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COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 29th November 2021

To: 29th November 2023

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

Dear Secretary General,

The HALO Trust continues to be committed to the humanitarian principles and the ten human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption principles of the United Nations Global Compact. With the support of our policy team, HALO has continuously promoted these principles during engagement with multilateral forums. This is HALO's Communication on Engagement with the UN Global Compact.

HALO is an international charity with 11,380 staff working in 30 countries and territories to save lives and restore the livelihoods of people affected by conflict. HALO continually assesses our actions and is committed to the communities we serve, as seen from our annual reports and [website](#). Over 98% of HALO's global team are recruited from mine-affected communities. As a global employer, HALO is committed to ensuring all staff are treated fairly and paid a fair wage. HALO ensures that no forced labour is present in our supply chains. Among others, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, Anti-Fraud, and Environmental policies are in place.

Throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery, HALO has continued its life-saving work while supporting its staff maintain livelihoods. HALO pivoted our global demining capacity towards the COVID response in marginalised communities. Our organization supported nearly one million people across fifteen countries by providing ambulances, ensuring vital medical supplies reached remote areas, and delivering hygiene kits to refugee camps and food supplies to hungry families.

In recent years, HALO has increasingly linked our mine action work to the global drive to help mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and prevent irreversible biodiversity loss while promoting sustainable livelihoods. One notable example is our work in Angola, the fifth-largest carbon sink on the planet. Making the area safe from landmines will not only protect the region's vital biodiversity but also help Angola to develop conservation-based tourism and provide sustainable jobs. Moreover, HALO supports women to be part of the effort to make their country safe and become agents of change in their communities. More examples are explored in HALO's Description of Actions.

HALO is currently developing a strategy to further engage the UNGC and its members and looks forward to further interaction with the Global Compact Office in this process. This biennial Communication of Engagement is one of the ways that HALO can share our engagement with stakeholders worldwide. HALO will also share this on other communication channels and strive for continual improvement in all areas.

Yours sincerely,

Major General (Retd) J M Cowan CBE DSO
Chief Executive, The HALO Trust



Part II. Description of Actions

The HALO Trust participates in UN Global Compact events and has continuously contributed to the UN Global Compact principles and engaged with other Compact participants. As such, HALO has increasingly linked our mine action and conflict work to conservation, climate engagement and gender and diversity action. As part of the development of a new plan for engaging the UNGC, HALO is working to identify appropriate Global Compact initiatives and work streams to join.

Human Rights: Principles 1 and 2

As a leading actor in the field of Humanitarian Mine Action, HALO supports and respects the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights. The humanitarian principles are an intrinsic part of HALO's identity and activities aim to address human suffering borne from conflict wherever it is found solely on the basis of need, without favouring a side or other objectives. Moreover, HALO has developed country-specific Conflict Sensitivity Strategies to avoid negatively affecting conflict dynamics in a manner that could lead to human rights abuses. These strategies are currently implemented in Afghanistan, Ukraine, and will be further deployed in seven countries.

Labour: Principles 3, 4, 5 and 6

HALO has developed its national workforce under a project supported by a private foundation. It has planned targeted in-person training and the translation of online learning content from English to Spanish, Ukrainian and Arabic while developing the English skills of national staff in Angola and Mozambique. Besides ensuring high-quality mine action, these skills provide significant socioeconomic capital to vulnerable communities. This has been particularly noticeable in Angola.

HALO takes great pride in mainstreaming gender and diversity provisions. HALO empowers and trains its national and international female staff to ensure female leadership is present in our global headquarters and programs worldwide. Specific training courses for women, such as the 'Women in Weapons and Ammunitions Management (WAM)' course, have been developed to address the gender imbalance of the sector. HALO is committed to achieving a gender balance in our workforce, aiming for 50% employment of women across teams, with significant progress in Angola, with 56% female operational staff, and Laos, with 51% of female staff.

Case study: Empowerment of HALO female staff

Childcare and related expenses are a major obstacle to employment for women in most countries where HALO operates. HALO is currently running pilots in a range of programmes to support female employees. The support includes childcare stipends, baby boxes and school kits, and aims to retain female staff and empower women through professional growth. As result of the pilots, there was an increase in job satisfaction, as well as strengthened economic resilience, among female staff. Beyond allowing women to remain in or re-enter the workforce, providing the means to obtain childcare services also has the potential to increase the quality of care and education for children and create additional employment in the local childcare economy. To date, childcare support has been provided to mothers and single fathers in 11 countries: Abkhazia, Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kosovo, Nagorno Karabakh, Somalia, Somaliland, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe

HALO is part of the Gender and Diversity Working Group, a key group of stakeholders including many Global Compact participants that works to mainstream gender and diversity within the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and in the wider disarmament and mine action sector. HALO cochaired this group in 2022 and 2023 and actively engaged in various virtual and in-person events to share best practices and lessons learnt from practical mainstreaming of gender and diversity in mine action.

Environment: Principles 7,8 and 9

HALO's efforts to link mine action and conflict work to conservation and climate engagement have been institutionalised in Strategic Goal 3: 'Build Resilient and Prosperous Communities', where projects are developed with partners to improve livelihoods, economies, public health, and resilience. Under this goal, HALO is implementing a privately funded project building on the forestry expertise of local NGO partners to employ vulnerable youth to help the country meet its carbon reduction goals by replanting mangroves, disseminating best practices in advancing conservation in conflict-impacted communities, and developing information technologies to improve and measure conservation efforts.

HALO has actively engaged in the COP26 conference in Glasgow and held a dedicated event on Conflict, Climate and Conservation with various stakeholders to highlight how the global conflict emergency is related to the interconnected nature of climate change and biodiversity loss. HALO continuously stresses that conflict and climate change can no longer be viewed as independent threats with separate policy responses.

Anti-corruption: Principle 10

HALO deploys effective safeguards against corruption, in particular in its procurement process, as well as when ensuring due diligence when entering partnerships. Moreover, its WAM activities contribute to preventing corruption among security officials by promoting best practices for the monitoring and management of firearms and ammunition.



Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Over the period covered by this Communication on Engagement, The HALO Trust has achieved the milestone of over two million landmines destroyed and released over 200 million square meters of land previously contaminated by explosive ordnance in over 30 countries, directly benefiting over 630 thousand people, (of which 35% were women, 26% were girls, and 17% boys). The following provides qualitative and quantitative indicators that measure the outcomes of some of the activities described above. HALO will identify appropriate indicators for its developing plan for engaging the UNGC.

Partnerships

In line with the UN Global Compact's encouragement, HALO holds the strong belief that working in consortium helps advance the UN Global Compact. HALO has been working intensely with global partners to showcase the importance of combining mine action and environmental activities, which in turn encourages other actors to follow their lead. In particular, the UK-funded Global Mine Action Programme has led HALO to work with Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and local partners to release over 105 million square meters of land from 2018 to 2022, directly benefitting 330,000 people in 10 countries. Likewise, the Dutch-funded Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme has enabled cooperation between HALO and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), MAG, Humanity and Inclusion and GICHD in over 15 countries.

Partnerships are key to HALO's work, and many are aligned with the UNGC principles, in particular environmental matters, eliminating discrimination and building staff capacity. HALO currently has 68 partners, 22 of which are based in the countries where HALO works. To further enhance its partnerships, HALO will endeavour to join the UN Global Compact Local Network in some of the countries where we have operations. HALO has a working relationship with four local environmental organisations to develop joint conservation activities. HALO has partnered with Social Finance and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to explore Innovative Finance opportunities for the mine action sector.

Together with like-minded NGOs, HALO has formed a new Action and Conflict Alliance in the UK, addressing human rights and environmental issues. HALO also acts as the Secretariat of the newly formed All Party Parliamentary Group for Action on Conflict and Global Britain, which follows the objective of ensuring that the UK places Action on Conflict at the heart of its international strategy alongside climate change and COVID recovery.

Environment

To achieve HALO's mission to protect lives and restore the livelihoods of people affected by conflict, we must address the dynamics between conflict and environmental change that impact people's lives and livelihoods, including climate change and the destruction of ecosystems. HALO's environmental strategy aims to address the long-term impacts of conflict, enhance community resilience to environmental change, and reduce HALO's environmental footprint globally.

Case study: The HALO Trust Environmental Marker

'The HALO Trust Environmental Marker', has recently been developed to capture environmental risks, inform mitigation measures and highlight opportunities for environmental enhancement. The Environmental Marker has been deployed in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Colombia, Iraq and Somaliland and enables HALO to systematically assess the sensitivity of the crisis-affected environments in which we work, highlighting underlying risks and vulnerabilities. Sensitivity summaries inform the design and implementation of practical mitigation actions to reduce negative environmental impacts, as well as enhance environmental benefits.

Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding is crucial to HALO, which is why new employees have to complete two courses on this topic, one external, and one internal. The latter has been completed by 250 staff, including 81 learners that completed the course in its Ukrainian language version, and 25 that completed the Spanish language translation.

Empowerment of female staff

Women's empowerment in all areas of HALO's work is being championed continuously in the UK and internationally. HALO supported the recent publication [Women Managing Weapons](#) by UNIDIR and offers a range of training programs to its female staff. The pilot project that took place in Abkhazia, Afghanistan, Kosovo, NK, Somalia and Somaliland led to the following:

- Reported level of satisfaction with opportunities to participate in leadership roles – increased by an average of 25%
- Average percentage of income spent on childcare has decreased by 24.9% in Zimbabwe
- Without HALO's support, 37% of women would have resorted to borrowing money or provisions

Likewise, the ongoing Livelihoods Transition workshops taking place in Sri Lanka have seen the following participation figures:

- Advanced Spoken English (35 women and 65 men), Spoken Sinhala (20 women and 30 men)
- Women Empowerment course (100 women)
- Recognition of prior training for skilled roles (35 women and 65 men)
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) (136 women and 204 men)