

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

*By email*

11 April 2023

Dear Secretary General,

**IIED Communication on Engagement to UN Global Compact - April 2023**

We are writing to confirm IIED's continued support and commitment to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact (UNGC), with respect to the fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. In the accompanying statement, we demonstrate IIED's commitment to responsible business and programme operations, embedded within our working practices. We reference our organisational strategy, policies and processes, that ensure IIED's work is framed around our own organisation's value-based guiding principles, as well as the Ten Principles of the UNGC.

IIED is a policy and action-research organisation, that undertakes research on global sustainable development issues, to protect the environment and local communities most at risk of the negative impacts of climate change. We specialise in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED has offices in London and Edinburgh, and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world's most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision-making arenas that affect them — from village councils to international conventions. IIED's mission is to build a fairer, more sustainable world, using evidence, action and influence, working in partnership with others.

This is IIED's Communication of Engagement to outline our adherence to the UN Global Compact, illustrated by our organisation's initiatives and activities to support the ten underlying principles.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T.C. Mitchell'.

**Dr Tom Mitchell**  
**Executive Director**

**International Institute for Environment and Development**

IIED, Third Floor, 235 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7LE, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 3463 7399 Fax: +44 (0) 20 3514 9055; Web: [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)  
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and in Scotland, OSCR Reg No. SC039864 and a company  
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WC1V 7LE, UK. VAT Reg. No. GB 440 4948 50

## IIED's Communication of Engagement

### **Organisational mission, business and programme operations, based on values-based principles**

IIED is an independent research policy organisation that aims to deliver positive change on a global scale. IIED's organisational strategy, [Make Change Happen](#), illustrates our commitment and mission to fight for a fairer future for those communities globally, who are most at-risk to the negative impacts of climate change. We work directly with established and new partners, for the greatest possible impact. We deliver original, rigorous research that helps to drive progress, support sustainable development and protect the environment. We identify local solutions that can work at scale and introduce these to global forums. [Partnership](#) working is at the heart of everything we do. Our projects make a tangible positive difference in the policies and practice that shape the everyday lives of marginalised women and men. IIED's work and programmes are based on our core values and beliefs of integrity, fairness, inclusiveness, independence, collaboration and partnership, equity and equality, accountability, transparency and sustainability.

As part of our organisational strategy, we seek to address five [global challenges](#):

- Reducing increasing inequality
- Tackling the climate crisis
- Protecting the natural world
- Reducing urban risk
- Supporting sustainable markets

Our ways of working have been tried and tested over decades, and we prioritise [research excellence](#), and we aim to tackle these five global challenges, in the following ways:

- Convening dialogues for transformative change
- Engaging practitioners and policy makers
- Providing evidence and ideas to transform policy and practice
- Empowering the excluded

We aim to strengthen our partnerships for change at three levels, across all programmes:

- Working from the bottom up to enhance sustainability and inclusion, in partnerships that mobilise action; we will amplify voices and represent realities that would otherwise be missing
- Shaping innovative ideas for tackling global challenges, together with experts and influencers who bring diverse perspectives to policy debates
- Pursuing yet greater excellence in our research through enhanced collaboration with outstanding institutions in the countries where we work.

IIED's research takes valuable local solutions to influential global forums, achieving impact at many levels. In a fractured world our network of partners brings together the missing voices and evidence that policymakers need to make the right decisions for people and planet. Building on a careful process of analysis and consultation, we have identified strengths to build on, areas where we can make a difference to tackling urgent and interconnected global challenges, and new contexts to apply our thinking. A comprehensive Learning and Impact Framework enables us to track the difference we

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make and apply lessons across all our work. From now to 2024, we will play our part to make change happen. We will help vulnerable communities achieve climate resilience and development, simultaneously pushing hard for global action to restrict planetary warming to 1.5°C. We will promote biodiversity alongside social justice, ensuring the women and men closest to the land, ocean and natural resources are heard. Our work towards healthier, more secure urban futures will emphasise community agency for truly 'local to global' outcomes. From big business to local entrepreneurs and public sector regulators, we will bring a breadth of vision and experience to bear on fairer markets. And underlying everything is our commitment to increasing equality — lived through how we work as well as the results we achieve.

### **Human Rights**

Human rights treaties typically establish obligations for states. But international instruments also affirm the responsibility of businesses to respect human rights, and provide guidance on the operational implications of this responsibility. There are strong links between human rights and sustainable development, and achieving the SDGs can advance the realisation of human rights. The close interrelation between human rights and the environment is also well established – including via the affirmation of the human right to a healthy environment, and procedural rights (e.g. access to information, public participation, access to justice) in environmental governance.

IIED promotes women and girls' rights to livelihoods, agency and security throughout our work. Women are central to a climate-resilient future; we will make the case for improving climate action at all levels by including women's voices and gendered experiences.

Our institutional gender awareness programme takes a holistic 'inside-out' approach: 'looking in' to the organisation, to build a diverse and fulfilled workforce that thrives in its career, family and personal life; 'looking out' to produce high quality research that supports gender equality and equity for sustainable development. Our Gender Equality Champions' Network ensure that we keep gender high on the organisational agenda, setting up a peer support group to advise staff how to strengthen gender awareness in research projects, and creating an easily accessible and comprehensive online hub housing relevant resources and information. Gender equality and equity are fundamental to IIED's mission. With our partners, we produce research that considers how gender intersects with factors such as age, ethnicity, class, caste, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity and wealth to inform strategies for sustainable development.

IIED's Gender Equality policy, formalises IIED's commitment to incorporate a gender-responsive approach in both our research and the way we operate as an institute. The policy is also more explicit on the need to look at how gender intersects with a person's background, age, race, ethnicity and religion when making sure that an intervention is equitably beneficial. The aspirations of this new policy, combined with the findings of the 'Gender equality ambition review', show that a range of skills and knowledge building is needed across the institute to put policy into practice and fulfil our ambition. This is a step forward from the 2016 manifesto as it clarifies how we will operationalise our key goals and commitments.

Promoting and supporting diversity and inclusion at IIED is about valuing everyone as an individual. While UK legislation – covering age, disability, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation among

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others – sets minimum standards, an effective diversity and inclusion strategy goes beyond legal compliance and adds value to an organisation, contributing to employee well-being and engagement. For a diverse workforce to have impact, it is vital to have an inclusive environment where everyone feels able to bring their ‘authentic’ self to work and have a feeling of belonging. IIED is developing an extensive programme of activities and initiatives under its Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging workstream, and already has a suite of policies to support equality in the workplace, e.g. Equal Opportunities policy.

### **Labour**

A determination to promote inclusion and justice runs through everything we do: informing how we work, where and with whom. IIED promotes the rights and voice of poor people in all our working contexts. Additionally, we promote women and girls’ rights to livelihoods, agency and security throughout our work. In keeping with its vision and values, IIED is committed to maintaining the highest degree of ethical conduct amongst all its staff and associated personnel. To help increase understanding, we have a Code of Conduct which details IIED’s expectations of the conduct of employees and associated personnel in key areas. Whilst recognising that local laws and cultures differ considerably from one country to another, IIED is an international non-governmental organisation and the Code of Conduct is developed from international and UN standards. We also have a comprehensive set of internal policies and procedures, which outlines our commitment and intention formally stated and supported by senior management – Procurement Policy, Research Ethics Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy, Fraud & Anti-Bribery Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Disciplinary Procedure. IIED is also a Living Wage Accredited employer.

The IIED union, affiliated and a member of a formal Trade Union, has a very good constructive relationship with management, ensuring real, positive change for all staff. Membership currently stands at over one third of all staff. We undertake a staff survey, every two years, to gather feedback and ensure that we take on staff members’ suggestions and constructive feedback seriously.

### **Environment**

At IIED, we prioritise ethical and responsible operations, and report on several key indications, e.g. measuring our carbon footprint and emissions. We have an Environmental Policy which outlines our approach and initiatives. We continue to maintain ISO14001-certified environmental management system, and IIED works with Carbon Offsets to Alleviate Poverty in offsetting our carbon footprint. We continue to work towards our target of 2.5% per year reduction target.

As our research and ideas support others to tread more lightly on this earth, we recognise that our own activities also need scrutiny. We are committed to minimising harmful emissions, waste and use of natural resources throughout our operations. Specifically, we aim to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 2.5% per head annually, consistent with globally recognised reduction commitments and our own ambitions for a safer world. To support continual improvement, we adhere to a strong Environmental Performance Policy and report annually on our carbon footprint — both are available on our website at Tracking our carbon emissions. We will continue to advance our environmental targets and practices by keeping them under review throughout this strategy period.

Our electricity supplier has green credentials – sourcing power from green initiatives

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The IIED-proposed approaches for climate resilience, equitable global governance and community adaptation to climate change have been useful for [reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and fostering conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks] (REDD+ expert, working to empower local communities to fight against climate change and local government to take positive actions.

### **Anti-corruption**

We ensure our work, projects and programmes adhere to our Research Quality, Ethics, Due Diligence and Procurement policies, including other organisational policies, such as Anti-bribery and Fraud policy, Environmental policy, Responsible Operations policy etc. We have robust policies and we train our staff on how to understand the substance of these policies and assess these risks. We also have clear Declaration of Interest and Whistle-blowing policies and we pass these requirements to our partners.

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