

THE DANISH  
INSTITUTE FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

UN GLOBAL  
COMPACT

COMMUNICATION  
ON ENGAGEMENT  
2020-2021

*This report serves to demonstrate the Danish Institute for Human Rights' commitment as a participant to the United Nations Global Compact. The report is a stand-alone document for the period between 2020 and 2021.*

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# ABBREVIATIONS

DIHR – Danish Institute for Human Rights

GANHRI - Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

NHRI – National Human Rights Institution

OECD - the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

UN – United Nations

UNGC – United Nations Global Compact

# STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT

Dear Stakeholders,

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), as a participant of the UN Global Compact (UNGC) since 2003, is proud to confirm its support for the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. With this commitment, we express our intent to support the UNGC in advancing these principles. We will do so through our work as a National Human Rights Institution by continuing to promote and develop knowledge about human rights on a national, regional and international basis.

We will continue to participate in and engage with the UNGC in the following ways:

- *Internalizing the UNGC Principles:* the DIHR will continue the process of internalizing the UNGC principles within its own organisation;
- *Participation and outreach:* the DIHR will continue to contribute to and participate in presentations at UNGC regional and global events, and to develop and promote tools, conduct assessments and encourage implementation by companies of the business and human rights standards including the UNGC Principles. Further, the DIHR will continue to engage in the human rights working group of the UNGC Network Denmark;
- *Including the principles in our work:* the DIHR will continue to integrate the UNGC principles into projects and activities with partners
- *The UN Sustainable Development Goals:* the DIHR will continue to work on providing human rights guidance to the SDGs and further support this guidance in our engagements with the UNGC and with business;
- *Special Initiatives and Work Streams:* the DIHR will continue activities to promote the engagement between NHRIs and UNGC Local Networks and in advancing and supporting access to UNGC tools and resources.

We recognize that a key requirement for participation in the UNGC is the submission of a Communication on Engagement (COE) that describes our organization's efforts to support the implementation of the ten principles and to engage with the Global Compact. We support public accountability and transparency, and therefore commit to report on progress, as outlined in the Global Compact COE policy.

Kind regards,



Louise Holck

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# ABOUT THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) is an independent national human rights institution (NHRI) established by the Danish Parliament in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Paris Principles. Under its legal mandate, DIHR's main functions are to monitor human rights in Denmark and promote human rights internationally, including through engagement with non-state actors, including business.

The DIHR has been a committed member of the UN Global Compact (UNGC) since 2003. The DIHR is classified as a non-business participant under the public sector, and has pledged to work to internalize, promote and disseminate the UNGC principles both throughout our institution as well through various external engagements such as advising business, governments, NHRIs and international organizations.

Since 1999, the DIHR has been active in the field of human rights and business. The DIHR has been directly engaged by companies and international organisations to provide support for the development of their human rights policies and due diligence measures, and to deliver internal capacity building, educational services, and impact assessments. In addition to direct engagements, human rights tools and approaches developed by the DIHR are being applied by various stakeholders world-wide. The 2012 law on establishing DIHR as Denmark's National Human Rights Institution further recognizes DIHR's mandate with regard to private sector actors.

At the national level, the DIHR monitors legislation to ensure that it is in accordance with human rights as well as providing advice to the government, parliament, civil society and business on human rights. This is done by submitting legal briefs during the legislative process, providing analysis and research on human rights issues, educating on human rights and cooperating with various stakeholders to assist in the implementation of human rights.

The DIHR's International Department is undertaking ongoing human rights projects with local partners in several countries, which are funded by a range of national and international donor organisations and clients. These projects include:

- Engagements with business, international financial institutions and other international agencies on human rights and business issues;
- Capacity strengthening collaborations with central governments and other state entities such as military, police, judiciaries and paralegal services;
- Capacity building projects with NHRIs and ombudsmen;

- Support to civil society organisations in sensitive human rights environments; and
- A range of activities focused on promoting the role of business in sustainable development.

As an independent NHRI, the DIHR has played a prominent role in promoting human rights and business. In 2008, DIHR led the establishment of a NHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights under the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). The Working Group has been successful in building recognition of NHRIs as key stakeholders in the evolving landscape of business and human rights.

In 2010, GANHRI adopted the Edinburgh Declaration<sup>1</sup> affirming the mandate and role of NHRIs in promoting business respect for human rights.

The UNGPs themselves expressly recognize the role of NHRIs in relation to business and human rights with reference to each of the three pillars of the UN “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework on Business and Human Rights<sup>2</sup>.

In addition, the DIHR supports capacity building of NHRIs worldwide, including through the development of a training course.<sup>3</sup>

# DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS & MEASUREMENT OUTCOMES

The following sections provide a detailed account of how the DIHR both supports and engages with the UNGC principles as well as takes strategic action to advance societal goals, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The chapter will be structured around the following subsections:

- *Internalizing the UNGC Principles:* Which elaborates on internal processes to internalize the UNGC principles within the DIHR
- *Participation and outreach:* Which includes participation and presentations at UNGC regional and global events, as well as DIHR's role in tool and resource development
- *Including the principles in our work:* Which explains how the Principles are integrated into the projects and activities of the Institute
- *The UN Sustainable Development Goals:* Which elaborates on our work on providing human rights guidance on the SDGs
- *Special Initiatives and Work Streams:* which elaborates on our activities in the areas of promoting further the engagement between NHRIs and UNGC Local Networks and in advancing and supporting access to UNGC tools and resources

## **INTERNALIZING THE UNGC PRINCIPLES**

The DIHR is committed to its duty to respect human rights and its legal mandate to protect and promote human rights not only through its work with external partners, but also through the institution's internal daily work. As a NHRI with a mandate to promote and protect human rights both nationally and internationally, it is necessary that DIHR internalises the UNGC principles and constantly works to improve its own processes.

During recent years, DIHR has further strengthened its internal governance systems to ensure that its employees work in accordance with the principles. This includes the development of internal policies and procedures in the areas of:

Human Rights	Labour	Environment	Anti-Corruption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>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.</b></li> <li>• Providing leave for maternity and adoption</li> <li>• Emergency plan and Emergency response communication</li> <li>• Anti-Terror policy</li> <li>• Providing holidays, Insurance and support for missions, as well as leave of absence</li> <li>• Smoking and alcohol policy</li> <li>• Stress-policy</li> <li>• Ensuring adequate working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;</b></li> <li>• Collective agreements</li> <li>• <b>Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;</b></li> <li>• <b>Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and</b></li> <li>• <b>Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.</b></li> <li>• Various approaches to combat offensive behaviour</li> <li>• Guidelines for recruitment</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Ensuring adequate salary and pensions</li> <li>• Senior policy</li> <li>• Staff policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;</b></li> <li>• <b>Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and</b></li> <li>• <b>Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.</b></li> <li>• Updated travel policy and approval procedures with focus on minimizing and monitoring CO2 imprint</li> <li>• Principal decision to explore CO2 offsetting possibilities</li> <li>• Facility management with focus on LED panel investments, green energy sources and solar power.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.</b></li> <li>• Anti-Corruption Policy</li> <li>• Whistleblower scheme</li> </ul>

In addition, the DIHR has developed internal procurement guidelines which support responsible procurement.

## **PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH**

The DIHR has engaged with the human rights experts of the UNGC, and the DIHR staff have participated in several UNGC webinars as presenters, contributors, and participants. In 2017 a DIHR member of staff was elected in as a Board member of the UNGC Network Denmark. Through her mandate, DIHR has supported the establishment of a Human Rights Working Group of UNGC Network Denmark, and DIHR has been a key subject matter expert for various events and activities organised by the UNGC Network Denmark on human rights<sup>4</sup>. This has included:

- A workshop series on human rights due diligence;
- Basic trainings on human rights; and
- Events and dialogues on legal developments in the area of mandatory human rights due diligence.

## **INCLUDING THE PRINCIPLES IN OUR WORK**

The DIHR Human Rights and Business Department works to support the full three pillars of the protect, respect, remedy framework of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Through the work at local and international level the Department objective is that economic actors respect human rights and are

accountable to rights holders, and that states meet their duty to protect against negative impacts on human rights associated with economic activities.

The DIHR strategy 2021-2024<sup>5</sup> specifically focuses on how the Institute can support a business community which respects human rights. In the current strategy period, the Institute will:

- In national and international work, continue to contribute to the development and systematic implementation of national action plans, and other initiatives on human rights and business.
- Focus efforts nationally and internationally towards encouraging the financial sector to support respect for human rights, including incorporating human rights due diligence in investment decisions.
- Help ensure that the green transition does not take place at the expense of human rights, but instead use human rights as a lever to realise the green transition.

Specifically, the DIHR aims at:

- **Improving conduct and supporting good practice:** The DIHR engages with economic actors, such as financial institutions, public or multi-lateral institutions procuring goods and services, as well as with sectoral initiatives or groups of businesses, on their efforts to identify, act on, track, communicate and remedy their negative impacts on human rights. In its engagements, the DIHR work actively with the first 6 principles of the UNGC, trying to identify practical approaches and methods for business activities to take due regard to human rights. And the DIHR support economic actors in building internal awareness of-, and capacity on, human rights.
- **Policy work and agenda-setting:** The DIHR develops and publishes tools and analyses, and provides submissions to policy processes, that combine human rights expertise with hands-on experience from engagements with economic actors. The DIHR uses its unique identity as a national human rights institution (NHRI) with far-reaching international networks to engage with standard developers and policy makers as well as convene relevant stakeholders aiming to scale up respect for human rights by economic actors.

## THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

DIHR develops analysis, tools and guidance on the links between human rights and sustainable development. Through partnerships, DIHR works to integrate human rights standards and mechanisms in sustainable development policies, programmes and monitoring.

DIHR has developed the Human Rights Guide to the SDGs which uncovers the human rights anchorage of the 17 goals and 169 targets. The Guide reaffirms that the SDGs are underpinned by human rights, and will only be achieved if principles of participation, accountability and non-discrimination are respected.

Human rights mechanisms and institutions have an important role to play in planning, implementation and monitoring of progress on the SDGs. The Guide enables NHRIs, major groups, states, rights-holders, civil society and businesses to use human rights as a means to realise the SDGs – and to use the SDGs to realise human rights.

NHRIs are uniquely placed to act as a bridge between stakeholders and promote a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to the SDGs. We work with the global network of NHRIs to build capacity and good practice.

In 2018, the DIHR launched a database to support business in conducting sustainable business through human rights due diligence. The database provides examples and cases of how business, through their responsible business practices, can contribute to the SDGs.<sup>1</sup> In 2019 DIHR published a discussion paper which provides an overview of the connections between human rights, responsible business conduct and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>2</sup>

## **SPECIAL INITIATIVES AND WORK STREAMS**

The DIHR is involved in a number of UNGC initiatives and activities at the global level. A DIHR staff-member is a member of the Expert Group of UNGC, the only NHRI representative within the Group. We are also involved in the UNGC Sustainable Ocean Business Action Platform and the work of the UNGC on Women's Empowerment.

Finally, the DIHR engages in ongoing dialogue and engagement with UNGC on various activities. Recently, the DIHR has been supporting the UNGC on the new format for Communication on Progress reporting. DIHR will continue to engage in additional activities in the areas of promoting further the engagement between NHRIs and UNGC Local Networks and in advancing and supporting access to UNGC tools and resources.

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<sup>1</sup> More on the database can be found here: <https://biz.sdg.humanrights.dk/>

<sup>2</sup> The paper can be found here: [https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/hrb\\_2019/responsible\\_business\\_conduct\\_as\\_a\\_cornerstone\\_of\\_the\\_2030\\_agenda\\_dihr\\_2019.pdf](https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/hrb_2019/responsible_business_conduct_as_a_cornerstone_of_the_2030_agenda_dihr_2019.pdf)

# LOOKING AHEAD

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# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Link to the Edinburgh Declaration:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/NHRI/Edinburgh\\_Declaration\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/NHRI/Edinburgh_Declaration_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [Link](#) to the Report of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprise on the Role of national human rights institutions in facilitating access to remedy for business-related human rights abuses: [A/HRC/47/39/Add.3 - E - A/HRC/47/39/Add.3 -Desktop \(undocs.org\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Link to more information on the ICC Guidebook and E-learning on business and human rights for NHRIs: <http://www.humanrights.dk/business/tools/guidebook-e-learning-nhris>

<sup>4</sup> Link to the UNGC Denmark Human Rights network: [Menneskerettigheder i praksis - netvaerks-grup - Global Compact Network Denmark](#)

<sup>5</sup>

[https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/document/Strategy%202021-2024%20English\\_feb.pdf](https://www.humanrights.dk/sites/humanrights.dk/files/media/document/Strategy%202021-2024%20English_feb.pdf)

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