

27 June 2018

Ms Lise Kingo
Executive Director
UN Global Compact
685 3rd Avenue
New York, NY 10017, USA



Submitted online

Dear Ms Kingo

Communication of Engagement

I write to express the Law Council's ongoing support of the UN Global Compact and renew our commitment to this initiative.

As the peak professional body representing lawyers in Australia, the Law Council is committed to protecting and promoting the rule of law in Australia and internationally. This includes support for the UN Global Compact's ten universal sustainability principles, and supporting broader UN and societal goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Key achievements for the Law Council in this past reporting period that are relevant to the UN Global Compact's ten principles include:

- principle 1: adoption of a Policy Statement on Human Rights and the Legal Profession in June 2017, which commits the Law Council to promote respect for human rights by Australian corporations and other incorporated and non-incorporated entities;
- principle 2: in partnership with the International Bar Association, the development and provision of training on business and human rights to Australian lawyers that advise businesses;
- principles 4 and 5: ongoing advocacy in support of the adoption of a Modern Slavery Act in Australia, including participation in Parliamentary inquiries and contribution to Government efforts to introduce for reporting requirements on modern slavery in supply chains for businesses; and
- principle 6: introduction of the Law Council's Model Gender Equitable Briefing Policy, encouraging all persons or entities that brief or select barristers, to achieve certain targets in selecting and briefing women barristers.

Further detail on the suggested activities for 'business and industry associations' that the Law Council has undertaken in this reporting period and measurement of outcomes is at **Appendix A**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Smithers", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jonathan Smithers
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Appendix A – Suggested activities for business and industry associations completed in last reporting period

1. Attract new participants to the UN Global Compact through their outreach efforts and awareness raising

Action	Measurement of outcomes
The Law Council has a dedicated Business and Human Rights Committee which includes two representatives of the Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA).	Having two GCNA members on the Committee provides a link between the GCNA and the legal profession, allowing the Law Council to promote the GCNA through its advocacy and proactive work.
Attendance at the GCNA’s Annual Dialogue on Business and Human Rights and promotion of the event among the legal profession.	The Law Council has attended the GCNA Annual Dialogue on Business and Human Rights every year since becoming a member and prepares a report for distribution to its constituent bodies, sections and committees nationally through its fortnightly electronic newsletter.
The Law Council President has promoted membership of the GCNA to the legal profession in industry publications .	While it is difficult to know the impact the Law Council has had in encouraging membership, at least two additional law firms have signed up to the GCNA since the Law Council began promoting membership.

2. Organise learning and dialogue events, workshops and training for their members on the UN Global Compact and specific topics relevant to corporate sustainability

Action	Measurement of outcomes
Partnering with the IBA to develop and provide training to lawyers on business and human rights, including corporate sustainability issues.	The program was enrolled in and attended by approximately 60 lawyers across Sydney and Melbourne. The Law Council is considering further opportunities to expand the training.
Organised and hosted introductory session on business and human rights , including corporate sustainability issues, for lawyers in Sydney, through the Law Society of New South Wales.	The session was attended by approximately 40 lawyers with excellent feedback and drove enrolments in the training program referred to above.

<p>Launched a landmark national training program customised for the legal profession to help counter unconscious bias.</p>	<p>The unconscious bias training program includes a comprehensive range of options for training, including an online 'e-learning' training module as well as in-house train-the-trainer and face to face training offerings. The training has been well received and has been undertaken by over 100 members of the Law Council's Constituent Bodies from all the States and Territories in Australia. Some Constituent Bodies have also incorporated face to face training into their annual CPD training days which are offered to large groups of their members.</p>
<p>Engagement with the Alliance for Democracy in Laos.</p>	<p>Meeting with representatives for the Alliance for Democracy in Laos regarding their advocacy on challenges in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Laos and sharing learnings from the Australian perspective.</p>
<p>Provided platform to UNGC Australia to present on the SDGs at the Law Council-hosted National Access to Justice and Pro Bono Conference 2017</p>	<p>The conference is a major event attended by legal assistance services from around Australia. Delegate feedback for the conference was overwhelmingly positive.</p>
<p>The CEO of the Law Council presented on the relevance of business and human rights principles, including corporate sustainability, to the legal profession, at 2017 IBA Conference in Sydney.</p>	<p>The CEO presented on this topic at two separate sessions at the IBA conference, directed to both domestic and international participants. Feedback was positive and helped generate interest in business and human rights, which was later capitalised on by the Law Council through its provision of training to legal profession on these issues.</p>

3. Provide their expertise and/or the voice of their members to Global Compact working groups and special initiatives

Action	Measurement of outcomes
<p>The Law Council developed a Business and Human Rights Background Paper for the Legal Profession, to complement the UNGC's Guide for General Counsel on Corporate Sustainability.</p>	<p>The Background Paper was promoted through the GCNA and promotes its ten principles to legal practitioners. Surveys conducted by the Law Council of the profession indicate interest in business and human rights commitments is growing.</p>

4. Engage their members in collective action efforts on Global Compact-related issues

Action	Measurement of outcomes
<p>Advocacy in support a Modern Slavery Act in Australia, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making submissions (available here and here) and giving evidence to a federal Parliamentary Committee inquiry into Establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia; and making a submission to federal Government on its proposal to introduce reporting requirements for modern slavery in supply chains. 	<p>The Law Council's influence is evident in the Parliamentary Committee's report, as it is cited repeatedly.</p> <p>The Law Council specifically advocated for the worst forms of child labour to be included in the definition of modern slavery for the purposes of any Modern Slavery Act, a recommendation the the Parliamentary Committee adopted.</p> <p>Modern Slavery legislation will be introduced into federal Parliament in June 2018. Some of the changes announced to the original proposal for the reporting requirements for modern slavery in supply chains reflect Law Council recommendations.</p>
<p>Adoption of a Policy Statement on Human Rights and the Legal Profession, which commits the Law Council to promote respect for human rights by Australian corporations and other incorporated and non-incorporated entities.</p>	<p>The Policy Statement sets out a framework for evaluating the merits of legislation, policy, and practice by reference to international human rights law, and is regularly drawn upon by the Law Council in its advocacy work.</p>
<p>Participation in the 2017 review of the Australian National Contact Point and the public consultation on the reform of its internal processes.</p>	<p>The Law Council's influence is evident in the Independent Reviewer's report, as it is cited repeatedly.</p>
<p>Adoption of a national Equitable Briefing Policy aimed at improving the briefing of women barristers in Australia, by encouraging organisations and individuals who brief barristers to sign up to meet voluntary targets.</p>	<p>As at June 2018, 378 individuals and organisations have signed up to the Equitable Briefing Policy.</p>

<p>Highlighting the exploitation of workers and advocating for stronger protections, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for the Fair Work (Vulnerable Workers) Bill 2017, which sought to strengthen protection for vulnerable workers, such as migrants; and • the Law Council’s Justice Project, which considers the legal need and challenges in access to justice across thirteen disadvantaged groups in Australia, including persons who have been exploited. 	<p>The Fair Work (Vulnerable Workers) Bill 2017 was enacted into law.</p> <p>The Justice Project is expected to issue its final report later in 2018.</p>
<p>Contribution to the Department of the Senate’s Inquiry into the Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	<p>Inquiry is yet to be finalised.</p>