

twentyfifty®

Communication on Progress

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To our stakeholders,

I am pleased to confirm that twentyfifty remains committed to supporting the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this, our seventh annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations.

We are a small company but one whose professional services are focused on, among others, helping large multinationals implement the principles of the UN Global Compact, especially those principles related to human rights and labour standards. We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders through our website and the Global Compact.

Our highlights this year include repeat business with all our major clients, leveraging global support to deliver social outcomes in developing contexts, supporting leaders in leadership and integrating purpose and 'human rights due diligence' throughout our clients' operations.

We have created the twentyfifty Academy, our training centre, through which we have started to provide Human Rights e-learning and other online trainings. We also continued to support our clients to contribute more effectively to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through respect for human rights.

We are committed to continuous improvement of our performance and look forward to any feedback on this report.

Sincerely,



Luke Wilde,
Chief Executive

Human rights

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

The purpose of twentyfifty is to partner global companies to be a force for good in the world. We are driven by our desire to see a more just and sustainable world, by the power of business to help realise that world and by our values of passion, clarity, integrity, respect and inclusion.

We are committed to respecting human rights in our own operations, our service delivery and our business relationships. Knowing whether business is being done responsibly isn't just a textbook exercise and it can't be learnt in a University. It involves continually engaging and listening to the people and communities that the business touches through its operations and business relationships, and continually learning, adapting and transforming practices. We do this by working with multinational businesses to help them to implement their commitments to respect human rights. Since 2004, we have worked globally and across sectors, with a focus on extractives, technology, food & agriculture, tourism, technology & science and retail & garments. Following their arrival in 2011, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) have underpinned much of our client work.

We provide practical support and expertise to implement the hard-wiring of human rights due diligence within organisations and value chains, as well as organisational change and leadership development skills to embed human rights within the soft-wiring of human relationships and organisational cultures. As a professional services firm, we aim to:

- Develop practical, implementable approaches to the UNGPs that deliver business benefits for our clients and provide organisational change support which enables these approaches to be implemented across global operations;
- Encourage larger numbers of businesses, especially those operating in emerging markets, to implement the human rights principles of the Global Compact and the UNGPs;
- Share, where clients allow, our work with wider audiences and encourage clients to be transparent about their progress and challenges in order to develop the collective knowledge and practice of respecting human rights.

Progress in 2020: Working with clients

The standard terms of many of the contracts issued to us by public bodies as well as private companies limit what we can say about our work. However, when we can, we agree with our clients that they (and we) publish lessons from the project we undertake together to support the transformation towards a responsible and rights-respecting global economy.

Key activities this year included:

- We worked with 30 companies, across 17 countries, across many industries and geographies, integrating our expertise in leadership of change, dialogue, facilitation and human rights expertise;

- In 2020, we were aware that our clients experienced many different demands: Some had new and pressing mandates to get food, finance or supplies to where it was critically needed. Others grappled with difficult personal circumstances or have found themselves furloughed. Throughout this challenging time, we offered the individuals we worked with an ear, a sounding board as they worked through whatever they were dealing with; we supported them in working out how to navigate the new complexities of engaging within a company whilst working from home, dealing with an unfamiliar topic, or managing a crisis; and we brought insights into how decisions or strategies being taken in the crisis might have affected vulnerable groups;
- We continued supporting all our clients to derive business and social value from implementing and communicating on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with an explicit focus on respecting human rights in their value chains;
- We co-developed the concept and 5-year plan for a Centre of Excellence, to accelerate the collective development of member's capabilities and enable them to lead a step change in responsible sourcing in their own organisations and their suppliers, and to positively impact people's lives and respect for human rights;
- We participated in a large study of large German companies and how they can implement the SDGs, specifically looking at best practice in the implementation of corporate due diligence;
- We have continued to work with the German Development Agency in the textile sector on the implementation of social, ecological and compliance standards in textile value chains. Specifically, we have been training many textile companies in human rights due diligence requirements for a nationally recognised ethical certification process;
- We continued our close relationship with the German Network of the United Nations Global Compact and supported them to deliver an engaging programme of webinars, workshops events and facilitation activities, including the DGCN Human Rights Peer Learning Group on Human Rights;
- We continued to collaborate on Human Rights Due Diligence with the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, the Global Compact Network and other public and private partners;
- We continued to expand the reach of our work on human rights due diligence in the automobile industry where we especially provide support to responsible sourcing.
- We conducted a survey of agricultural practices in India, to find out to what extent the minimum wage was being implemented throughout this sector;
- In New Delhi, we were hosted by the Swiss Ambassador to India for networking and discussions.

In 2020 we deepened and broadened our training offerings related to business and human rights. We delivered face-to-face training to businesses on topics such as:

- General business and human rights
- Human rights due diligence
- Implementation of due diligence systems
- Organisation of stakeholder dialogue
- Modern slavery
- Developing a Human Rights Policy
- Impact Assessments

- Monitoring and Reporting
- Legal and Compliance
- Supplier capability building

We shared our knowledge and expertise on human rights as guest speakers at events, through webinars and via [online blogs](#) on topics such as gender justice, human rights and climate change.

Progress in 2020: In our own operations

We seek to apply the same principles to our own operations as those of our clients, using the UN Guiding Principles as a reference point in our decision-making. twentyfifty is a member of the UNGC local networks in the UK, Germany, Switzerland and India, and a signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles.

In contrast to our consulting engagements in which we influence the system through our multinational clients, when it comes to our own operations as a micro-business, like other small businesses, our choices are limited to those which the system makes available to us. Nevertheless, we endeavour to use our knowledge to choose ethical or lower impact suppliers or business partners whenever possible, for example, when we book travel or purchase computers. We also look for certified providers or consult websites such as 'rank a brand' before making purchase decisions.

One area where we encounter dilemmas is in who we choose to work with. In controversial cases, we involve colleagues in the decision-making until we are satisfied with the conclusion. We generally base decisions on whether we feel the client shows meaningful commitment and whether our work will have a positive impact on the people potentially affected by the client's activities. Broadly, we make these decisions on a case-by-case basis and if we feel our experience and competencies can make a difference to people's lives, this is not an opportunity we want to walk away from. In 2020, we have turned down lucrative work with clients who don't meet our stringent criteria. This allowed us to work more deeply on repeat projects with long-term clients who are committed to transforming how they behave towards all their stakeholders throughout their value chains.

During 2020, due to the pandemic, all companies had to think carefully about the wellbeing of their employees. At the start of the year, most of our employees worked in managed office spaces. During the lockdowns, we set up each employee to work comfortably and effectively from home. We then explored new office solutions in which we could all work safely together in the future.

In February 2020 we committed to using local contractors to carry out Human Rights Impact Assessments in developing countries, rather than travelling to carry out the assessments ourselves. In this way we increased our impact, due to:

- better local knowledge;
- improved relationships with local people;
- deliberately building skills in developing contexts, thus contributing to resilience in local networks;
- We have appointed a new Managing Partner who has expanded our thought leadership efforts, raising awareness of the opportunities of a human rights-based approach in public fora and media;

- We have installed internal Well-being and Development leads in each office, who are available at all times to all staff. Leaders meet monthly to discuss their findings and report to senior management.

Measurement of outcomes

Employed 11 local contractors in 7 Human Rights Impact Assessments in 4 African and 3 South Asian countries.

About £300 per head, on average, spent on employee home-working office equipment, particularly meeting the needs of families dealing with home-schooling their children.

Rental of new global headquarters, in the UK, incorporating well-furnished, discreet office spaces where employees and contractors can enjoy working together whilst remaining appropriately socially distanced.

No redundancies made due to the pandemic in our UK and German operations.

Plans for 2021

In the year ahead, we hope that the tough lessons our clients have learned through the multiple global crises of 2020 will provide them with the opportunity to confront the way business is done. We truly hope that this unique opportunity to tackle the climate crisis, address inequalities and support sustainable livelihoods will be taken. Our plans are to:

- Develop a Centre of Excellence for internal learnings and trainings that will feed into our external training programmes delivered by our new “twentyfifty Academy”;
- Launch our Flourish programme, for employee wellbeing, in Q4 2020;
- Successfully address the human problems thrown up when the new technologies of artificial intelligence and big data are rapidly deployed;
- Ensure that human values are central to our increasingly on-line and mechanised world .

Labour

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Labour issues are a core human rights issue and one of the main areas that we focus on in terms of providing consultancy. We have several labour standards specialists in our team. This gives us the capacity to support our clients to ensure local practices meet international expectations and the labour principles of the UN Global Compact.

In addition to our client work, we seek to make sure our own practices are exemplary. For us, fostering positive working conditions is essential to recruiting and maintaining the best talent. Our consultants will only be successful in supporting clients if they feel respected and treated fairly, have opportunities to develop and can find an adequate balance between work and personal life.

Progress in 2020: Working with clients

This year we gave much focus to agricultural labour practices across the globe, identifying salient labour rights, as well as land, environmental and socio-economic impacts in agricultural communities across India, Mexico, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

At the start of the year, we produced a substantial report into the multiple factors that sustain poverty in farming communities in Zambia, which have impacts that affect communities presently and into the future. We focused particularly on the economic challenges experienced by growers which are perceived as one of the causes of child labour in Zambia.

We continued our work on modern slavery, helping a number of existing clients to further understand the expectations of the Modern Slavery Act, and supporting their continued efforts to address these risks and impacts. Likewise, our projects around general human rights due diligence, decent work and responsible sourcing inevitably and importantly also include modern slavery components.

Other activities around modern slavery included:

- Workshops and trainings;
- Support to companies' risk identification processes;
- Work on Modern Slavery statements.

Progress in 2020: In our own operations

Within twentyfifty's operations, we have sought to improve further our working practices in ways that align with our values, treat our people fairly and manage our geographically spread team. This past year, we have focused on strengthening the implementation of existing corporate policies, including our Flexible Working, Appraisal and Development and IT Security policies. Through internal awareness raising, team discussion and practice, we continuously seek to ensure employees understand and make use of their related freedoms and entitlements.

Our values

We are committed to living our values, with each other and with our clients.

PASSION In our company and in our work, we let our passion shine through, heart and soul.

CLARITY We strive for clarity. We seek to get to the essence of what is important and practical. We communicate clearly with each other and with our clients, using simple, clear and accessible language.

INTEGRITY We do what we say we will do, and we trust each other to do a good job. We are good custodians of our clients' funds and our own, and we do not engage in any activity which is illegal or improper.

RESPECT & INCLUSION In our business and in our consulting, we seek to ensure that everyone is given a voice. When necessary, we reach out to individuals or groups who need particular support to voice their needs and aspirations. We seek to ensure that our own business processes empower and do not discriminate, and we provide all means possible for concerns to be raised and appropriately resolved by our management.

RESULTS-ORIENTED We want to do work that is meaningful and impactful. We are focused on delivering results for our clients that also deliver broader positive impacts to society and, wherever possible, on measuring these results. We help our clients to address negative impacts, and to make a real difference, by enhancing their contribution to people, society and to the planet.

Our growing team is confronted with an equally growing and demanding workload, and we have recognised that balancing employee wellbeing in this context is a major challenge for a business like ours. We have started to implement our action plan for appraisal, development, wellbeing and communication practices, including our wellbeing monitoring system, as well as a strengthened appraisal and development procedure. They were implemented throughout the year and have been accompanied by the establishment of less formal routines to share experience regarding work satisfaction and wellbeing across the team. We have strengthened our workload tracking by purchasing and successfully implementing a fully integrated online project planning and project accounting software. This has helped us to avoid over-working our staff, by identifying future workload crunch points and taking mitigating action.

We seek wide involvement in decision-making through regular team calls and through all-team face-to-face meetings. In common with all multi-national companies, we have upgraded our IT capabilities to help our geographically dispersed team to stay connected. At the same time, we improved further our flexible working arrangements.

We continue to support professional and personal development by providing each team member with a training fund for them to choose their own training courses. We continue to hold fortnightly internal online peer-learning opportunities, that are attended by most of the team. As an organisation with highly skilled and experienced experts from various backgrounds, we recognise that great opportunities exist in internal coaching and development sessions.

We have taken further steps to move towards Employee Ownership. We have taken legal counsel to evolve equitable outcomes for employees working in different countries and liaised with an employee owned organization who have succeeded in structuring their EOT to include long-term contractors.

We do not use unpaid labour and negotiate fair contracts with our associates.

We have clear grievance channels and procedures. Employees may approach their line manager and either the chief executive or the chairman with any issues arising.

Measurement

100% of staff and several associates involved in coaching calls (both giving and receiving coaching)
No violations of the above-mentioned principles have been detected by our management's due diligence activities or reported through our employee grievance channels.

Plans for 2021

For us, diversity is a key success factor in ensuring we can respond to client needs globally. Our team is diverse, with 12 languages spoken. We plan to recruit and train more contractors in developing countries, thereby reducing our reliance on travel and increasing the diversity of our team. We intend to make further additions to our leadership team, continually aiming for diverse representation at the highest level and providing flexible working arrangements to meet individual needs (e.g. to balance work and family life through working from home and flexible time).

In 2021, we plan to:

- Expand our work on modern slavery and forced labour by supporting clients to further address risks in their deeper supply chains;
- Set up a Stewardship group to act as a shadow Employee Ownership body prior to setting up an EOT;
- Aim to significantly increase Black and Minority Ethnic representation throughout our global consulting team;
- Review our employment practices to ensure we are 100% compliant with IR35 regulations;
- Recruit 4 women into Leadership positions in the UK and Germany;
- Re-instate sector leadership positions, with a majority of female Sector Leads;
- Focus on “Understanding Impacts” – a structural change in our Knowledge Base and internal library to address our expertise in the areas of Child Rights and Forced Labour.

Environment

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

When working with clients, we seek to ensure that the environmental impact on people is considered, understood and addressed, in accordance with the UNGPs. In our own operations, twentyfifty is committed to minimising its impact on the environment wherever possible. Our biggest impact is the travel we undertake.

Progress in 2020: Working with clients

This year we have developed an Account Prioritisation Matrix, with 11 criteria. One of the more important criteria that we have incorporated into the matrix is “Facing into Climate/Ecological Crisis”. The intention of this criterion is that, in all the work we do, we now seek opportunities to alert clients to their environmental impacts and how these can impact people, through pollution, land rights, and climate impacts that lead to forced migration.

Progress in 2020: In our own operations

The whole twentyfifty community attended a talk by Extinction Rebellion: a transformative evening of learning, relationship-building and partnership around combatting global warming and climate change.

At our global leadership meeting in January 2020, we made a decision to reduce our long-haul travel to an absolute minimum and agreed wherever possible to partner with local organisations or use local consultants in the developing countries where we plan to run Human Rights Impact Assessments. We started working with experts in environmental sustainability to incorporate the human rights impact of climate change into our work with clients and set up an environmental sub-committee to fulfil on our commitment to become carbon neutral by 2025. We also decided to make increasing use of public transport and increase our use of teleconferencing and webinars even for internal meetings, allowing staff to work from home, for example, instead of making unnecessary journeys to the office.

The arrival of the global pandemic a couple of months later significantly accelerated these process. Clients were suddenly much more accepting of our new practices, as in effect we no longer had any choice.

We have subsequently employed local contractors throughout East and southern Africa, as well as throughout South Asia, leading to the elimination of long-haul travel and reduced carbon footprint.

Due to these choices and new circumstances, we no longer regard global business flying and face-to-face engagement as necessary to the running of a global human rights business, and we believe that our clients also will regard this as a permanent change. This constitutes a major change in our working practices and has significantly reduced our environmental impacts, now and in the future.

We work with carbon offsetting organisation Atmosfair and have succeeded in including a carbon offset into every flight purchase we made in 2020. We now include a clear opt-out carbon offsetting statement to this effect in all our standard proposals and budgets so that clients are aware of and have the opportunity to support our efforts.

Measurement

In 2019 we took 43 long-haul flights. In 2020, we reduced this to 0.

Plans for 2021

In 2021, we plan to:

- Continue to select, as far as possible, our business partners and suppliers based on their sustainability performance and purchase sustainably;
- Review our insurance portfolio with a view to moving to more ethical providers, specifically those who invest in Green Assets and in companies who have signed up to the science-based targets aligned to the Paris Climate Agreement;
- Measure the number of projects we undertake in which environmental concerns have been a factor;
- Recycle office waste, including paper, packaging, stationery and office products;
- Reduce the amount of printed materials, reports and written correspondence
- Supporting our team members to work from home;
- Offset carbon on all flights.

Anti-corruption

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

twentyfifty seeks to practice transparent, ethical, and honest business practices. We believe that business must include honesty in all our dealings, which includes speaking plainly and not using language that will mislead or confuse those with whom we interact.

twentyfifty has put in place management practices to meet the requirements of the UK Bribery Act (2010) and we regularly review these. We do not tolerate any forms of bribery and corruption within our own operations or by associates or clients. We have an Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy which is available on our website and communicated to all staff, and we maintain a Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Progress in 2020: Working with clients

This year several projects allowed us to support clients to work against corruption. In the agricultural sector, for example, we led trainings surrounding the key issues needed to inform a strategic assessment of current, emerging and long-term threats of global illicit trade in agricultural commodities.

Progress in 2020: In our own operations

We have continued to offer anti-corruption training to our staff and contractors.

Measurement

Our staff have reported no incidents of being offered or asked for a bribe this year.

Several gifts have been recorded on our gift and hospitality register.

10 staff have completed Drum Cussac Travel Prepare training, focussing on anti-bribery and corruption.

Plans for 2021

In 2021, we plan to:

- Provide anti-bribery and corruption training for all further employees;
- Review our policies and procedures.