



# UN Global Compact Communication on Progress



This is our **Communication on Progress** in implementing the Ten Principles of the **United Nations Global Compact** and supporting broader UN goals.

We welcome feedback on its contents.

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# *A letter from our Managing Partner*

Dear stakeholders,

Vaar Advokat became a participant to the UN Global Compact a year ago, and we are now proud to present our first Communication on Progress.

I hereby confirm that Vaar 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 Communication on Progress, we describe what actions we have taken the past year to improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy and daily operations. Furthermore, we present the plans we have going forward to further implement these principles.

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

Kind regards,



Thor Beke,  
Managing Partner





# Human Rights

1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
2. Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses





# Human Rights

At Vaar, we hold ourselves to the highest standards of human rights. We believe that as lawyers, it is our duty to maintain a high set of ethical values and to act as an example. This inherently includes respecting and promoting human rights. We are compliant with the UDHR and ECHR as well as national legislation regarding human rights. Respecting and supporting human rights is something we incorporate into every aspect of our organization. We practice a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of discrimination, and this is explicitly stated in our internal guidelines. Being a law firm, our employees are our biggest asset. We believe that for us to succeed as a business, it is of vital importance that our employees feel valued, fulfilled and safe. We thus ensure that we always fulfil our responsibilities regarding the health and safety of our employees.

We recognize that as a legitimate actor, it is our responsibility to ensure compliance with human rights not only within our organization, but also further down the supply chain. As part of our initiative towards becoming more sustainable in all areas of our business, we have set a goal to implement a system for monitoring our suppliers' compliance with human rights.

As lawyers, we find it important to utilize our professional knowledge in ways which have a positive impact on society, and we therefore support the following organisations:

## Stiftelsen Sightsavers



Sightsavers works to promote health, education, employment, and social inclusion for people with disabilities in more than 30 countries in Africa and Asia. Vaar has assisted in establishing the organisation in Norway and is represented in the board. Vaar has also assisted the organisation with various legal needs at discounted prices.



## Stiftelsen Sykehusbarn

Stiftelsen Sykehusbarn works to ensure that all children in hospitals have happy experiences during their treatment period. Vaar is represented in the board and assists the organisation with various legal needs at discounted prices.



## Actions performed

- We are compliant with the UDHR and the ECHR
- We ensure that our employees are provided with a safe working place
- Our zero-tolerance of any form of discrimination is explicitly stated in our internal guidelines

## Plans going forward

- We aim to implement a system for monitoring our suppliers' compliance with human rights
- We will continue to conduct annual reviews regarding human rights





# Labour and working environment

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

4. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

5. The effective abolition of child labour; and

6. The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.





# Labour and working environment

As already mentioned, as a law firm our biggest asset is our employees. We deeply care for the wellbeing of our employees, and it is imperative that they feel satisfied in the workplace. We are compliant with the Norwegian labour law, and we always strive for the highest level of employer satisfaction.

We continuously encourage physical activity and the benefits it involves to our employees. We also want our employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance and thus encourage them to rest and take time off when needed. We have further implemented a flexible workweek to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

We place high emphasis on workplace inclusivity and culture. We regularly arrange social events and activities and have a zero-tolerance policy towards any kind of discrimination.

Our current gender-balance is 33% female and 66% male. We intend to minimize this gap in the coming years.

We further intend to implement an annual review of our working environment policy.



## Actions performed

- We are compliant with the Norwegian labour law
- We arrange social events and encourage our employees to stay physically active to ensure their physical and mental wellbeing
- We have implemented a flexible workweek with the possibility to work from home to ensure a healthy work-life balance

## Plans going forward

- Work towards minimizing the gender gap
- Achieve highest possible employee satisfaction and continue to conduct yearly reviews
- Continue to promote equality and inclusion within our company





# Environment

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





# Environment

As a modern and innovative law firm, we strive to do our best in contributing to the environment.

Our office lies in the heart of Oslo, which enables our employees to utilize public transport when traveling to the office. In fact, 88% of our employees use public transportation or walk to work.

We wish to reduce our environmental footprint. We encourage all employees to use environmentally-friendly options whenever possible. Furthermore, we sort all waste and use renewable energy in our office facilities. Moreover, we make sure to utilize all office space through renting out a section of the office.

We are a tech-oriented law firm and thus all our activities are cloud-based, which practically makes us a paper-free company. We order food each week based on the needs of the week and purchase items with a lower CO2 emission. We have further implemented a policy where all items procured for the office are required to be eco-friendly, wherever possible.

Furthermore, we are working on implementing a system for checking and monitoring our suppliers' environmental performance by choosing environmentally certified suppliers. We strive for 80% of our suppliers to have environmental certifications.



## Actions performed

- We have incorporated environmental policies in our quality assurance system
- We use renewable energy in our office facilities
- We sort waste in our office facilities
- We practice a minimal use of paper as our firm is cloud-based

## Plans going forward

- We aim to further reduce our environmental footprint
- We will implement a supplier policy where we intend to demand environmental certificates where relevant





# Anti- Corruption & Ethics

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





# Anti-Corruption & Ethics

As a law firm, ethics is a vital part of our profession. We always maintain the highest possible ethical standard, and all of our employees act in accordance with the Norwegian Lawyer Bar Association's guidelines on ethics. We thus always act in accordance with the professional and ethical standards of the legal profession. This includes aspects such as integrity, client loyalty, confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

We practice a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to corruption. Our quality assurance system contains strict routines and guidelines on how to act to avoid corruption and bribery and how to act in case situations would arise. Furthermore, we do not accept assignments which pose any risk of money laundering.

We practice strict routines when it comes to conflict checks, data privacy and internal control. All our anti-corruption and ethics routines are clearly mapped out in our quality assurance system.



## **Actions performed**

- All employees strictly adhere to the Norwegian Lawyer Bar Association's guidelines on ethics
- Quality assurance system contains strict routines on anti-corruption and ethics

## **Plans going forward**

- Conduct annual review of quality assurance system and anti-corruption routines
- Continue to educate our employees on anti-corruption and ethics





# vaar

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