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Communication

2017 UN GLOBAL COMPACT

2017

Avalon Information Systems Private Limited

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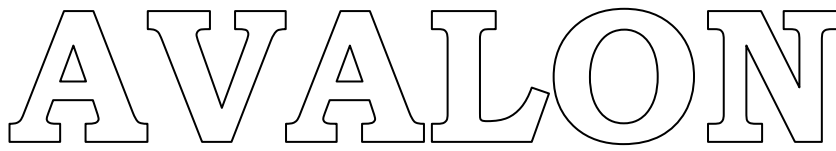
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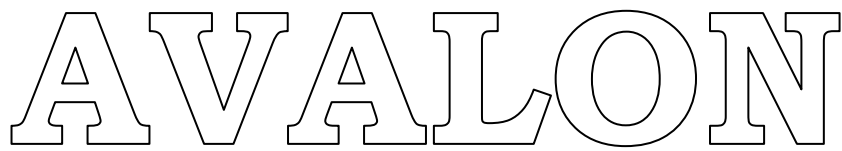# Statement of continued support by the MD/Chief Executive Officer

I am pleased to reaffirm Avalon's Information Systems Private Ltd support to the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Avalon Information Systems Private Ltd provides IT services to UN agencies, International Aid Agencies and Governments in the field of human development. We consider our operations to have very low risk to the societies and environment in which we operate. Through our projects, we promote sustainable development and are actively involved in supporting countries monitor and report on the SDGs.

Avalon Information Systems Private Ltd aims to operate in an ethical and responsible manner.

Rahul Dev, MD/CEO

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Our culture and company values

The world is going through an unparalleled transition affecting the way communities live and work together. More people now live in cities than ever before. The balance of power is shifting from the west to the east. Extreme poverty has decreased, while inequalities are widening across the world. Glaring gaps exist between the "haves" and the "have-nots" as we all compete for scarce natural resources. Women and girls still remain a high proportion of the vulnerable sections of society deprived of the basics of education, health and freedom from poverty. Climate change threatens the future of our planet.

In this strategic setting, Avalon is challenged to engage in the debate to rethink development. We must strive to expand community options by building capacities and opportunities in ways that lead to good development **outcomes** sustained by responsible development **processes**. We must address the process of enlarging people's choices by expanding their capabilities and opportunities in ways that are sustainable from the economic, social and environmental standpoints, while benefiting the present without compromising the future.

The challenge is to help communities rethink their own development strategies to use the technology and resources available to reduce poverty, eradicate polio, save the lives of under-fives, and fulfil their basic needs above a minimum threshold of well-being. Avalon is in a position to make the most of this momentum to leverage innovations for change, while helping communities mitigate risk and reduce inequalities.

Sustainable development is the way forward and emerging technology is an important part of the solution. Avalon has a proven ability to influence policy and build capacity through transfer of appropriate technology to communities to help them address the long-standing challenges of human development. We must aim for sharper focus and more effective operations in order to reach more communities and continue to be relevant

The Avalon strategic plan addresses the five key human development issues: poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge, sustainable development, gender equality, transitions from relief to development, and resilience, the latter two being particularly relevant in disaster and post-conflict settings. Resilience is the inherent, as well as acquired condition, of being able to manage risks within communities in ways that sustain development. These risks include natural disasters and conflict that may both disrupt development progress and inflict community losses.

The strategic plan of Avalon builds on our core strengths to help communities eliminate poverty while reducing inequalities and exclusion. This vision is within reach and can be achieved within a generation if the communities of the world unite together to harness the resources and technology currently available to achieve this outcome.

The desired outcomes of the Avalon strategic plan are: 1. Sustainable development using innovations that create livelihoods for all; 2. Systems of democratic governance; 3. Communities have universal access to basic services for human development; 4. Communities implement policies of gender equality; 5. Communities are able to reduce conflict, lower the risk of natural disasters

The Avalon strategy is implemented in line with the following principles that reflect our approach to sustainable development and for which we will be accountable.

Avalon will be guided by participation with communities to build local ownership of development initiatives that build the capacity of communities to make decisions on how best to meet their own aspirations and needs.

Avalon recognizes the intrinsic value of the body of economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights established by the United Nations that are pursued through the human rights-based approach to development.

Avalon will follow a plan for sustainable human development where our contributions are grounded in the process of expanding the opportunities of communities to benefit themselves in the present while not compromising the future. Avalon believes gender equality is a pivotal condition for achieving sustainable community development. Avalon will

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implement a strategy of community participation to address issues of equitable access to opportunities for development gains. Avalon will continue to pursue its advancement of South-South cooperation in the implementation of sustainable development initiatives. Avalon will continue to leverage the power of access to open data for all to enable communities to understand their development challenges more clearly and to use data to support their own plans, policies and actions.

Our **vision** is to increase opportunity and equity for those most in need through solutions that protect and promote well-being in every community. Our **mission** is to improve quality of life through applied research and technical assistance to communities by pioneering technological solutions that yield measurable results that leave no one behind. We pursue our mission with entrepreneurism, creativity, and originality. We are humble and mindful in our actions and words of the insights and counsel of diverse opinions. We seek to learn how to tap the great potential of science and technology to improve lives around the world

We believe that it is only in partnership with the community that experts can begin to bring the tools of modern science to bear effectively on efforts to improve the quality of life. We demand ethical behaviour of ourselves and our partners. We make every effort to explore and examine issues with objectivity and neutrality. We strive for excellence through continuous quality improvement. We are accountable for the decisions we make and the work we perform.

The cornerstone of our strategic approach is the development and application of techniques to help communities gain a better understanding of their environment and to thereby help determine how to attain their goals. A common element in our repertoire of techniques is community learning which involves members of the community in all program phases--problem definition, program design, resource procurement, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation--with the ultimate objective of vesting in the community the skills and knowledge necessary to attack not only the problem at hand but also the unanticipated problems of the future.

We treat important human development problems and their potential solutions, as systemic community issues which are usually not served well by existing institutions alone. We help communities decipher complex development problems that from the outset are usually not framed properly nor well understood. We strive to design and implement engaging educational exercises and programs devoted to promoting accurate images of commitments and needs throughout the world. We help provide access to timely and relevant information that is necessary for solutions. We help close data gaps and improve data quality. We help transform data into information, information into knowledge and knowledge into wisdom.

We are committed to the long haul: we pay attention to going beyond writing up a report and leaving to go on to the next problem. We endeavour to be as flexible and timely as possible in working with existing institutions even though we start with the assumption that we all are often as much "part of the problem" as "part of the solution."

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Description of actions

Human Rights

Avalon strives to ensure workers are provided safe, suitable and sanitary work facilities.

The Human Resources Team (HR) monitors very closely the workplace environment for any case of harassment of any sort.

After work hours, the office provides taxi services to drop the staff at the nearest public conveyance area. Should any staff stay back to work overtime, a taxi is arranged for the employee to be dropped at his/her doorstep.

Outcomes:
There have been no incidents of human rights abuses associated with the company during the reporting year, and no complaints or grievances lodged.

Labour

Avalon supports the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the relevant labour legislation prevailing in the country.

Avalon operates a comprehensive human resources department and maintains policies clearly stating employee rights and responsibilities, compensation and benefits. Alongside a detailed HR operating manual, employees are issued with an employee handbook outlining their rights and responsibilities, including code of conduct, terms and conditions of employment, benefits, disciplinary procedures, performance reviews and the company grievance procedure.

Avalon maintains a dedicated recruitment and selection process that ensures all applicants are above the legal age of 18 years old, and are not discriminated on the basis of age, religion, race, or gender.

Outcome:
Equitable workplace in terms of pay scale, well aware of the labour policies linked to regular appraisal and their career pathways. The organisation's equitable hiring practices have resulted in more gender balance in the work force. In a traditionally male dominated field, the organization has made strides to achieve better balance through the identification and hiring of more female staff.

Environment

Avalon supports a precautionary approach to environmental challenges and undertakes initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility. The company encourages the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly practices.

Outcomes:
Avalon encourages workplace behaviour that promotes care towards environment:
- Encouraging the employees to bring their own cups in order to avoid the unnecssar use of disposable cups (these have been banned within the organisation).
- Using double sided printing wherever possible.
- Progressing towards a culture of paperless work office, whenever possible, in the day to day operations.
- Switching off lights, air-conditioning whenever the staff leaves the office premises.

Anti-Corruption

Avalon is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, openness and financial accountability.

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Avalon has a zero tolerance for corruption. Company policy prohibits bribes and facilitation payments of any kind and the company believes it is important for the organisation to play a major role in identifying and eradicating corrupt business practices.

Outcomes:
- Our project administrators handle projects and are ambassadors of the values we treasure.
- When new staffs are hired, they are provided orientation and a safe work environment; they are strongly encouraged to report any suspected wrongdoing to the management.