



INITIATED BY H.M. KING CARL XVI GUSTAF  
AND H.M. QUEEN SILVIA OF SWEDEN

## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

GLOBAL CHILD FORUM

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 1 JANUARY 2018

To: 31 DECEMBER 2019

### Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive

30 April 2020

*To the Global Child Forum stakeholders and partners:*

*I am pleased to confirm that Global Child Forum 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,*

*Cajsa Wiking  
Secretary General*

## Part II. Description of Actions

### Background

Global Child Forum is a Swedish non-profit foundation initiated by the H.M. the King and H.M. the Queen of Sweden in 2009, with its headquarters in Stockholm. The organization is an independent, global multi-stakeholder platform with a particular focus on the power of business to be a positive driving force for a better world for children, encouraging business to take approaches in their operations and their communities to best advance children's rights.

The organization's tag line is "A heart for children. A head for business" and its objectives are mainly threefold:

- To bring together thought leaders and influencers from business, civil society, academia and government in order to spur action for social change around children's rights (Forums), and to raise the children's rights and business issue at other adequate gatherings (Forums and Outreach).
- To conduct studies, develop tools and write and present best practices that help business and investors to assess, address and advance children's rights issues in their operations and communities (Research).
- To increase awareness on the issue of children's rights and business and build brand recognition among Global Child Forum's target audience in order to spark action for children's rights (Communication).

As Global Child operates in a broad scope the organisation cannot be classified solely as an academic institution, business association or civil society organisation but rather as a hybrid of these.

Activities conducted by Global Child Forum have a correlation to the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact and are underpinned also by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Children's Rights and Business Principles and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Main activities and actions in 2018

#### Reports and studies

The following reports and studies were launched throughout the year:

- "Business Investments in Children's Education – A Mapping Study";
- 2 x Deep Dive – The Corporate Sector and Children's Rights Benchmark Series;
  - "AstraZeneca: Investing in the Health of Adolescents";
  - "Standard Chartered: Empowering Girls to be Agents of Change";
- "Confronting History, Engaging the Future – Norsk Hydro Brazil's Journey Towards Social Sustainability";
- "Investors' Insights on Children's Rights";
- "Corporate Responses to Protecting Children's Rights in Southeast Asia".

#### Tools and guidances

A 2.0 version of the GCF and UNICEF co-branded product, the Children's Rights and Business Atlas (<https://www.childrensrighsatlas.org>), was launched in November 2018. The Atlas is a due diligence platform for facilitating the understanding of actual and potential business impact on children, containing both data and guidance.

Two guidance documents on "Corporate Programmes for Children's Rights" respectively on "Child Labour Policy: A Child-Centred Approach" were published.

## Forum

On 11 April 2018 a Global Forum took place at the Royal Palace in Stockholm. More than 300 delegates from around the world gathered to discuss corporate impact on child rights issues. The Forum featured 26 speakers, including Lise Kingo, CEO of the UN Global Compact, Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, whose Missing Chapter Foundation works to give children a voice in society, as well as Swedish Minister for Industry, Mikael Damberg and Telia CEO Johan Dennerling. Apart from plenary sessions the Forum also featured so called Action Labs on various business and children's rights related topics. The Forum was opened by His Majesty the King of Sweden and the closing remarks were given by her Highness Crown Princess Victoria. (<https://www.globalchildforum.org/forum/stockholm-royal-palace-2018/>).

The Pledge-initiative was launched at the Stockholm Forum encouraging business and organization to commit to at least 1 of the following 5 pledges – advancing children's rights through principles, codes of conduct and policies, listening to children, initiating a partnership that brings child rights expertise to the organization, integrating children's rights into due diligence processes and raising children's rights to the board level. The project resulted in a pilot programme documenting the journey of a few path-finder companies in their work with their Pledge.

## Other Events

Additionally, GCF exhibited at the following events:

- CSR Asia Summit, Hong Kong, 18 – 19 September;
- UN Global Compact Corporate Network, Geneva, 23 – 24 October;
- Elevate Leadership Summit, London, 30 - 31 October;
- UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, Geneva 26 – 28 November;
- Hållbart Näringsliv, Aktuell Hållbarhet, Stockholm, 27 November.

## Communications

The Global Child Forum website provides a digital platform for sharing information, inspiration, best practice and knowledge around how business can best support children's rights in their operations. It aims to provide a space where some of the best findings and observations on the topic can be shared. During 2018 GCF built a user-friendly search engine, in order to improve the ability to showcase internal and external resources such as research, tools and guides in the so-called Knowledge Centre on the website.

In parallel work was also done on SEM/SEO to strive towards becoming amongst the most visited places for stakeholders to access relevant information with regards to children's rights and business. Moreover, GCF continued building its presence on social media, ie Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, sharing relevant GCF content and highlighting good company practice.

In collaboration with CCR CSR, 4 short films were produced which focused on 4 stories where business has had a positive impact on children, youth and their families. The 4 stories covered Bangladesh, Vietnam, India and China.

## Main activities and actions in 2019

2019 marked Global Child Forum's 10-year anniversary. For a decade the organization has been working to promote children's rights and focusing primarily on the business sector to drive that change.

## Reports and studies

A Global Benchmark study (The State of Children's Rights and Business 2019) was conducted and its findings published in 2019. It is an analysis of how businesses in their sustainability reports describe how they respect and work with children's rights in their operations. The study encompasses approximately 700 of the largest listed corporates globally and within 9 industries. Their publicly accessible reporting has been analyzed according to 20 indicators that cover children's rights issues, including child labor, child friendly workspaces, marketing and product safety as well as their influence on the environment and the society in which they operate. The previous Global Benchmark study was performed in 2014.

Key finding from the study include:

- Companies have made improvements across industries and geographic regions compared to the last study pertaining to reporting on child rights indicators;
- Companies have a low understanding of the unique vulnerabilities of children as a distinct consumer group;
- Companies' initiatives benefiting children tend to be ad hoc instead of tying into a broader strategy;
- Companies often have policies in place to safeguard children's rights, but most are behind in demonstrating their implementation and outcomes;
- Companies' boards need to improve their accountability for the implementation of policies related to children's rights.

All the corporates in the study were informed of their results through a new digital platform that led to improved interaction with the concerned.

### **Tools and guidance**

The Global Child Forum and UNICEF joint product, The Children's Rights and Business Atlas, is a due diligence platform for facilitating the understanding of actual and potential business impact on children, containing both data and guidance.

After a re-launch of the Atlas in November 2018 emphasis throughout the year has been put to improving the content on the site by developing a narrative guidance that complements and explains how the different parts of the tool can be utilized. By different means steps have also been taken to make UNICEF's country offices increase the use of the Atlas in their interaction with corporates.

As an outcome of the Forum 2018 ActionLab on child participation, a cooperation was initiated with two researchers from Ryerson University and the University of Edinburgh, the purpose of which is to develop concrete guidance for corporates that wish to involve and consult children in their decision-making processes. During 2019, Global Child Forum hosted a webinar on the subject, "Speaking up: Young people's participation in business decision-making".

In cooperation with the Lindén-group and Boston Consulting Group, a basic practical workbook for corporates who want to start acting on children's rights in their core business was developed.

### **Events**

Global Child Forum participated in the CSR Asia Summit 2019, Asia's largest sustainability conference. The overarching theme for this year's Summit was "Sustainability: From Rhetoric to Results". Global Child Forum hosted a well-attended breakfast seminar on children's rights in the agricultural sector in Southeast Asia, with discussions centered on issues such as informal employment, living wages and land rights.

To observe the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the 20- respectively 10-years jubilees of both Royal Foundations Childhood and Global Child Forum, a one-day expert roundtable on the potential and limits of artificial intelligence to help combat child sexual abuse online was hosted by both organizations at the Stockholm Royal Palace. The roundtable was built on existing research, commitments and tools and gathered stakeholder groups, such as experts and thought leaders from business and academia, law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies and child protection organizations to challenge and inspire one another in the combat against the practice.

The State of Children's Rights and Business-benchmark report was launched at the BSR Conference 2019 themed "The New Climate for Business" in San Jose, California. The study was well received and generated a lot of attention and this gave Global Child Forum the opportunity to raise the children's rights and business perspective at a large

gathering of corporates. Some 80 participants were present during Global Child Forum's session and included speakers from AT&T, Millicom and Johnson & Johnson.

Thanks to Global Child Forum's involvement in the San Jose conference, we were also offered to present the outcomes of the Benchmark study and go deeper into its methodology and results at BSR's Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) that convened a meeting in Basel. The HRWG works to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights across all industries and gathers an exclusive crowd of corporate representatives with an interest in sustainability issues.

Throughout the year, Global Child Forum has been supporting the Global Initiative on Advancing Children's Right to a Healthy Environment by providing the corporate perspective to their efforts. This initiative, which is a multi-stakeholder cooperation under the aegis of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and the Environment, have hitherto carried out consultations on the matter in Colombia and Indonesia and issued a Ministerial Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action launched at COP25 in Madrid.

Additionally, Global Child Forum-staff partook eg in a Nordic UNGC-meeting in Helsinki, the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva, as well as meetings with the Swedish Children's Rights delegation.

### **Communications**

Global Child Forum's ten year's anniversary was observed by producing a White Paper on "10 Child rights issues for companies to consider". It was based on a global survey commissioned among young people and adult stakeholders. Also, an anniversary logo was developed, a web landing page was created on the website to showcase the organization's milestones during the past 10 years and a short film produced staging corporate leaders telling what they dreamed of as ten-year-old.

Furthermore, a number of web-related projects were conducted to enhance Global Child Forum's digital platform and make the information around children's rights issues more accessible to the corporate sector. A major SEO/SEM-analysis was performed, that resulted in improving Global Child Forum's visibility in search engines. Also, improvements were made to the Global Child Forum Knowledge Centre, that now encompasses also Save the Children's reports (and vice versa).

A new website template was designed to showcase Global Child Forum's Global Benchmark study, with a possibility for corporates to view their results in relation to others, and with improved options to find related materials.

Communications work surrounding the Children's Rights and Business Atlas has continued in cooperation with UNICEF, resulting in a framework with key messages for social media and a short tutorial.

The Communications team has also supported other efforts within the organization with blog posts, press releases and campaigns in social media etc.

All referenced materials can be accessed on the Global Child Forum website <http://www.globalchildforum.org>

We believe the above research and studies support many of the requested actions, for example:

- Conducting applied research and thought leadership in relation to the UN Global Compact;
- Disseminating the Global Compact Principles.

We believe the above events and communication activities have supported many of the requested actions, such as:

- Attracting new participants to the UN Global Compact through our outreach efforts and awareness raising;
- Organizing learning and dialogue events, workshops and training for the participants to get a better

understanding of the principles of the UN Global Compact and specific topics relevant to corporate sustainability;

- Provide expertise for Global Compact working groups and special initiatives;
- Engaging with Global Compact Local Networks;
- Joining and/or proposing partnership projects on corporate sustainability;
- Engaging companies in Global Compact-related issues;
- Joining and/or supporting special initiatives and work streams.

### Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

The purpose of Global Child Forum is to deliver a global platform for informed dialogue and partnerships in the intersection of business and children's rights and between different sectors of society, as well as to inspire cross sector activity to spur action in the same field. The outcomes of our activities are believed to be long-term.

Measuring impact and value creation on business practice is however challenging, since GCF works in an indirect fashion, as an influencer raising awareness and inspiring to commitment and action. Modalities are nonetheless being implemented internally to obtain an increase in impact assessment.

We have however witnessed a change in the perception of children's rights in business, shifting from being primarily perceived as a question of child labor to, for example, taking children's views on board to inform their decision-making, assessing how they can ensure children's prosperous future through various means and collaborating with others to advance on issues.

Examples of outcomes from the activities described above are:

- Benchmarking studies are used to measure performance over time with regards to how corporates include children's rights as part of their business;
- Indicators used in the benchmarking studies are slowly being integrated into corporate activities, actions and reporting;
- The outcomes of the benchmarking studies are referenced in different contexts, having a long-term impact on corporate performance;
- Informing the corporates of their results in the benchmark enables them to track their results and encourages them to integrate a children's rights perspective in their business.