. In Central African Republic, as of December 2017, we were employing just under 600 local staff, and around **11 %** of them were female. We have further hired our first ever female Country Manager, who is taking up her post in March 2018 in Mali.



**We deliver. Regardless.**





## LABOUR

- In October 2017, RA International received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Somali Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Simultaneously, RA International's Operations Director received a Certificate of Honor, also from the Somali Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in recognition of his support and contribution to the development of the Somali nation. For us, both of these certificates were a milestone achievement, as they are testament to our commitment towards upholding employee rights & labor standards even in the most challenging of environments.



**We deliver. Regardless.**



## LABOUR CONT.

- An area where RA International is especially proud of its achievements over the past year is Mpoko in the outskirts of Bangui, Central African Republic, where RA has an ongoing project site. Mpoko is an area with a high concentration of IDPs caused by the fighting, and former combatants from both sides of the conflict reside here. It is also the area where those who leave the countryside in search of work in the city settle, and these facts combined makes it one of the poorest areas of Bangui. Education and skill levels are very low, while illiteracy and innumeracy are both high. Many residents struggle with issues such as PTSD caused by the fighting and what they have witnessed. In 2015, the UN initiated a project in this area called Youth at Risk, through which young people from the area were assisted in finding employment. The program was designed to offer an alternative to fighting, as an incentive for the combatants to lay down their arms and begin re-integration and normalization. The project suffered many set-backs, and as a result of poor progress it was stopped in December 2017. This is when RA International decided to take on some of the youth from the program. For our operations in CAR - just as in any of our operational areas - we need a relatively high number of semi-skilled or unskilled staff to take care of the simpler tasks on our construction sites. In the second half of 2017, we had numerous disputes, death threats, road blocks stopping us getting to site, vehicle hijacks and threatening behavior caused by misunderstandings between the youth and our labor provider. Instead of giving up, we have engaged, explained, educated and involved the workers by creating representatives and engaged wider with Community Leaders - sometimes in very high tension situations. We have also modified our processes to ensure that misunderstandings are preempted, such as introducing longer induction days where labor agreements are explained at length. In this way, as of February 2018 RA International gainfully employs 60 of the youths from Mpoko (some of them in their first ever paid job). The Company is putting great focus on developing the skillsets of these young people by teaching them transferable skills - not only in the building trades, but in Health and Safety awareness, employee actions, personal responsibility and accountability, and teamwork. Where a person shows capability we make them a Team Leader, which in addition teaches them leadership skills. We are proud of this achievement as we believe there are not many other companies that would have persevered in these circumstances.
- RA International's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management system is certified in accordance with best international practices. We continue to follow both British and OSHA standards as per any clients requirement, and we adapt using the best of both systems to ensure a zero harm philosophy. We have an active approach to ensuring health and safety procedures. As such, our project managers hold weekly so called "Toolbox talks", during which a specific OHS topic is presented and discussed. We have also recently implemented the internal distribution of The Tradesman - a magazine by RA, for RA that takes a fun and engaging tone in explaining health and safety matters. In addition, we continue to regularly hold workshops on health and safety across all our locations. With all of these measures, we ensure to keep our staff's knowledge on health and safety instructions and procedures as well as on first aid up to date.

**We deliver. Regardless.**



## ENVIRONMENT

- Environmental matters continue to be key to RA International and are reflected in all of the Company's operations. RA International operates according to an ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management System. The Company is committed to environmental leadership in all its projects to prevent any negative impact that might come as a direct result of its operations. We believe that thorough research, improved designs, effective mitigation measures, environmental monitoring and a clear and concise environmental policy are all crucial factors in reducing the negative environmental impacts in any of our operations.
- In 2017, the Company increased its commitment to ensure monitoring of the environmental impact of its operations, and actively sought out measures to reduce it. We depend on feedback especially from within our workforce, and reward good suggestions that lead to more eco-friendly practices. The most prominent example of this is the bed bug control solution, that was invented by members of our Pest & Vector Control (PVC) team in Somalia. The PVC team is always looking for ways to minimize the use of chemicals in their work, and came up with a solution for controlling bed bugs that contains everyday products that have minimal impact on the environment. After starting to use the product that we have proudly named RA's Sleep Safely product, not only did we see a decline the amount of calls for bed bug treatment by our clients, but also have they reported to us that it is much more friendly to the skin, compared to traditional pesticides that cause a lot of irritation to the skin after having been applied to bedsheets.
- Operating in remote and challenging environments means that we have little to no access to reliable grid power as well as external water provision. It is therefore of special interests to us to be as power efficient as possible, and to manage our water production and consumption according to best practices. We ensure this through continuous staff education on clever use of power and water, as well as by always ensuring we use up-to date, energy efficient equipment. In Somalia, we purify brackish water by reverse osmosis, and this water is then used for showers, laundry, etc. We use water obtained through condensation from air conditioning units to water plants. Furthermore, grey water from showers is treated through waste water treatment plants, and used on our construction projects, for instance for road grading and dust suppression. We have 40 solar water heaters installed across our operations in Somalia that cater for all our hot water needs.
- The Company continues to ensure that every legal requirement relating to the environment is fulfilled to its best possible outcome, and that its employees and all its contractors have the relevant expertise and ability to adhere to the Company's Environmental Policy.



**We deliver. Regardless.**





## ANTI - CORRUPTION

- The company continues to fully support the UN Global Compact 10<sup>th</sup> Principle, which requires participants to not only avoid corruption, but also to develop policies and concrete programs to address it. As a company that operates in environments that often lack or have very low regulatory requirements, we take it upon ourselves to ensure that we not only adhere with all international standards and regulations, but go beyond them. It is this voluntary self-regulation that has led to all our business relationships being built on a strong foundation of honesty, fairness and trust. We continue to follow a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, bribery and extortion, which is strongly highlighted in our Code of Conduct and Company Policies. Employees are advised to read, understand and follow the articulated policies and procedures.
- Internally, we continue to maintain a strongly monitored check and balance system on all our transactions. All company expenditures and transactions are recorded with proper documentation. Our books and accounts are annually subjected to external audits. Our financial audit is done by Ernst & Young. On top of that, we have engaged PWC to do a separate audit which looks into corruption specifically. These audits are used as one of the methods of identifying any payments which could be related to bribery or corrupt behavior. RA International is proud to say there has been no such incident reported over the past year.
- We stand by our belief that engaging the supply chain through meaningful anti-corruption programs improves product quality, reduces fraud and related costs, enhances the company's reputation for honest business and creates a more sustainable platform for future growth.



## 2018 targets

- Continue to ensure that all staff understand and adhere to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact.
- Create stronger reporting mechanisms and processes to capture efforts that support the Global Compact.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

- Continue to influence that all our employees and business partners respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by actively promoting the UN Global Compact.
- Ensure that we have active CSR outreach initiatives in each country of operation.
- Upholding our commitment to equality of opportunity in employment and further the employment of women, especially in our operational areas.

## LABOUR

- Continue our efforts to include vulnerable parts of society into the labour market.

## ENVIRONMENT

- Continue to ensure monitoring of the environmental impact of our operations and actively seek out measures to reduce it.
- Continuously integrate environmentally friendly practices into daily operations.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

- Continue to promote honest, ethical and transparent conduct, including in the handling of actual or apparent conflicts of interests between personal and professional relationships.
- Maintain a strongly monitored check and balance system on all our transactions.