

24 June 2021

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York, NY 10017
USA

UNGC Communication of Progress Cover Letter

Dear Secretary General of the United Nations,

The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) joined UNGC in March 2019, and I am pleased to submit our first Communication of Progress (CoP). The submission of the CoP is also an expression of our continued support for the UNGC's Ten Principles as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SAMRC annual report enclosed (p33) gives an account of how the research programmes are aligned to the SDGs. The annual report further illustrates that the SAMRC strives to address the Ten Principles of the UNGC as encapsulated by the four themes of *Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption*. Each of the four themes are well addressed in the annual report as follows:

1. **Human Rights:** For the past 50 years, the SAMRC has been advancing human rights in health research addressed through six research programmes (p50-136).
 - a. **Principle 1:** Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.
 - b. **Principle 2:** Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.
2. **Labour:** Four out of ten principles constitute this theme and this theme is addressed in the annual report PART B on **research capacity development** & PART D (p180-184) on **human resource management** including employee wellness, guaranteed remuneration, transformation, among others. The four principles are as follows:
 - a. **Principle 3:** Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
 - b. **Principle 4:** The elimination of forced or compulsory labour.
 - c. **Principle 5:** The effective abolition of child labour.
 - d. **Principle 6:** The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
3. **Environment:** Three out of the 10 principles are addressed by this theme and various parts of the SAMRC annual report address the three principles. The annual report showcases the work performed by the Environment and Health Research Unit of the SAMRC (p56-58) which also covers issues of climate change



and infectious diseases through the use of Early Warning Systems. This theme is further addressed in PARTS D particularly on injury on duty (p202). The three principles are as follows:

- a. **Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.
 - b. **Principle 8:** Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility
 - c. **Principle 9:** Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
4. **Anti-corruption:** Part E of the annual report (p202-213) outlines the audit report, financial statements, as well as the Audit Committee report. As a result, Principle 10 of the UNGC has been addressed.
- a. **Principle 10:** Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Gray', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

Prof Glenda Gray
President & CEO: South African Medical Research Council