Dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to express with enthusiasm our continued support and commitment to the Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the area of Human Rights, Labor, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

Over the years, Close the Gap has been implementing different activities advocating for the Ten principles of the United Nations Global Compact, especially in terms of sustainability, social entrepreneurship and human rights.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the activities we have been caring on over the years and their impact. Close the Gap believes access to information through ICT is key for the sustainable development of less developed countries, ensuring human rights, labour, environmental and anti-corruptions standards are respected.

I can't close this statement without expressing a word of appreciation and thanks to all our strategic partners and sponsors, to our service partners in Africa, to the members of the Board as well as to the members of the staff of Close the gap for supporting our organisation and therefore, supporting the UNGC and its principles.

Olivier Vanden Eynde
Founder & Managing Director
Close the Gap

ABOUT CLOSE THE GAP

Close the Gap aims to bridge the digital divide by offering high-quality, pre-owned computers donated by large and medium-sized corporations or public organisations to educational, medical, entrepreneurial and social projects in developing and emerging countries. All the projects are demand-driven and share the common denominator of being non-profit-oriented initiatives.

In 2008, Close the Gap identified the need for accessible environmentally safe recycling processes for the ICT hardware used in their beneficiary projects in the developing countries. After exploring the possibility of creating a public-private partnership to create an environmentally friendly e-waste management system for these regions, the WorldPC Project was born.

Based on a feasibility study and thanks to the support of Computer Aid International, Safaricom Foundation, Close the Gap set up a pilot project in 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya. On the 27th of September 2011, Close the Gap inaugurated the WEEE Centre, the first e-waste recycling facility in East Africa.

2012 marked a year of transition for the pilot project. Through the invaluable support from sponsors and partners, the WorldPC project was able to take off as a separate organisation with the new name WorldLoop and a dedicated management team. The new team leveraged the momentum created by Close the Gap to expand its collection scope, geographical reach and promote the importance of environmentally sound e-waste management in developing countries. WorldLoop has now become the innovative solution of e-waste in Africa

CLOSE THE GAP ACTIVITIES AND THE UNGC PRINCIPLES

Close the Gap collects decommissioned computers from companies and arranges for other organisations to clean the hard disks and then check and configure the hardware according to the requirements of its end-users. The computers are then shipped to the destination country by sea or air transport. Since it was created in 2003, Close the Gap have received 520.000 computer assets donated by nearly 400 companies. The computer assets that meet stringent quality standards are refurbished and sent to different projects (a medical center, a school for example). The computers that do not meet the quality standards and therefore, cannot be reused, are properly recycled.

Close the Gap would not exist without its partners; we aim to create partnership through enterprises' Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, which improves their performance towards being a sustainable enterprises. Consumers aren't the only ones who are drawn to businesses that give back, employees are now looking to work for companies that have a CSR programme, because honesty and transparency is the nucleus of this programme. Through our partnership, we aim to align our partners' CSR strategies and operations with the UN Global Compact Principles.
Through Close the Gap's collaboration with the UNGC, we have created the opportunity to share knowledge and best practices about sustainable development, and the opportunity to make another step in the process of emphasizing the importance of high standards in terms of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. A countless number of projects have demonstrated that ICT can contribute directly or indirectly to the UN Global Compact Ten Principles.

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Human Rights

Access to ICT is a key driver for the development of any society in today's world. Improving access to information contributes to the elimination of poverty and disease, leads to better education and more gender equality. However, the cost of new equipment, limited infrastructure and the lack of IT knowledge and proficiency mean that many people still have no access to IT. The digital divide is not only a divide between people who have access to ICT and people who don't. It's also a divide between people who have knowledge of ICT and those who don't, between people who realise the opportunities presented by ICT and those who don't. It consists of an infrastructure gap, a knowledge gap and a psychological gap. High-quality reused IT equipment gives access to information at unprecedented levels, empowering poor and disadvantaged communities living in developing and emerging countries. Close the Gap contributes to defending the Human Rights, through access to ICT.

Labour Standards

Access to ICT involves information on the benefits for parents and children to attend school instead of obliging them to work in the field/ factories/ mines. Indeed, letting the children attend school will, in the future, be much more beneficial for the children but also for the families. A child that attends school will be better educated and therefore, will have the chance to access a job that requires specific intellectual skills, and will earn a higher salary. They will be able to send money to their families. By providing access to information thought ICT, Close the Gap contributes to the eradication of child labour.

Environment

At end-of-life, IT equipment does not have to be an environmental liability. Through responsible recycling it can pose new opportunities in communities creating green jobs, stimulating local economies and recovering precious material that can be used in new IT equipment. Through Close the Gap's e-waste offsetting programme, operated by WorldLoop, computer donors can support the responsible recycling of a similar asset in a developing country. Therefore, Close the Gap promotes greater environmental responsibility and counts on its partners encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly behavours.

Anti-Corruption

Close the Gap is committed to compliance with all applicable anti-bribery and anti-corruption laws and regulations, and promotes this compliance amongst the partnerships. Close the Gap does not accept bribes, and avoid doing business with others who may harm our reputation by not respecting these values. In addition, Close the Gap provides communication channels for all through which they are able to report instances of suspected dishonest behavior.

Close the Gap's strategic partners are social enterprises based mainly in Africa. Close the Gap sells the refurbished computer assets to those social enterprises at an affordable price. Our service partners then sell them to schools, medical center, social projects etc. Close the Gap makes sure the donated computers in Europe goes to one of those destination, bridging the digital divide.

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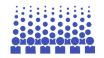Pleinlaan 2 • B-1050 Brussels • Belgium
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OUR IMPACT

It is important to keep in mind that **15 devices** constitute a computer lab,

and **1 computer** lab can reach **240 kids per week**.

Every device donated, refurbished and sent to a project in Africa can have a significant impact in people's lives.

PC SOLIDARITY

In total, more than 4.000 projects have been supported in 56 countries, and reached 1.700.000 people unique users per week.

More than 2.000 projects were implemented in Belgium, through our PC Solidarity Programme, which supports Belgian socio-professional projects.

> In 2015, 110 companies were involved in donations, and donated 69.182 computers assets. This enabled the support of Close the Gap to 828 projects in 19 countries.

Close the Gap have been collecting different testimonials of children and young adults that shared their experience with us, explaining the impact of the computer assets towards their lives:

"I have benefitted in such a way that I can browse the Internet and learn more and I am hoping to find employment."
Humphrey Alunga, student at International Transformation Foundation

"I have been attending computer classes at ITF since December 2014 and took a mentorship class. ITF has been allowing us to access computers anytime. I am thankful to them for what they have been doing. I have progressed in my computer knowledge. I am able to type documents and mail them. The training has been free and fair to every student attending. I can apply for any occupation that concerns computers."
Abiero Mildred, student at International Transformation Foundation

"We were very grateful to Savana Signatures and its partners for donating computers and accessories to our school. They came at a time when the school was struggling to acquire a few computers. These computers will not only aid the teaching and learning of ICT in the school, but they will also expose our teachers and students to the use of ICT. In fact, ICT is now an examinable subject and part of Ghana's education curriculum. These computers, I assure you will be put to good use to enhance lesson preparation and delivery in the school. The teachers will also use them to teach other subjects, which will go a long way to improving teaching and learning."
Ms. Gloria Adjei, Headmistress of the United M/A Junior High School in Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana

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