

## **COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)**

**[Plan International Netherlands]**

### **Period covered by this Communication on Engagement**

From: February 2021

To: February 2023

### **Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Director, Plan International Netherlands**

08-03-2023

To our stakeholders,

I am pleased to confirm that Plan International Netherlands reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact for the period of February 2021 to February 2023. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

As Plan International's office in the Netherlands, we are aligned with Plan International's global strategy which focusses on strengthening the position of girls and young women. This is realised by working directly with different stakeholders such as communities, civil society organizations and governments making long-term improvements that are based on structural solutions. We recognize the importance the private sector plays in making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and therefore work with private sector partners across sectors. Our collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact is supporting our mission and we are dedicated to expanding on the work that is currently being done by the network.

Warm regards,

A blue ink signature of Garance Reus.

Garance Reus

Director, Plan International Netherlands

## Engagement Brief - Plan International, Netherlands

(Timeline: Feb '21 to Feb'23)

### Description of Actions:

At Plan International Netherlands there are a variety of projects and work that are contributing to the sustainability development goals (SDGs) while adhering to the principles of the UN Global Compact. These are:

- **General Lobby and Advocacy work:** Plan International Netherlands has been actively involved in influencing political parties and their election manifestos to include Sustainability Development Goals, due diligence legislation based on the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as an agenda item. Plan International Netherlands also participated in several consultation forums regarding the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation's new policy memorandum, advocating to include themes related to the rights of girls such as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Gender equality. In addition to this, through programs such as **She Leads** financed by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which champions the rights of girls and young women to speak out and make an impact, and the EU funded **Our Voices Our Choices**, that aims to improve compliance with international human rights policies and legislation by improving the lobbying skills and capacity of women and young people so they can make the responsible parties more accountable. Plan International Netherlands has endeavoured to contribute to the freedom of civil society actors, most notably (young) Women's Rights Organizations, advocating for their freedom of expression and association; countering shrinking civic space, and jointly with like-minded organisations, advocating for policy coherence (sustainable growth, tax justice, sustainable and fair trade).
- **Green Entrepreneurship Pilot project:** The aim of the project is to support and accelerate sustainable enterprises run by young people, particularly those run by young women. It started in July 2021 as a one-year project funded by our business partner Accenture. It was carried out in Colombia in conjunction with the organization Socialab. The entrepreneurs selected for the project were active in the areas of plastic-waste recycling, handicrafts, local and natural food products, vertical gardens and bicycle courier services. All selected entrepreneurs were affected by armed conflicts in the Chocó, Valle del Cauca and Nariño regions.
- **Strategy on Climate and Environment:** As part of Plan Netherlands' new strategy (2021 - 2025), we commit to adapt our programming, taking environmental sustainability and climate change into account in our thematic areas, engaging and partnering with expert organizations in these fields. We as an organization are also committed to reducing our carbon footprint within our office by improving the choices we make around our building, what we purchase (or don't purchase) and on our actions (for example by becoming a meat free office and reducing international air travel).
- **Skills and opportunities for Youth Economic Empowerment:** Plan International Netherlands in 2021 and 2022 worked with corporates and corporate foundations (such as Accenture, ACT Commodities, AkzoNobel, GSRD Foundation, TUI Care Foundation and ASML Foundation) and educational institutions around the world to support young people to obtain decent employment.

- **Partnership with Accenture and Plan International:** Plan International and Accenture have been working in partnership since 2010, focusing on youth economic empowerment and equipping youth, especially young women, with the skills they need to succeed in the future.  
To help close the digital gender gap, Accenture and Plan International collaborate to mark Girls in ICT Day. The aim of the Girls in ICT Day event is to unlock the digital power of girls by providing them with workshops that give girls hands-on experience with different IT applications. The event is set up to connect girls with female role models in the field of ICT, so they can explore if this sector is an option for them to study or work in. In 2020 we organized Girls in ICT Day online, due to the COVID-19 restrictions. In 2021 the restrictions were lifted and we organized Girls in ICT Day at 3 locations in the Netherlands, and similar events were organized amongst others in China and Finland. Plan International and Accenture have also been continuing and scaling the **YES! Digital Ecosystem platform** in Indonesia and the Philippines. In addition, both Accenture and Plan International place an increasing emphasis on environmental impact and sustainability, with a special focus on promoting youth employment and entrepreneurship in green sectors. The Green Entrepreneurship Pilot was one such initiative contributing to this goal.
- **TUI Academy:** To address the dual challenge of youth unemployment and (sexual) exploitation of children and youth, TUI Care Foundation and Plan International, along with other country-specific partners, set up the TUI Academy in the Dominican Republic and Thailand. The TUI Academy Thailand is co-financed by the Fund against Child Labour, commissioned by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- **Saksham:** The Saksham Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship program has been set up to bridge the skills gaps for youth lacking the skills required by the market. The COVID-19 pandemic has massively disrupted livelihood and employment across industries in India, particularly inflicting a heavy toll on young workers, curtailing gainful employment opportunities and undermining their career prospects. The project is supported by AkzoNobel. Besides a financial contribution, the Dutch multinational AkzoNobel also offers 300-500 project participants a training at the AkzoNobel Painting Academy in Delhi. A market-assessment and guidance by Plan International ensures that all jobs offered to youth are considered as decent jobs.

## Measurement of Outcomes

### Human Rights, Principles 1-2

- **Netherlands Lobby and Advocacy Work:** Plan International Netherlands' lobbying and advocacy efforts have borne many fruits. In the EU-Africa Summit, Plan International Netherlands and -France worked closely with Plan International's EU office to advocate for the inclusion of (young) women and marginalized groups as an overall priority and the final statement of the EU Africa Summit reflects this priority. After lobbying and advocacy efforts to pay more attention to menstrual health and hygiene, a motion for promoting menstrual health was adopted by the Dutch House of Representatives on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the lobbying efforts of over three years by Free a Girl, Defence for Children-ECPAT, ICCO and Plan International to combat sexual exploitation of children and youth resulted in the allocation of 5 million Euros until 2026 by the Dutch government. Finally, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation has included SRHR and gender inequality as key priority in the Dutch development cooperation policy.

### Labour, Principles 3-6

- **Plan International & Accenture:** The **YES!Digital Ecosystem** platform delivers engaging experiences for learners, effective tools for practitioners, and rich and meaningful data for monitoring and evaluation. This platform is Accenture and Plan International's joint project towards the development of digital tools for youth education in Indonesia and Philippines and it has reached 15,354 youth; which was 190% of the overall target (8100) on youth reached. The **Green Entrepreneurship Accelerator** project focused on supporting sustainable enterprises run by young people, particularly those run by young women. With the aid of a market analysis and design challenge, we mapped out the opportunities and needs of the entrepreneurs, after which we transformed challenges into solutions. Participants followed a four-month acceleration programme, which included coaching, mentoring, skills training, seed funding, technical assistance and networking. Links to potential clients were also established for each entrepreneur. An important aspect of this project was the improvement of participants' sustainability skills and making their companies more environmentally friendly. The most important takeaways of this project are:
  - identifying opportunities and obstacles for budding young, and green, entrepreneurs;
  - strengthening young people's entrepreneurial skills;
  - leveraging strategic partnerships and the power of innovation to enable young people to make the transition to a greener economy.

With experience gained in the project, Plan developed a roadmap on how to implement gender sensitive Green Entrepreneurship to scale up around the world.

- **TUI Academy:** Through the TUI Academy, 300 youth (aged between 17-29, at least 60% young women) are socially, economically empowered and gain access to decent work opportunities in tourism. Students receive vocational training as well as life skills training such as personal development, gender equality, leadership, teambuilding, and entrepreneurship skills. As a result, young people are able to protect themselves against exploitation and make conscious decisions about their future. Moreover, communities, the tourism sector and local authorities are engaged to raise awareness on how to recognize and report on cases of (sexual) exploitation and to advocate for a stronger legal environment to protect children and youth.
- **Saksham:** Through the Saksham Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship program, by the end of March 2025, 3900 vulnerable youth aged 18-29 (at least 60% young women) from target areas of Delhi and Rajasthan will have market-driven, quality and relevant skills and capabilities leading to sustained employment and self-employment.

#### **Environment, Principles 7-9**

- We have started to build expertise and a small portfolio of climate change related programming (e.g. Disaster Risk Reduction and Green Skills and Entrepreneurship) which we aim to expand in the coming years. The Green Entrepreneurship Accelerator program is an effort in this direction. The program made a promising start towards improvement of participants' sustainability skills and making their companies more environmentally friendly.