

Solidaridad

Solidaridad East and Central Africa

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COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)



Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa Expertise Centre

From: February 2021 **To:** February 2022

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

Statement of Commitment

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to declare Solidaridad Eastern and Central Africa Expertise Centre's (Solidaridad) commitment and support to the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

Solidaridad is an international solution-oriented civil society organization working to **transform markets** and **make them more sustainable** and **inclusive**. As an organization, we bring together supply chains and engage them in co-creation of innovative solutions to improve production in a way that ensures a transition to a sustainable and inclusive economy that maximizes the benefit for all. Importantly, we facilitate strengthening of local capacity in developing countries, the creation of an enabling environment for economies to thrive, and improve market access.

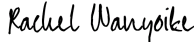
In East and Central Africa, we are working with more than 300,000 **producers** - *farmers, workers, and miners*, as well as public and private sector and development partners in the agriculture, industries and minerals value chains. Through our programming in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, we are fostering ownership, and adoption of sustainability solutions/practices to accelerate sustainable development.

In this first phase of publishing **Communication on Engagement (COE)**, we highlight our efforts and strides towards building *sustainable and inclusive* supply chains in line with United Nations Global Compact principles and UN Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 1 (**No Poverty**), SDGs 2: (**Zero Hunger**), SDG 5 (**Gender Equality**), SDG 8 (**Decent Work and Economic Growth**), SDG 10 (**Reduced Inequality**), SDG 12 (**Responsible Consumption and Production**) and SDG 13 (**Climate Action**).

By submitting this COE, we affirm our commitment to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our internal and external channels of communication to advance dialogue and actions that drive sustainable *change that matters*. We also welcome feedback and progressive dialogue on the contents of this COE.

Yours faithfully,

Rachel Wanyoike
Managing Director
Solidaridad East and Central Africa

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Part II. Solidaridad Overview

Solidaridad is an international solution-oriented civil society organization working to transform markets and make them more sustainable and inclusive. Our global network consists of eight regional expertise centres, specifically, Asia, East and Central Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America and South America.

Guided by an approach that gives prominence to our producers, we promote sustainable land-use, contribute to improved working conditions and livelihoods, ensure food and nutrition security, as well as strengthen dynamic producer organizations. We bring together supply chain players and engage them with innovative solutions to improve production while ensuring the transition to sustainable and inclusive *economies that maximize the benefits for all*.

We facilitate strengthening of local capacities in developing countries, support creation of enabling environments for economies to thrive, and improve market access. Through our practices, we encourage fair and transparent trade, uphold corporate social responsibility, and foster conscious commodity sourcing and consumption.

OUR OUTREACH IN EAST & CENTRAL AFRICA

Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, Solidaridad East and Central Africa has country offices and programmes in the Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda and outreaches in Burundi and Rwanda.

We support producer organizations working in various commodities to combat structural poverty, and promote sustainable agricultural supply chains in the following key commodities: coffee, tea, palm oil, cotton and textile, cocoa, livestock, leather, dairy, fruit and vegetables and artisanal gold and diamond mining.

ACCELERATING INNOVATION

Solidaridad is a key player in developing innovative solutions to bring sustainable production to speed and scale in our target commodities that are driving economic growth. Our sustainable production approaches are achieved by integrating **digital innovations** to reduce asymmetric information and enhance **transformative finance** to facilitate business growth. We also champion **inclusivity** to empower women and youth throughout the supply chain and promote approaches for **sustainable landscapes** that align food and business systems with natural resource management.

Part III. Description of Actions

Gender and Social Inclusivity: Solidaridad accelerates gender and social inclusivity interventions targeting households, communities, value chain actors, development partners and policymakers. To drive community (and sector) driven transformative gender approaches, we integrate evidence-based inclusivity approaches including **Start Awareness Support Action! (SASA!)** to raise awareness on, and bridge gaps contributing to existing inclusivity gaps. At the community level, we are building the capacity of, and activating local **champions** to advocate for meaningful participation and fair benefits for women, youth and marginalized groups in our target supply chains e.g. coffee, tea, cotton and textiles, horticulture and artisanal gold mining. We are also building the capacity of producer-led¹ organizations on Responsible Business Conduct to facilitate a transition to *sustainable* and *inclusive* business. Integrating transformative gender and social inclusion approaches in our programming is a key strategy for improving the position and bargaining power of [women](#), [youth](#) and marginalized groups. This is achieved by deploying high-impact interventions such as capacity building/training, promotion of micro-enterprises and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), women and youth leadership, community-driven advocacy, and lobbying for enabling policies among other interventions.

Production in Balance with Nature: As part of our [strategy](#) (2021-2025), we are promoting transformative approaches to improve sustainable production, productivity and profitability in *agricultural*, *industries* and *minerals* supply chains. To this end, we have and continue to equip producers with knowledge and skills to facilitate uptake of sustainable production practices including organic farming, regenerative farming practices, climate-smart farming and pollution reduction/waste management/waste recycling. To reduce the carbon footprint in the agriculture sector, Solidaridad has also co-designed a project that will pave the way for smallholder farmers to transition to regenerative farming practices - including agroforestry - and benefit from carbon markets. In all our work, our promoted sustainable production practices are aligned with our [vision](#) of *a world in which all we produce, and all we consume, can sustain us while respecting the planet, each other, and future generations.*

Food and Nutrition Security: Food and nutrition security is a critical focus of our sustainable livelihood interventions within the region. Solidaridad is implementing projects that are focused on improving the livelihoods (food and nutrition and income security) of smallholder farmers. Specifically, we are promoting **diversification** in rural economies to improve the productivity and resilience of local communities. Our efforts, centred on building producers' capacities, have been critical in embedding [on-farm](#) and **micro-enterprises** - diversification approaches - to improve incomes, and access to healthy and nutritious diets. In addition to improving food and nutrition security, diversification approaches have paved the way for thousands of [women](#) to have equal access to, and control of



¹ Farmers, workers and miners

land and income from agricultural produce.

Climate Change Dialogues: Solidaridad has been actively participating in sector [dialogues](#) to contribute to, and call for cooperation towards improving the resilience of rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2021, we participated in a dialogue under the theme [Accelerating Women's Leadership through Cross Regional Perspectives](#). Our rallying call to global and local stakeholders underscored the need to sustain and/or increase strategic investments in approaches that embed solutions in the hands of women as key drivers of *fair* and *inclusive* development. Ahead of COP27 in 2022, we also co-hosted a multi-stakeholder dialogue under the theme *Towards Tangible Climate Action: Bridging the Gap Between Planning and Action in Kenya*. The dialogue was part of our strategic efforts towards setting the agenda, and rallying action towards improving the resilience of communities in sub-Saharan Africa to climate change. We also participated in a high-level roundtable dialogue alongside public and private sector actors in Kenya to discuss locally-led climate actions, and rally stakeholders' support to galvanize short, medium and long-term climate action commitments.

Decent Work: In all its programming, Solidaridad emphasizes the need for creating employment opportunities and offering decent work. Our efforts are geared towards building the skills of youth, women and other workers to enable them to exploit opportunities in supply chains. Through our partnerships, we have been offering training on selected expertise areas including extension service provision, value addition, and recycling among others to enable more youth and women access employment opportunities. Through our advocacy work, we have also made notable strides towards reinforcing the commitment of producer organizations to uphold decent work principles including safeguarding workers' rights, safe working environment and implementation of minimum wage.

Market Access and Inclusion: Solidaridad is making strategic investments to improve market access for smallholder producers. We are achieving this through the provision of training on the requirements for international standards certification to producers (farmers, workers and miners) and processors with the goal of improving compliance. Similarly, we continue to facilitate business-to-business (B2B) engagements to link our local producers to regional and international markets. Importantly, Solidaridad is undertaking campaigns geared towards improving sustainable sourcing to ensure uptake of local produce and ensuring fair value distribution.

Part IV. Measurement of Outcomes

In 2022, we broadened our Gender Inclusive Smart Villages through training and collaboration with gender champions at community level to demystify gender inequalities and social norms that negatively impact women, youth, marginalized groups and value chains. In total, Solidaridad activated **500 gender champions and villages, reaching 6,749 supply chain actors**. To accelerate the transition to inclusive and sustainable business practices, 45 leaders from 14 farmer cooperatives received training on Responsible Business Conduct guided by the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact. By December 2022, 14 cooperatives had complied with the one third gender rule - electing women representatives to their boards.

A total of **311,088 producers - farmers, workers and miners** - reached with tailored training and capacity building interventions in the agriculture, minerals, and manufacturing sectors. In the leather, cotton and textiles, and coffee sectors, **53 processors** reported **reduced pollution** following training on pollution reduction, waste management and waste recycling. Processors also reported improved working conditions for **47,210 cotton and textile factory workers**.

In Kenya and Tanzania, more than 10 tea and coffee cooperatives received training on C.A.F.E Practice and Rainforest Alliance certification. In Tanzania, certified cooperatives were linked with coffee exporter Taylor Winch. Farmers in Tanzania produced and exported a total of 280.4 metric tons of **certified** coffee. In Kenya, 191,751 kgs of coffee were Rainforest certified representing 1,342,257 kgs of certified green coffee.