



**Norwegian People's Aid**

## **Communication on Engagement**

**Period covered by this Communication of Engagement: May 2018 - May 2020**

### **Part I - Statement of continued support by the Secretary General**

Date: 05.02.21

*To our stakeholders:*

*I am pleased to confirm that Norwegian People's Aid 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,*

Henriette Killi Westhrin  
Secretary General



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### **Part II. Description of Actions**

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) was founded as the labour movement's humanitarian solidarity organisation in 1939. Our vision is "Solidarity in action" through which we strive to promote human dignity and equal rights for all, focusing on the protection of life and health, and the just distribution of power and resources. NPA is a member-driven organisation, accountable to our General Assembly. We are governed by a representative National Board and administered by our Secretary General

NPA runs development cooperation, humanitarian response and humanitarian disarmament programmes in over 35 countries and its national activities in Norway include disaster preparedness and search and rescue. NPA has 2200 staff globally, mostly locally employed in the programme countries.

In the following, we present the actions that our organisation took in respect of the UN Global Compact and its ten principles during the reporting period.

#### **The promotion of a greener organisation**

NPA systematically employs in its operations a risk assessment tool that identifies environmental risks as well as mitigation measures. We are currently developing a new set of risk assessment and management tools that will enable staff to better manage environmental risks in our field and office operations. When and where the risk of potential environmental harm has been identified, our standard operating procedures provide clear guidance on mitigating and preventing such harm.

In 2020, Norwegian People's Aid undertook four specific internal actions to improve on its environmental responsibility. NPA was certified through the EcoLighthouse environmental scheme in December 2020. NPA will also approve a new environmental policy for the organization. Third, NPA has adopted environmental goals in its new global strategy. Fourth and final, NPA is developing new tools and measures for its field operations to improve its environmental management. This includes implementing a new Environmental Management System, a new Environmental Impact Assessment mobile application, and a new standard operating procedure for field operations.

NPA is currently developing new technological approaches for its field operations that will help to minimize its environmental impact. This includes the development of an Environmental Impact Assessment mobile application as well as an electronically-based Environmental Management System.

#### **Anti-corruption measures and policy**

The fight against corruption in the aid sector is high on the agenda in the Norwegian aid community, including Norwegian People's Aid. Corruption as an issue is discussed openly in Norwegian People's Aid. We exchange experience concerning how to prevent and deal with such cases both at Head Office and within the different programmes. This work is wholly in line with guidelines in Norwegian aid policy.

We work with long-term development and humanitarian work with local partners around the world and we are one of the world's largest organisations within the field of humanitarian disarmament. Many of the countries where we maintain a presence represent a high risk of corruption according to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI).



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In 2018, we updated our processes against corruption and continued the work of making whistle-blowing routines and systems simpler and more effective. NPA's anti-corruption policy ensures that the Head Office in Oslo maintains a system for receiving and processing reports of unwanted actions or situations wherever they might arise within the organisation. In addition, we wish to include assessments of the risk of corruption in all relevant tools and processes within the administration and in our project work both at home and abroad.

Norwegian People's Aid maintains a report function for all incidents that may involve non-compliance, i.e. an incident reporting function. Responsibility for reporting incidents to Head Office lies with the individual in the programme concerned, in Norway or abroad. The reporting system includes cases which are potentially in grey areas with respect to the definition of corruption. The system helps create greater ownership of our anti-corruption work through the organization, as well as making it easier to uncover cases which may not at the outset be considered as deviation from acceptable routines or actions.

### **Full transparency**

Norwegian People's Aid practices zero tolerance of all forms of corruption. We acknowledge the problems but do not tolerate them. We work for a unified attitude towards corruption throughout the organization, and seek full openness in relation to our anti-corruption work and any exposure of corruption. Corruption and the abuse of power prevent the efficient use of national resources, inhibit economic growth and contribute to unfair distribution of resources in society. Widespread corruption is also an indicator of poor governance and a barrier to a country's democratic development. There is no simple explanation as to why corruption arises. Deficient systems or a particular culture can often provide favourable conditions for corrupt behaviour. Poverty and low wages, moreover, are often important contributory factors.

### **Follow-up of partners and trainings**

By means of contract negotiation and capacity assessment, Norwegian People's Aid is able to ensure that all our partners establish sufficiently robust guidelines and procedures for anti-corruption work. We undertake assessments of our partners' administrative and control routines and unequivocally communicate our zero-tolerance policy. At the same time, we recognise that many of our partners lack the necessary capacity to manage these challenges. Where we find this to be the case, we either make training part of the collaboration or offer our partners external support.

### **Workers' rights and labour conditions**

NPA as an organization has a long history of cooperation with its employees, which is regulated both by laws and agreements. NPA practices freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. In NPA Head Office (HO) in Oslo, there is a Union that represents all employees and this union has monthly meetings with NPA's management covering issues like finance, HR, new strategic initiatives and more. The union is also involved in NPA's Health Safety and Environment (HSE) work and participates in quarterly HSE meetings.

NPA's expatriate staff have formed an Expat union that represents all expatriate staff in meetings with HO concerning issues like contracts, salary, allowances and more.



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NPA' has a Global HR policy that promotes union work and among others states that "Good cooperation between the parties is built, to a large extent, on underlying trust between the parties and a shared sense of responsibility for a fair and productive workplace."

Exploitative practices or forced labor are not acceptable in NPA. NPA's foundation is firmly rooted in the fundamental values of the labour movement: Unity, solidarity and human worth. Norwegian People's Aid's values are based on equal rights for all, irrespective of sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and social status.

NPA continuously assesses and when necessary improves internal standards, practices and our code of conduct to ensure that NPA complies with national and international ethical standards, including the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking. We require that our suppliers and business partners respect these ethical standards in the course of their operations and production.

NPA has a separate section covering the prohibition against child labor in our "Expat handbook". This section is in line with the ILO *Minimum Age Convention, 1973*, as well as UN Global Compact's principle five on Labour.

NPA respects all national and local laws in countries where we operate, and our Code of Conduct requires all our employees to agree that they will:

- Respect and promote fundamental human rights, without discrimination, and act with integrity.
- Encourage respect for the host country's laws, culture and religion, insofar as these are not in conflict with international human rights standards.

Further, our employees also have to confirm that they will never take part in, contribute to or tolerate harassment which in NPAs Code of conduct is described as acts, omissions or statements that have the purpose or effect of being offensive, frightening, hostile, degrading or humiliating. This includes harassment committed by or against members of the local community, partners, NPA staff, vendors or any visitors.

Through our Workplace violence, Harassment and Discrimination prevention policy, NPA takes a clear stance against harassment and discrimination. These are defined in the policy as follows:

- Harassment comprises inappropriate comments or behaviours that are offensive, degrading, humiliating, derogatory or disrespectful of the dignity of a person or group of persons.
- Discrimination is to treat a person or group of persons worse or better than others based on skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, clan, political conviction/association, marital status, age, religion, social status, nationality, disability or hierarchical position in the organisation. Discrimination includes harassment as defined below.