



# **Practical Action**

**UN Global Compact**

**Communication on Engagement**

**December 2021**

**Big change starts small**

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Practical Action is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee | Reg. Charity No. 247257 | Company Reg. No. 871954  
Registered office – The Robbins Building, 25 Albert Street, Rugby, CV21 2SD, United Kingdom | Patron HRH The Prince of Wales.

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

20<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

## **Statement of continued support for the UNGC**

I am pleased to confirm Practical Action's continued support for and the renewal of its ongoing commitment to the UN Global Compact initiative and its ten principles. Practical Action's strategy, operations and ways of working are fully compatible with the *Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption* and our Change Ambitions are very much aligned with the aims of the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*.

We are delighted to report that our team in Bolivia, who joined the national network, were recognised, at a ceremony on Thursday 9th December 2021, for Practical Action's work since 2010 in Bolivia. Recognised within the framework of SDG 2 to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, promoting the productive use of energy under a market-based approach in different value chains. This work contributed to SDGs 7<sup>1</sup> and 8<sup>2</sup> in addition to SDG 2<sup>3</sup>,

As part of our commitment to membership of the UN Global Compact, we submit our Communication on Engagement and we will ensure we communicate this to our stakeholders and the general public via your website. The report that follows is a summary of the most relevant activities from 2019 to the end of 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Roberts  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> promoting the use of renewable energy beyond the electricity sector to make rural electrification projects sustainable, and supporting target 7.a by facilitating access to clean energy technologies

<sup>2</sup> promoting inclusive and sustained economic growth for rural development, to achieve higher economic productivity through access to technology and innovation in labour-intensive, high value-added production chains (targets 8.2 and 8.3)

<sup>3</sup> using technologies to increase agricultural productivity and incomes of small producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples and family farmers. Considering that increased agricultural productivity is key to food security, income generation, development of rural areas and, therefore, poverty reduction (targets 2.3, 2a and 2c).

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# Practical Action & UN Global Compact

Practical Action's support to the UNGC and its Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption and contribution to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is achieved in a number of ways: engaging in UNGC local networks; conducting applied research and thought leadership to advance best practices; providing support to corporate partners and other stakeholders as they implement sustainability initiatives that benefit local communities; supporting Global Compact principles, special initiatives and work streams through our four program change ambitions: Resilience that Protects, Energy that Transforms, Cities Fit for People and Farming that Works; and participating in Global Compact events.

Practical Action works in Africa, Asia and Latin America, taking the knowledge and learning from practical projects, advocacy work and research activities and extending its reach and influence through its consulting arm <https://practicalaction.org/consulting/> and its publishing <https://practicalaction.org/publishing/>

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## Engage in Global Compact Local Networks

- Practical Action in Bolivia joined the UNGC local network and was recognised in December 2021 for Practical Action's work since 2010 in Bolivia, within the framework of SDG 2 to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, promoting the productive use of energy under a market-based approach in different value chains. Practical Action participated in the series of webinars in mid-2021 organised by the UK network. <https://mailchi.mp/2c60ef4952d3/premios-pods-161030?e=e25534cc8f>
- Practical Action are partners on the **Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings (GPA)**, which is hosted by UNITAR. The GPA works to support humanitarian partners to deliver the actions of SDG7 for displacement contexts. Practical Action are on the steering committee for the GPA and secured €10,000,000 (euros) of funding from the IKEA Foundation to partner with UNHCR on developing a 5-year project on humanitarian energy in displacement contexts including implementation and advocacy

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## Conduct applied research & thought leadership to advance best practices & participating in Global Compact events

- Practical Action was recognised in 2020 for outstanding collaboration in Latin America for its Brighter Futures project that will improve the education of hundreds of thousands of children in rural Peru: <https://practicalaction.org/news-media/2021/09/03/practical-action-recognised-for-outstanding-collaboration-in-latin-america/>
- Practical Action has **observer status for UNFCCC and UNCBD** global environmental agreements and is an active participant in the conference of parties (COP). In Dec 2019 Practical Action engaged in the COP25 in Madrid, with a delegation of seven staff including one each from Kenya, Nepal, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh with the latter two part of the official government delegations. In November 2021 Practical Action attended COP26 in Glasgow with a delegation of 14 staff from the UK, Peru, Zimbabwe and Nepal with the Nepal colleagues part of the official government delegation. Attending and speaking at several side events, we engaged with the negotiations directly via our staff on the Nepal delegation and indirectly as official observers to the process. We shared a policy brief based on lessons learned from the establishment of the Climate Technology Centre and Network to help shape the operationalisation of the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage. It was widely used by negotiators with the inputs captured in the final Glasgow Climate Pact. We released a report with University College London on the slow progress of the Warsaw International Mechanism, where we highlighted the disconnect between escalating climate impacts in developing countries not being reflected in the technical work of the negotiating bodies. In addition to this, Practical Action, with Oxfam International and Prakriti Resources Institute, hosted an official Blue Zone side event “How Vulnerable Countries are Responding to Loss and Damage and What Support They Need”. Key speakers included First Minister Nicola Sturgeon who announced the Scottish Government would be committing 2 million pounds to a dedicated loss and damage fund, and H.E. Ramsahay Prasad Yadav, Minister of Forests and Environment, Government of Nepal. Our technical report and these events contributed to the high profile that Loss and damage received at COP26 and has firmly secured loss and damage as an agenda item at the next COP.
- Indigenous ingenuity – tapping into ancestral water management knowledge <https://practicalaction.org/news-media/2021/01/22/indigenous-ingenuity-tapping-into-ancestral-water-management-knowledge/>
- Commitment to the Global Compact on Refugees pledged as chair of GPA at the Global Refugee Forum in Dec 2019
- In February 2020 Networking Event at the **World Urban Forum** showcasing Practical Action’s innovation in dealing with waste problems (both faecal sludge and household waste) in the Rohingya Refugee camp in Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh. The options for design were constrained by many factors including a lack of space, extreme weather events, steep slopes, and a prohibition on building permanent structures. But sometimes constraints lead to the best innovations, such as our decentralised sludge treatment plants

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## Provide support to corporate partners and other stakeholders as they implement sustainability initiatives that benefit local communities

- Practical Action is a long-standing member of the **Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance**, connected through the Zurich Foundation to the Zurich Insurance Group, a member of the UNGC since 2011. The Alliance is a multi-sectoral partnership focused on finding practical ways to support communities in developed and developing countries strengthen their resilience to flood risk. <https://floodresilience.net/zurich-flood-resilience-alliance/>. As a member of the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, Practical Action contributes to initiatives in Peru, Bolivia, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Nepal and Bangladesh to promote greater environmental responsibility (Principle 8): See the following links:
    - <https://floodresilience.net/resources/item/cost-benefit-analysis-of-flood-early-warning-system-in-the-karnali-river-basin-of-nepal/>
    - <https://floodresilience.net/blogs/from-grey-to-green-infrastructure-a-paradigm-shift-needed-to-deliver-on-climate-action/>
    - <https://floodresilience.net/blogs/solutions-providing-multiple-resilience-dividends-require-integrated-approach/>
    - and encourages the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies (Principle 9) <https://floodresilience.net/blogs/is-this-new-framework-what-is-needed-to-better-assess-nature-based-solutions-for-climate-change-adaptation/>
    - <https://floodresilience.net/blogs/eco-solutions-can-nature-solve-our-problems/>
  - As an implementing partner with **Poul due Jensen/Grundfos Foundation** in Kenya to work with pastoralist communities in north west Kenya to access drinking water for themselves and for their livestock. <https://www.pdjf.dk/en/program/water-for-pastoralist-communities-in-turkana/>
  - As partner of **IKEA Foundation** in Rwanda and Jordan, to facilitate energy for refugees and in Kenya helping young farmers earn an income they can rely on. For more information see: <https://practicalaction.org/our-work/projects/re4r/> and <https://ikeafoundation.org/story/power-to-the-people-who-need-it-most/>
  - Working in partnership with **RiverRecycle** and **DMDP/Danida** in Bangladesh to recycle single use plastic while improving the working conditions and providing dignified jobs for waste workers. <https://dmdp.dk/projects/increasing-employment-by-creating-value-from-plastic-waste-in-bangladesh/>
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## Support Global Compact principles, special initiatives and work streams

This is achieved through our four program *change ambitions*: Resilience that Protects, Energy that Transforms, Cities Fit for People and Farming that Works.

- Co-hosted in June 2021 the 15th International **Conference on Community-based Adaptation** to Climate Change. CBA15 was funded by the Climate Justice Resilience Fund, Irish Aid and IIED, and organised with co-hosts the Global Resilience Partnership, CARE, Practical Action and ICCCAD, in collaboration with the contributing partners Green Africa Youth Organisation, BRAC, the Huariou Commission, IUCN NL, African Centre for Trade and Development, GIZ and VSO, and sponsorship from EnGen. CBA15 provided a hub for people who are on a pathway to climate-resilient, low-emission and sustainable development and want to thrive in the face of climate change.
- More on our approach to agriculture can be found here: <https://practicalaction.org/news-media/2020/06/29/the-future-of-agriculture-its-not-what-you-might-expect/> and <https://practicalaction.org/news-media/2021/03/01/equipped-to-succeed-meet-the-women-farmers-turning-the-tables-on-climate-change-in-nepal/>
- Through the START network and the Asia Development Bank, raised the profile and shared important lessons on gender inclusion in emergencies, using the Missing Voices methodology to produce this primer: <https://startnetwork.org/resource/gender-and-drf-philippine-primer>

## Governance and policies that support the UNGC principles

Practical Action ensures its work, projects and programmes adhere to its ethical code of conduct and expects all employees, volunteers, consultants, suppliers/contractors, partners, beneficiaries, trustees, and any other parties who have a business relationship with any Practical Action offices to abide by it and other organisational policies, including Safeguarding, Financial Crime, Protecting Practical Action from Terrorist Financing; Dignity and Diversity at Work.

- Practical Action has a cycle of regular policy review, strengthening policies where gaps are identified and a comprehensive roll out and training programme in all key areas that are relevant to our ethical code of conduct. Specifically
  - Safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed annually, updated according to need, with compulsory annual training for all staff to update their skills and knowledge. Legal compliance for reporting incidents is strictly adhered to.
  - Financial policies and audit reviewed and updated regularly

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- The governance of the organisation, with quarterly meetings of trustees and their delegated committees, together with director level meetings, follow a cycle of strong management and oversight of the whole Practical Action group to ensure adherence to our ethical code of conduct.
- Our partnership engagement policy and procedures ensure we assess new partners and consider all relevant risks through a due diligence process before entering into a partnership
- Practical Action's Public and Private Engagements Policy: <https://practicalaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Public-and-Private-Engagements-Policy-FINAL-2.docx> is designed to ensure that such engagements are in keeping with our vision, mission and strategy and values of Practical Action and minimise risk to Practical Action. When assessing an organisation's suitability for partnership with Practical Action, there is **focus on assessing the organisation's record in the areas of: Environment** including environmental reporting, climate change, pollution and habitats; and **People** including human rights, workers' rights and supply chain management as well as their governance and financial suitability.
- Global Diversity and Dignity at Work policy, together with other key policies, can be found here: <https://practicalaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Global-Diversity-and-Dignity-at-Work-Policy-English-February-2020.pdf>

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## Impact and evidence

Everything we do at Practical Action is designed around the needs of the people we work with, and to contribute to changing the systems that hold them back. As the examples above show, we work in varied and connected ways to achieve impact. Details about our approach to measuring impact can be found here <https://practicalaction.org/news-media/2021/12/09/impact-under-spotlight-in-newly-launched-annual-report/>

This report is a summary of key highlights that illustrate Practical Action's commitment to the UNGC. More detailed information can be found in our most recent and previous Annual Reports <https://practicalaction.org/annual-report/>

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