



H A G E - C H A H I N E

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS
2021

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1. STATEMENT

Hage-Chahine Law Firm reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

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

We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Najib Hage-Chahine

Managing Partner



2. FIRM PROFILE

Hage-Chahine Law Firm provides first-rate comprehensive legal services in Lebanon and the Middle East since 1976.

The firm is known for handling high-profile cases and solving complex legal issues by combining deep academic insights with superior practical efficiency.

In 2019, the firm underwent restructuring with the aim of making it one of the leading law firms in the region.

We have adopted state of the art systems for the delivery of legal services and implemented a modern business model that adheres to the highest international standards while still taking into account the specificities of the Middle-East.

This new structure has allowed us to expand our practices and to service local and international clients by relying on a team of highly-skilled experts that have over 40 years of experience in corporate, real estate and transactional matters as well as mediation, arbitration and litigation.

With a unique approach and a superior team of lawyers, we offer strategic and effective representation to individual and corporate clients who operate in the Middle East and to international companies who do business in the region.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS

3.1 Principles

- a) Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- b) Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

3.2 Description of Actions

3.2.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm is committed to informed, proactive and unwavering support of human rights and freedoms.

3.2.2 Our lawyers adhere to the ethical standards of the legal profession without compromise. We are committed to working with transparency and independence in order to fulfill the role that has been bestowed upon us by the laws of our profession and by the Regulations of the Beirut Bar Association. We have an ethical duty to establish a client-lawyer relationship built on honesty, trust and respect. We only act in the best interests of our clients while keeping them informed about all matters related to their case and protecting the privacy of their information.

3.2.3 As part of our restructuring, we have undertaken to develop a Code of conduct that highlights our ethical approach.

3.2.4 We have taken the necessary measures to comply with the new rules on Data Protection that have been implemented by national laws and regional regulations. We

also assist our clients with protecting the privacy of their employees and their customers by relying on extensive experience to offer practical solutions that are tailored to current regulatory standards.

3.2.5 As part of our restructuring, we have developed a Privacy Policy that highlights our commitments (<https://www.hagechahine.com/privacy-policy>).

3.2.6 Our firm is committed to promoting accessibility and intelligibility of the rule law across the Middle-East. Our aim is to help raise awareness of regional reforms and practices in order to help increase transparency and legibility. As such, we leverage our academic background to provide legal updates, insights and scientific publications in order to inform our clients of the most recent legal developments in the MENA Region. We have adopted a new policy aimed at encouraging regular publications on the most pressing issues in the legal field and frequent participation in speaking engagements and conferences.

3.2.7 We refuse to do business with individuals, companies, governments or organizations identified as violators of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

3.3 Measurement of Outcomes

3.3.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm has never been the subject of investigations, legal cases, rulings, fines, or any other incidents related to human rights violations.

3.3.2 Our firm is engaged in a variety of *pro bono* activities that benefit our communities. We use our legal expertise to assist religious congregations and individual

clients with real estate disputes and criminal charges and have provided legal advice on civil and administrative liability.

3.3.3 Our firm has actively participated in raising awareness of Human Rights by teaching classes on Human Rights at Saint-Joseph University and speaking on panels dedicated to discussing the promotion of Human Rights in Lebanon.

3.3.4 Following the Beirut Blast of August 4, 2020, Hage-Chahine Law Firm joined a special working group created by the Beirut Bar Association tasked with handling over 1400 claims for damages. The special working group is handling hundreds of claims before the Judicial Council in what was dubbed the “Crime of the Century”. The special working group is handling submissions, hearings, interrogation of suspects and seizures against responsible parties for over 1400 plaintiffs. All members of the working are working on a pro bono basis and have waived their rights to any legal fees. The task of the working group is extremely complex as it leads to confrontations against a politically corrupt system that seems to be intent on covering up the reasons that led to the Beirut Blast instead of punishing the responsible parties.

4. LABOR

4.1 Principles

- a) Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- b) The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- c) The effective abolition of child labour; and

- d) The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

4.2 Description of Actions

4.2.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm is committed to supporting the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor. We condemn the use of unacceptable forms of child labor, and any kind of child exploitation worldwide.

4.2.2 Hage-Chahine Law Firm recognizes the right of all employees to join and form trade unions to protect their interests, as well as the right to a collective agreement where this is desired by our employees, without them having to fear any kind of intimidation.

4.2.3 Hage-Chahine Law Firm is committed to respecting and promoting the elimination of discrimination in every aspect of human resources, ranging from hiring to remuneration, equal employment opportunities to promotion decisions.

4.2.4 Hage-Chahine Law Firm is committed to actively promote diversity. Our commitment to diversity pervades all aspects of our practice. The firm provides an environment which allows everyone to develop and grow regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, maternity or pregnancy, race, religion or belief. Members of our staff come from different backgrounds and we aim to create an environment which focuses on the talent and the potential of each and every one of our people.

4.2.5 We have taken measures to eliminate discrimination from our recruitment process and we encourage diversity in legal education.

4.2.6 As part of our restructuring, we have undertaken to develop an internal Code of conduct and a clear career path based on meritocracy.

4.2.7 We have taken a set measures destined to reduce risks during the recent Covid-19 Pandemic and have implemented a remote working policy that allows our employees to work from home.

4.2.8 Our firm believes in helping young lawyers gain the education and practical experience they need to effectively serve their clients. Our senior attorneys teach at top universities in Lebanon and in France and are committed to providing guidance to young lawyers in and out of the classroom. We provide the young attorneys in our firm with the resources, access and opportunities they need to develop into highly-skilled and communicative advocates and advisors.

4.3 Measurement of Outcomes

4.3.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm has never been the subject of investigations, legal cases, rulings, fines, or any other labor-related incidents.

4.3.2 No individual under the age of 18 has ever been employed by our firm.

4.3.3 Our commitment to diversity is palpable through the composition of our team. Our lawyers have attended school in Lebanon, France and the United States, and they are fluent in Arabic, French and English.

5. ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Principles

- a) Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- b) Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- c) Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

5.2 Description of Actions

5.2.1 Although we do not directly face significant environmental risks in our own operations, we are committed to ensuring a sustainable and healthy working environment and have taken steps that aim to make the most efficient use of the resources that are used on a daily basis.

5.2.2 We have recently started moving towards being a paperless law firm and have implemented measures to reduce waste.

5.2.3 Our firm intends on investing in equipment that reduces energy consumption and aims to improve recycling each year to reduce waste and paper consumption.

5.2.4 Our firm has adopted recent measures that aim to ensure a safe environment during the current Covid-19 pandemic. We have implemented safety guidelines to reduce the risk of contamination and allowed our staff to work from home during the pandemic.

5.3 Measurement of Outcomes

5.3.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm has never been the subject of investigations, legal cases, rulings, fines, or any other incidents related to environmental issues.

5.3.2 As a law firm, we do not face the environmental challenges of businesses that operate in other sectors. However, we were able to significantly reduce our paper consumption by leveraging state of the art data management software and secure email communications.

6. ANTI-CORRUPTION

6.1 Principle

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

6.2 Description of Actions

6.2.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm is committed to fighting corruption and will not tolerate any form of corruption, including extortion or bribery.

6.2.2 Our lawyers adhere to the ethical standards of the legal profession without compromise.

6.2.3 As part of our restructuring, we have undertaken to develop an anti-bribery & corruption policy. We have integrated this policy in our Terms of Business.

6.3 Measurement of Outcomes

6.3.1 Hage-Chahine Law Firm has never been the subject of investigations, legal cases, rulings, fines, or any other incidents related to corruption or bribery.

6.3.2 Our firm did not hesitate to file a complaint before the Central Inspection Board for misconduct of a public officer.

6.3.3 Our firm did not hesitate to file a request to transfer a case to another tribunal for legitimate suspicion of a magistrate.