



Judith F. Samuelson
Executive Director

May, 2017

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the Aspen Institute's Business and Society Program reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Samuelson", followed by a horizontal line.

Judith Samuelson
Executive Director

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

The Aspen Institute Business and Society Program

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

June 2, 2015—May 31, 2017

Mission

The Aspen Institute Business & Society Program, founded in 1998, works with business executives and scholars to align business decisions and investments with the long-term health of society—and the planet. Through carefully designed networks and working groups, the Program identifies and inspires thought leaders and “intrapreneurs” to challenge conventional ideas about capitalism and markets, to test new measures of business success and to connect classroom theory and business practice.

The Business & Society Program is best known for our First Movers Fellowship Program, for dialogue on curbing short-termism in business and capital markets, and for fresh thinking about the purpose of the corporation.

Description of Actions

The Aspen Institute Business & Society Program is wholly aligned with the UNGC and engaged in many activities that we hope and expect will support its flourishing. Five top-of-mind examples are:

- We honored, in 2016, eleven faculty from around the world with our “Faculty Pioneer Award.” The 2016 Awards focused on teaching (at the MBA level) about business practices that help corporations confront society’s “grand challenges”—e.g. climate change, inequality, access to health care. These awards bring visibility to excellent teaching directly relevant to the UNGC principles and the SDGs, and inspire new faculty to follow suit.
- Also in 2016, we launched our new “Ideas Worth Teaching” resource. Ideas Worth Teaching (IWT) is a tightly curated set of articles and teaching materials, together with a discussion question, distributed weekly via email to 1900 business school faculty in over 100 countries. IWT lowers the barriers for faculty to incorporate into their classroom discussion of business activities (for good or ill) related to the SDGs.
- We identified, encouraged and equipped corporate intrapreneurs working to launch new products, services or management practices that align with the UNGC principles and with positive action on the SDGs. Our First Movers Fellowship is an innovation lab and leadership development program for accomplished innovators inside companies. As of 2017, we count 150 Fellows and 109 companies in 20 countries around the world. Past First Mover Fellowship projects have included: strengthening the capacity of small-scale farmers in Southern Africa; providing insurance products to the poor across global markets; building a mobile payment solution for the unbanked, and many more.
- We continued to build a community of sustainability strategists working within MNCs. Our Aspen Leaders Forum is designed to help members and their companies seize the “license to lead” on business-society issues of global importance. Member companies include: ABInBEv, Autodesk, Banorte, BNY Mellon, Cargill, Chevron, Citi, Disney, Hyatt, Johnson & Johnson, Levi Strauss & Co., Microsoft, Mars, Nike, Novartis, Pearson, Pfizer, Prudential, Starbucks, Toyota, Verizon, and Xylem. Through its broad reach, the Leaders Forum is building a strong network effect of committed and influential executives who can make concrete contributions to the SDGs.

- In the past two years, we've also convened over 100 CEOs, CFOs, and other senior leaders in dialogue to curb short-termism in markets and management. We have spearheaded conversation on this issue since 2006; we believe that short-term thinking and decision-making is a fundamental obstacle to action by corporations on the SDGs and in support of UNGC's ten principles. One signature achievement in 2017 was our publication of the "American Prosperity Framework," signed by influential corporate leaders including Dominic Barton (McKinsey), Chad Holliday (Royal Dutch Shell), and Paul Polman (Unilever).

We are also please to support the UNGC (and PRME) via a strong working relationship, participation in each other's events, and our Associate Director Claire Preisser serving on Board of UNCG Local US Network.

May 26, 2017