

2023

UN Global Compact Initiative

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT 2023

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PERIOD COVERED BY THIS COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

This Communication on Engagement covers the period:

From: 01 January 2022

To: 31 December 2023

STATEMENT: COMMITMENT TO THE GLOBAL COMPACT INITIATIVE

Date: 11 January 2023

To our stakeholders:

Syria continues to experience the enduring aftermath of a crisis that has spanned over twelve years, resulting in extensive damage to the country's infrastructure, economy, and environment. This situation has significantly hindered the remaining population's access to essential services and resources. Even as Syria was slowly recuperating from the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely strained the already fragile healthcare system and heightened people's susceptibility to infections and complications, a catastrophic earthquake struck the country on February 6th. This earthquake claimed numerous lives, caused injuries to thousands, and led to extensive damage to buildings, roads, as well as water and electricity networks. Consequently, it further compounded the humanitarian needs of the populace.

The recent local, regional and international developments have resulted among other outcomes in diverting international attention away from Syria and eventually have exacerbated the country's economic collapse and its incapacity to address fundamental living requirements, triggering a fresh wave of Syrians seeking refuge in more prosperous destinations worldwide.

Operating within this challenging environment, the Syrian Enterprise & Business Centre remains committed to its mission of fostering socio-economic growth by supporting the business community. It does so while adhering strictly to the principles outlined in the United Nations Global Compact, with a specific emphasis during this reporting period on environmental conservation.

I take this opportunity to reassert our dedication to the United Nations Global Compact and present this report on our Communication on Engagement. This report illuminates our initiatives concerning environmental preservation and addressing global warming. We pledge to share this information with our stakeholders through our primary communication channels and invite feedback on its contents.

Sincerely yours,

Noha Chuck
CEO

ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN THE REPORTING PERIOD

Relevant activities of SEBC during this reporting period included the completion of the "Syria: Enabling Activities for Kigali Amendment" project and the continuation of the "HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (Stage 1, First Tranche) for Syria" project, in addition to SEBC moving to new location and changing to solar energy as a main power scheme for its HQ office.

THE ENVIRONMENT

SYRIA: ENABLING ACTIVITIES FOR KIGALI AMENDMENT

SEBC completed the implementation of the UNEP-funded project titled "Syria: Enabling Activities for Kigali Amendment" which aimed to assist Syria in meeting its obligations under the Kigali Amendment, focusing on reducing hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) emissions. The project comprised three components:

- Facilitating early ratification of the Kigali Amendment by enhancing understanding and preparing the legislative basis for ratification.
- Providing capacity-building and training for sectors using HFC alternatives to facilitate the phase-down of HFCs.
- Developing a regulatory framework for import/export licensing of HFCs and their alternatives.

The project involved collecting data from national stakeholders, conducting consultation workshops, preparing a country assessment report for Kigali Amendment implementation, and finalizing the country report based on feedback from stakeholders and UNEP. Its main goal was to support Syria in fulfilling its obligations under the Kigali Amendment and reducing HFC emissions.

HCFC PHASE-OUT MANAGEMENT PLAN (STAGE 1, FIRST TRANCHE) FOR SYRIA

SEBC is still executing the "HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (Stage 1, First Tranche) for Syria." The project aims to meet the Montreal Protocol's 2020 target by reducing harmful substances by 35%. The project's key activities include updating national regulations on Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), conducting training workshops for Customs Officers and servicing technicians, revising training curricula to incorporate safer refrigerant handling methods, certifying 600 technicians, reinforcing quota and licensing systems,

and facilitating the use of low Global Warming Potential (GWP) alternatives. Signed in June 2021, the project is in its final stages but has garnered strong support and collaboration from both government and private entities, showing promising momentum.

A NEW ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY HQ

SEBC has made a strategic decision to relocate its headquarters a few buildings away from its previous location. Realised in March 2023, this move was primarily driven by the organization's current space requirements and a concerted effort to streamline expenses by eliminating unnecessary costs. Notably, the relocation was accompanied by a deliberate shift towards adopting sustainable energy sources, marking a departure from traditional energy methods.

To embrace this eco-friendly approach, the new headquarters of SEBC has been equipped with a robust solar energy system, effectively replacing the reliance on diesel-powered generators for electricity. This transition aligns with the organisation's commitment to sustainability, demonstrating a dedication to reducing its carbon footprint and embracing cleaner energy alternatives. As a result, over 80% of SEBC's operational hours now depend on electricity generated through solar power, reflecting a significant shift towards renewable energy usage.

Furthermore, SEBC is on the verge of completing its ambitious initiative to fully automate its document and record archives. This progressive step is part of the organization's broader mission to drastically reduce paper consumption by an impressive 95%. By embracing digital archiving solutions, SEBC aims to minimize its environmental impact while maximizing efficiency in data management.

The concerted efforts made by SEBC, encompassing both the adoption of solar power and the transition towards digital archiving, underscore the organisation's commitment to sustainability and technological innovation. These initiatives not only position SEBC as a forward-thinking entity but also contribute significantly to reducing its environmental footprint and promoting a more efficient, eco-conscious operational framework.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOME

Based on the above, the following outcomes were realised:

- a) The Kigali Amendment was ratified by the Syrian Government
- b) A new licensing system is now in place to regulate import/export of HFC and HFC's alternatives and its equipment, which shall significantly contribute to reducing global warming hazards associated with the use of ODS
- c) SEBC has made a significant shift towards renewable energy usage

ANNEXES

LETTER PUBLISHED ON SEBC WEBSITE

**10 principles of UN Global Compact Initiative**

The UN Global Compact asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption.

SEBC would hereby like to take this opportunity to encourage all partners to contribute to the United Nations Global Compact Initiative by committing to its 10 principles as follows:

Human Rights

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

Labour

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

- **Principle 4:** the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- **Principle 5:** the effective abolition of child labour; and
- **Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

- **Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- **Principle 8:** undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- **Principle 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-Corruption

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

For further information, guidance material, please visit the Global Compact website: www.unglobalcompact.org