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STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

Dear Esteemed Stakeholders,

It is with pleasure that we publish Ahead of the Curve's fifth United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Communication on Progress (CoP) report. This report covers our activities for the year 2020.

This report acts as an affirmation of our commitment to maintaining accountability and transparency, and to support the ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labor, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this Communication on Progress, we describe our continued efforts in integrating sustainability and Global Compact principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations.

Sincerely,

Dina Sherif,

Co-founder,
Ahead of the Curve
Cairo, Egypt

ABOUT US

ATC is a social business dedicated to the promotion of sustainable management practice, inclusive growth and social innovation across growth markets.

MISSION

We aim to promote economically viable, sustainable and scalable solutions to socio-economic challenges in growth markets through responsible management practice, inclusive market growth and the proliferation of social businesses.

VISION

A world where growth markets are seen as hubs for social innovation and where profit has a purpose that is sustainable.

We work towards the fulfillment of our mandate through four main streams of work:

1. Knowledge Creation and Awareness Raising

We produce world-class knowledge pieces about regional insights and practices related to the areas of sustainable management practice, entrepreneurship and impact entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic expansion across growth markets, including women's equitable economic participation. We also continuously engage in raising the awareness levels of our different stakeholders around these topics.

2. Consulting and Training Services

We offer our clients and partners tailored consulting and training services, enabling them to integrate the principles of responsibility and sustainability into their company culture and day-to-day operations.

3. Entrepreneurship Support Efforts

ATC is committed to ensuring more sustainable and inclusive growth models in the region. We realize that groundbreaking efforts are needed for this to materialize. We have launched a series of support programs to enable the proliferation of social and inclusive business models across the Middle East and growth markets beyond.

4. Gender Diversity Efforts

Stemming from the belief that sustainable growth will only be possible if women are able to equitably access and advance within the labor market, ATC launched a stream of work that is focused on women's economic integration in 2014. This includes a women's network that connects, supports and celebrates women leaders from the region, as well as engages men around pressing issues related to women's equitable socio-economic participation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 10 PRINCIPLES

ATC's mission and approach revolves around ensuring more sustainable societies through enabling businesses, civil society organizations and the public sector to create shared value by adopting responsible and inclusive management practices. We incorporate the principles of sustainability within our own operations by:

- Basing all of our core corporate functions on the achievement of more responsible and sustainable growth.
- Mainstreaming the principles of accountability and transparency within our corporation:
 - We have developed comprehensive bylaws to ensure effective board oversight.
 - We maintain an open work culture whereby employees and management openly communicate and are held accountable for any potential sustainability violations.
 - We integrate a comprehensive sustainability management paradigm overview in our employee induction trainings.
 - Our employee handbook addresses issues of corruption, human rights, non-discrimination, and integrity at large, and explains the company's zero tolerance policy for any violations.

Human Rights Management Policies & Procedures

ATC is committed to promoting human rights by reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights dated December 10, 1948, and adheres to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. ATC not only promotes human rights internally through integrating human rights principles in the framework of the company, but also through providing services to private sector and civil society organizations to foster human rights principles within their organizations.

We have zero tolerance for human rights violations within our own internal operations. As per ATC's bylaws and employee handbook, neither the corporation nor its duly authorized agents shall discriminate against any individual or group for reasons of race, color, sex, age, marital status, sexual preference, disability, religion, or any other basis for discrimination. Our open communication culture allows for any such violations to be detected and addressed at an early stage; there have been no such violations to date.

With regards to supply chain integration, members of our supply chain are largely service-oriented. In support of ensuring more inclusive growth, we prefer locally-based suppliers that are small or medium sized (SMEs). We have zero tolerance for suppliers that violate human rights principles. While we do not have a formal supplier screening process, we cease dealing with any given supplier should we become aware of their engagement in violations of the principles of integrity and human rights.

With regards to advocating for the protection of human rights within the corporate sector, we have continued engagement in multiple consulting, training, and research activities around the topic.

PLANS FOR 2021

- We plan on continuing to engage in core business activities related to the promotion and protection of human rights within the private sector. This includes efforts to enable Small and Medium Enterprises, and large companies, to adopt best Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices with regards to ESG, including encouraging gender inclusion and diversity.

Labor Management Policies & Procedures

ATC surpasses the national minimum wage and goes beyond labor laws to ensure that its employees are effectively engaged and fairly treated within the company. We have zero tolerance for child labor, forced or compulsory labor; and they are explicitly prohibited in our employee handbook.

Instead of contracting employees using letters of assignment, ATC initiated the issuance of formal contractual agreements for full-time employees.

We continuously invest in the growth and development of our employees by:

- Granting them full ownership of their work, allowing them to innovate new streams of work and unleash their leadership potential
- Maintaining a coaching system whereby the company's management team closely coach employees and employees coach each other
- Continuously offering our employees exposure and training opportunities that focus on developing their technical and interpersonal skills.
- Allowing core employees to take extended leaves of absence to pursue advanced degrees, and to rejoin the team once they complete their degrees.
- Offering young high-school and undergraduate students learning and training opportunities through internship opportunities.

ATC has flexible working conditions that allow employees to tailor their working hours to their needs and personal commitments, without sacrificing the quality of work. Employees work in an office building that is equipped with safe evacuation mechanisms. The office's physical condition is well maintained to allow employees a comfortable and safe working environment. No employees have been subject to safety hazards as a result of working with the company.

ATC has not experienced any incidents of bullying, verbal or physical harassment or any unethical behavior.

PLANS FOR 2021

- ATC has experimented with life-insurance and pension programs that are suitable for small companies like ours. We are still exploring similar health coverage systems through innovative providers.

Environmental Management Policies & Procedures

Given the nature of our work, our environmental footprint is minimal. Many projects are desk-based with documentation exchanged electronically. However, we remain committed to maintaining an environmentally sustainable office. As of this moment, we have engaged in the following efforts to reduce our environmental impact:

- Digitizing training programs which has significantly reduced paper use and transport directly caused by our programs.
- Reducing print publications by relying on digital publications whenever possible
- Re-using supplies and materials (including handouts, nametags, etc.)
- Encouraging employees to carpool; employees frequently travel from and to the office together
- Using reusable kitchenware in the office
- Installing a water dispenser to minimize plastic waste resulting from using plastic water bottles in the office.
- Segregating paper waste and donating it to a civil society organization that uses returns to support development efforts.

PLANS FOR 2021

- Exploring how training programs that are partially online, and partially offline, can also have minimal environmental impact.

Anti-Corruption Management Policies & Procedures

ATC has a board of directors that is fully independent and does not derive any economic benefits from the company. Moreover, ATC's bylaws dictate that the board of directors must disclose upon election or appointment any relevant interest, financial or otherwise, which may pose a conflict of interest. In the event that any matter comes before the board in which a director has an interest, it shall be immediately disclosed to the board. Board members who have disclosed their interest are not allowed to vote in matter in question. To prevent confusion, interest is determined as the director deriving an individual economic benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the board or committee's decision on the matter.

Moreover, employees are carefully hired based on their commitment to ethical practices. Our employee handbook includes a dishonesty and plagiarism policy, violations of which would negatively affect an employee's standing. ATC encourages its employees to report any concerns they have about the company or its activities, to ensure transparency and minimal violations.

ACTION IN SUPPORT OF BROADER UN GOALS AND ISSUES

ATC's main purpose is to ensure sustainable societies, and shared value creation across private sector, public sector and civil society organizations. The strong overlap between ATC's work, the UNGC principles, and the UN's development goals are described below.

Promoting a Comprehensive Corporate Sustainability Approach

Over the past year, we have enabled three large corporations and a large foundation to conduct comprehensive sustainability diagnostics and issue sustainability reports conforming to internationally accepted standards. ATC has also engaged stakeholders worldwide in engagements related to gathering information for sustainability reporting.

One of our most exciting efforts during 2020 was organizing an insightful series of webinars titled "Reimagine Life" at the onset of the pandemic. The webinar series aimed at capitalizing on the major shock caused by the pandemic, to encourage key stakeholders to re-think the status quo, and how a more sustainable and inclusive one can be reimagined. We curated three episodes on the topics of:

- The Future of Food Security



AHEAD OF THE CURVE
REIMAGINE

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF FOOD SECURITY

Join an enticing conversation about Food Security in the Middle East & Africa during & beyond COVID 19.

Date: 21/4/2020 Time: 8:30 -9:30 PM Cairo Time Medium: Zoom RSVP: Link in the description

Moderator

Speakers



Dina Sherif

Co-Founder | Ahead of the Curve & Executive Director | MIT Legatum Center of Development & Entrepreneurship



Abeer Etefa

Senior Spokeswoman & Regional Communications Officer | World Food Program



Hesham El-Naggar

Vice Chairman | Daltex



Khaled El Anani

Vice Chairman | Dakahlia Group



Mohsen Sarhan

CEO | The Food Bank



Ndidi Nwuneli

Co-Founder & Managing Partner | Sahel Consulting

- The Future of Social Protection



AHEAD OF THE CURVE
REIMAGINE

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

Join us for a discussion around the impact of COVID-19 on our region's most vulnerable groups.

Date: 5/5/2020 Time: 3:30 -5:00 PM Cairo Time Medium: Zoom RSVP: Link in the description

Moderator

Speakers



Ms. Dina Sherif

Co-Founder | Ahead of the Curve & Executive Director | MIT Legatum Center of Development & Entrepreneurship



Dr. Ghada Waly

Executive Director | UNODC & Former Minister of Social Solidarity | Egypt



Dr. Khaled Abu-Ismael

Chief of Economic Development and Poverty Section | UN ESCWA



Dr. Michael Samson

Research Director | Economic Policy Research Institute



Ms. Nahla Zeitoun

Senior Social Protection Specialist | The World Bank



Dr. Tafeeda Jarbawi

Board Member | Bank of Palestine & Former Director General | Taawon

- Reimagining Education



REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Join our conversation on the impact of COVID-19 on our education systems

Date: 12/5/2020	Time: 4:00 - 5:00 PM CAI 10:00 - 11:00 AM EST	Medium: Zoom	RSVP: Link in the description
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Speakers:

						
Caitlin Baron ---- CEO Luminos Fund	Christine Safwat ---- COO Educate Me Foundation	Deema Bibi ---- CEO INJAZ Jordan	Hamdi Tabbaa ---- Co-Founder & CEO Abwaab	Madhav Chavan ---- Co-Founder Pratham	Mohamed El Kalla ---- Co-Founder ATC & CEO CIRA	Vicky Colbert ---- Executive Director Escuela Nueva

Moderated by:



Dina Sherif

Co-Founder |Ahead of the Curve (ATC) & Executive Director |MIT Legatum Center of Development & Entrepreneurship

PLANS FOR 2021

- Sustaining our core business, which naturally supports UNGC’s principles and the SDGs.

Supporting inclusive and social business

ATC is a regional actor in the impact enterprise development and employment creation space that has strategic partnerships with major private sector actors nationally and across the region. We are working on the proliferation of impact and inclusive business models and provide non-financial support to impact-driven businesses and to already existing large businesses that are willing to expand their vision to include the base of the pyramid within their business model. We have developed several flagship training boot camps, including:

- **Thrive (2017 - Present):**

Launched in 2017 in partnership with Oxfam Novib’s Work in Progress! Alliance, Thrive is a specialized program that offers tailored support to impact driven businesses to get

them ready for investment and growth. It does so through capacity building training and one-on-one consulting in various fields based on our assessments of their needs. In 2019, ATC executed two rounds of the THRIVE Program, one sector-agnostic round in Cairo, and another sector-specific round in Sohag, which focused on entrepreneurs creatively using Agricultural by-products. The Cairo round was attended by 7 unique companies in the fields of Environmental Awareness, Recycling, Agriculture, Biotechnology, Arts and Culture, and Education. The Sohag round was attended by 11 companies that are creating added-value products using agricultural waste, and the by-products of the agricultural process. Participating companies, as well as Egyptian companies participating in other WiP! Egypt activities were also provided with the opportunity to win a financial award to support their excelling work; two of the Thrive Cairo cohort won awards totaling 30,000 Euro.

In 2020, we revised the structure of the program to be able to reach a larger number of young business owners. The new design offers short modules on the unique topics of:

- Adaptive Governance
- Impact Management
- Circularity
- ESG Principles, and
- Mindsets of Possibility.

All modules were offered online to adapt to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, which has significantly reduced their environmental footprint, and was very well received by working mothers.

In parallel, we ran a consulting program that provided young business owners with tailored consulting from world-class experts in the areas of branding, marketing, financial management, and governance, among other topics. This new design enabled us to serve a total of 57 additional companies through training, and 17 companies through consulting

- **EGBank (2018-Present)**

In September 2018, Ahead of the Curve and MINT by EGBank collaborated to launch the “MINT Ambassadors” program across Egypt. The program allowed university students, or “Ambassadors”, to participate in a 4-day training program addressing leadership skills, design thinking and business modelling, become a better and more effective communicator and develop a deep understanding of Egypt’s economy and the role of banks in building this economy. After the training the “Ambassador” were assigned to three separate “missions,” and the top students working on these missions would be eligible for an internship at the EGBank. Missions have included passing on the knowledge that they acquired through the training to other young Egyptians.

In 2020, 36 MINT Ambassadors were able to reach *700 students across 16 universities in 8 governorates*.

PLANS FOR 2021

- Digitizing some of our content.
- Launching shorter training seminars to a wider network of entrepreneurs, and in collaboration with other entrepreneurship support organizations to accelerate and spread out impact. These modules will include ESG performance for SMEs, Impact Measurement, Mindsets of Possibility, Circularity, among others.
- Continuing to expand “The Impact” program by implementing it in new countries/cities, increasing the number of engaged entrepreneurs, and empowering others to start and scale up their social enterprises.
- Continuing to expand our sector-specific offerings, enabling large and multinational corporations across the region to support and integrate entrepreneurs into their value chains.

Promoting Gender Equality

Stemming from our commitment to the inclusion and empowerment of women, we continue our efforts towards strengthening a women’s network that aims at creating a supportive, celebratory, and inclusive community for women in the Arab region, both in the formal and informal labor market. In working towards that, we embarked on a series of new efforts to help us mainstream more inclusive and diverse work environments and organizations and across the Arab World.

Among these has been our partnership with the National Council for Women, and the World Bank around the Egyptian Gender Equity Seal (EGES). The EGES is a certification program based on the World Bank's Gender Equity Model (GEM) that aims to promote gender equity and eliminate gender discrimination and practices that hinder the promotion of women in companies by focusing on improving performance in 4 areas: recruitment; career development; family-work balance; and sexual harassment policies. Through a collaboration between the World Bank, the National Council for Women (NCW) and the U.K. Embassy in Egypt ATC piloted the EGES on two private sector companies in Egypt: Commercial International Bank (CIB) and Vodafone Egypt. The companies were guided through a participatory self-assessment (involving both desktop and primary research) to identify and flag gaps, challenges and opportunities; supported in the design and implementation of a gender equity Action Plan through a participatory process; provided with required technical support/training to implement the Action Plan; and underwent an independent audit prior to certification. In order to

ensure sustainability, the EGES was institutionalized within the NCW's Women Business Development Center, and Ahead of the Curve developed a Standard Operating Procedures Manual for the EGES, as well as a Training of Trainers (ToT) training manual for independent certifiers. Finally, two case studies were produced documenting the process adopted by each company, as well as the lessons learned and approved gender Action Plans.

We have sustained our exciting partnership with the **Arab Women's Enterprise Fund (AWEF)** to foster women's economic inclusion in Egypt through the promotion of more gender balanced and sensitive media content. This year, our partnership entailed a series of creative interventions with this end in mind, including:

- Gender sensitization training for young press and media students and professionals
- Continuing sponsorship of the Aswan International Women's Film Festival (AWIFF) ISIS Award, for the Egyptian film with the best representation of women's role in society.
- A 3 minute video film highlighting the changing representations of women's gender roles in Egyptian society, as represented in film over the past 50 years.
- A high-profile panel on Media's pivotal role in shaping perceptions of gender roles, as well as in perpetuating negative stereotypes.

Ahead of the Curve also supported the German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) by conducting a Gender Analysis (GA) for the Equal Opportunities and Social Development (EOSD) project. The GA is designed to enable a gender-responsive project design and implementation, highlighting potentials for the promotion of gender equality, and identifying potential unintended negative consequences. The GA identified realistic and project specific measures to address opportunities and potential negative impacts. The GA follows the GIZ standard template for Gender Analysis, and combined both desktop research as well as 10 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Youth, GIZ Gender Focal persons, GIZ project staff at different levels, and representatives from civil society organizations targeting youth, women, and people with disabilities (PwD).

PLANS FOR 2021

- Launching additional programs that specifically target women entrepreneurs in Egypt.
- Fostering more connections between all past program participants.

Corporate Sustainability Governance and Leadership

We are a small-sized company that employs 10 full time employees, in addition to seasonal interns, and a large roster of independent consultants sourced on an as-needed basis. We are governed by a fully independent Board of Directors, which does not derive any economic benefits from the company. Our Board of Directors includes some of the region's top thought leaders on sustainability.

Our Co-founder and CEO, Dina Sherif, is strongly committed to advancing the principles of sustainability within the company, and across other organizations through the company's core business. Our other Co-founder Mohamed El-Kalla is one of the foremost experts on sustainability management and inclusive business in the Arab World; he was involved in the creation of Egypt's UNGC chapter and other UNGC chapters across the region.

The Board of Directors is constantly engaged in enhancing ATC's operations and potential for reaching its goals of sustainable and inclusive growth. While ATC has not conducted a comprehensive stakeholder engagement exercise, feedback is always gathered after any project or activity undertaken by the company. Furthermore, ATC staff members provide and receive feedback from partners throughout partnerships, and conduct debriefing meetings following the end of a partnership.

As any new program or initiative is designed, relevant key stakeholders are engaged in the project design to ensure that the project is built on a participatory approach, is relevant, and thus will achieve sustainable impact. When it comes to employee engagement, ATC management maintains an open door policy for employees to discuss any arising issues, while ATC employees are also encouraged to provide feedback for each other.



Ahead of the Curve

124 Othman Ibn Affan St.

8th Floor, Apt. 82

Heliopolis, Cairo

Facebook: /atcposts

Twitter: @atctweets

Email: info@ahead-ofthecurve.com

www.ahead-ofthecurve.com