

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF)



Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: J a n u a r y 2 0 2 3 To: May 2024

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

Please use the box below to include the statement of continued support signed by your organization's Chief Executive or equivalent.

Statement of Continued Support

2nd April 2024

To our stakeholders:

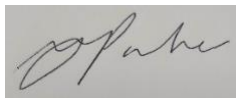
I am pleased to confirm that the Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF) reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact.

This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that TRF has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles.

We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders and partners using our primary TRF channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Natasha Parker", on a light grey rectangular background.

Natasha Parker
Global Director of Business Development
Thomson Reuters Foundation

Part II. Description of Actions

Please use the box below to describe the actions your organization has taken in support of the Global Compact. It is strongly recommended that the actions taken are related to one or more of the specific activities suggested. *Please refer to the complete list of suggested activities for your type of organization found [here](#).*

Overview - Thomson Reuters Foundation

We are an independent charity, registered in the UK and the USA. We work to advance media freedom, foster more inclusive economies, and promote human rights. Through news, media development, free legal assistance and convening initiatives, we combine our unique services to drive systemic change.

We believe that societies around the world should be free, fair, and informed.

We use the combined power of journalism and the law to build global awareness of critical issues faced by humanity, inspire collective leadership, and help shape a prosperous world where no one is left behind.

Join and/or support special initiatives and work streams – Responsible Business

The development of the global economy is entrenching inequalities. According to Oxfam, since the beginning of the decade, the wealth of the world's five richest billionaires has more than doubled, while 60% of humanity has grown poorer. Fifty million people – including children – are living in conditions of modern slavery. The global cost-of-living and energy crises, widespread social unrest and geopolitical tensions are all converging to shape a turbulent future.

Meanwhile, the unprecedented development of technologies and artificial intelligence brings with it concerns about privacy, discrimination, and unequal access to the digital world. The growing pressure of the climate emergency is playing out across the world. Governments and the private sector are being pushed to act on rising temperatures, the loss of biodiversity and transitioning away from fossil fuels. In response to this global crisis, the roles and responsibilities of business are changing.

There is growing momentum behind environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting and regulation, with investors and the public demanding greater transparency about corporate impact on people and the planet. Building inclusive and sustainable economies that can withstand these interlinked challenges requires collaboration and collective action. We bring together those working in the field of ESG – businesses, investors, and civil society organisations – to improve their understanding and bolster their ability to take action to shape more responsible business practices.

Through accurate news reporting, specialist training, comprehensive legal research and by facilitating pro bono legal support, we strengthen the capabilities of key stakeholders and help them to shape economies that create opportunities for all.

Engaging Local Networks – S in ESG Training

Training key stakeholders in the human rights component of ESG reporting and disclosure for companies is shifting from a voluntary option to a mandatory requirement. However, there are challenges and a general sense of hesitancy on reporting within the social component of this framework, impeding the progress on ESG.

Following our work to bring together key stakeholders on the importance of reporting on the 'S' in ESG over the past few years, we collaborated with partners and used our TrustLaw network to develop a pilot training programme in : 'S in ESG Fast Track - Human Rights Due Diligence: Compliance, Disclosure, Success'. The three-day training course was designed to equip sustainability professionals, lawyers, and finance specialists to better understand disclosure and transparency requirements specifically related to the 'S' in ESG.

In 2023, twenty-seven participants from 15 industries across the globe took part in the pilot in London and remotely. The course involved expert-led sessions, practical case studies and cross-sector collaboration, all

designed to support professionals to embed human rights considerations in corporate responsibility reporting. The training was significantly oversubscribed, demonstrating the growing need to empower ESG leaders across all sectors.

In 2024, TRF launched the next phase of the training programme, with significant updates from the 2023 pilot, including designing a shorter and more interactive course, combining both knowledge and practical application. TRF will be launching its first international version of the training as part of a funded programme both in Kenya and Ghana.

Engage companies in Global Compact-related issues - Dialogue, training and legal resources to address modern slavery

Since 2020, the Foundation has worked to promote effective responses to forced labour, building on our long history of work in this field. In line with the objectives of a specific funded programme, we have brought together stakeholders in Colombia, India, Malaysia, and Thailand to create spaces for dialogue on these issues, provide access to free legal support, and empower local journalists over the last four years.

In 2023, we brought together over 200 representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs) and businesses of all sizes through 11 events in the four focus countries to discuss issues that are critical to the advancement of the SDGs through responsible business, in particular implementing effective grievance mechanisms, and providing access to remedy emerged as topics of interest.

Through these activities we have also sought to build relationships with the UNGC country representatives and have opened attendance to the local networks. These events brought local expertise, including from TrustLaw's network, and identified opportunities for collaboration on issues such as child labour, forced labour and ethical recruitment.

We also provided national CSOs and social enterprises with access to TrustLaw's pro bono support to build capacity on policy engagement, legal and campaign work. Through TrustLaw, we supported CSOs by connecting them to targeted legal research on labour rights. This research covered issues including trial laws around human trafficking and sexual exploitation to inform public interest litigation cases, the legal rights and protections of migrant and national domestic workers, and comparative legal research on modern slavery in nine countries in Southeast Asia.

The project has built understanding of modern slavery and forced labour by training more than 50 journalists in the four countries on how to report on these issues. As a result, drawing on our expansive network, journalists and CSOs are collaborating to report on labour rights abuses.

In 2024, we will be commencing phase two of this programme, taking lessons from the first phase and now specifically addressing responsible business practices.

Join and/or propose partnership projects on corporate sustainability – Just Transition

Shifting to a low-carbon economy requires a "just transition", where those most vulnerable and at risk are not left behind in the substantial reforms that will be needed. Through our journalism and network-building work, we have clearly demonstrated how just transition is moving into the mainstream narrative, at least at the level of climate policy. However, it is vital that key stakeholders – the workforce, business, and the public – are at the heart of these conversations. One of our funded programmes explores the nexus between the climate crisis and inequality and its effects on labour and workers' rights.

A key component of this programme is to develop well-informed discussions between local and international media, decision-makers, and the public. We provide context, analysis, and investigative reporting, as well as giving voice to CSOs, experts, workers and affected communities. We bring together key stakeholders in the just transition space to contribute to thought-provoking, transparent, international dialogue.

Journalists from our award-winning journalism platform, Context, led workshops on the development of reskilling initiatives, unlocking financing for just transition, and the impact of the energy transition on women workers. The programme has facilitated and amplified Context's reporting on key themes around climate change, inequality, and labour rights. For example, TERI invited Context's Just Transition Editor to speak at

COP28 on the green transition for industries. By sharing emerging findings from the editorial work supported by this programme, we were part of informing the conversation on just transition at an international level.

This year, we have also supported external journalists and CSOs who are working on climate issues in India. In 2024, we will follow a similar model of convening local stakeholders, building partnerships and training journalists and CSOs both in Bangladesh and in Brazil.

In-depth reporting linked to Responsible Business / Inclusive Economies

The global economy all too often works for the few rather than the many. Reporting from the ground in more than 90 countries, our editorial team continued to shine a light on issues around decent work for all. In the context of the climate crisis, our coverage also explored the opportunities and challenges of the global shift towards greener economies, highlighting the need for a just transition.

Highlights in 2023 included:

Green jobs for a just transition: The transition to a greener global economy brings immense opportunities, with the potential to create tens of millions of sustainable jobs. Our green jobs series put the spotlight on the wide range of roles that are emerging around the globe, not only in high-visibility green sectors such as solar and wind power, but also across a range of other industries, from fashion design to farming, mechanics and maintenance to law and banking. The series also highlighted the current green skills shortage.

Why the fastest warming place on earth can't quit coal: The Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard is on the frontlines of climate change, as the fastest-warming place on earth. It is also home to the world's northernmost coal mine and a coal-fired power plant. Both are earmarked for closure. Albert Han's video report explored the challenges of Svalbard's efforts to transition to renewables, highlighting how moving away from coal has been a difficult and drawn-out process that involves economic, community, energy security and geopolitical concerns.

Digital connections but few protections for domestic workers: Around three quarters of domestic workers worldwide are women, and over 80% are employed informally, with no labour protections. With the explosion of apps that offer to connect cleaners and clients, Context's Kim Harrisberg and Bukola Adebayo and freelance journalist Menna Farouk explored how women across Africa are joining digital gig platforms in droves, despite low pay and few safety nets.

Striking for safe conditions in extreme heat: Rising temperatures mean more dangerous working conditions, especially among those who spend a lot of time outside or on the road. Heat deaths and injuries at work are mounting, particularly among lower paid workers, and safety regulations are struggling to catch up. As July 2023 registered the hottest month on record across the globe, this film by Avi Asher-Schapiro, Ashley Jiang and Jacob Templin explored why workers across a range of industries in the US, including a group of Amazon delivery drivers, have been striking to demand safer working conditions.

Legal Research

Legal research is a key part of creating inclusive economies. By improving understanding of the legal landscape in different jurisdictions, our research explores the use of law in creating better conditions for workers.

In 2023, TrustLaw worked on 36 research projects focused on inclusive economies. We collaborated with Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (ELA), a non-profit that promotes women's human rights and gender equality through the law and public policies. We produced analysis of the existing regulatory framework on violence and harassment against women in the world of work in 11 Latin American countries to build empirical evidence with comparative law and support ELA's community regional advocacy strategy.

The legal advice facilitated by TrustLaw is also helping civil society organisations to drive business models and work practices that are inclusive and sustainable. For instance, we facilitated pro bono legal support for Disability:IN to develop a memorandum of existing legal frameworks requiring the disclosure of board diversity information, including disability metrics.

Looking at 10 jurisdictions – Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, England, and Wales – this work informed efforts to increase the representation of people with disabilities on corporate boards of directors. Additionally, we connected two NGOs in Nigeria, Children and Young People Living for Peace and The International Society for Peace and Safety. This led to a partnership in jointly developing and distributing a handbook on Nigerian labour law. The handbook is now being used to inform both employers and employees of their rights.

We also facilitated pro bono legal advice for Alterfin, a non-profit driving financial inclusion for marginalised communities in developing countries. The guidance helped them to navigate the legal landscape as they scale their investments in microfinance institutions, furthering their mission to create positive social and economic change. Building an understanding of rights for informal traders.

We published a 'Know the Law' guide on the rights and duties of informal traders in Ghana, in partnership with Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, a US-based women's economic justice organisation. This guide aims to inform informal workers in Accra about their rights and duties when working in public spaces, and how to defend themselves if these rights are curtailed, for example if they are evicted or moved on by law enforcement authorities.

Provide commentary to companies on Communications on Progress - The Workforce Disclosure Initiative (WDI)

In February 2024 TRF acquired the skills, expertise, data, and resources of [The Workforce Disclosure Initiative \(WDI\)](#). WDI aims to improve corporate transparency and accountability on workforce issues, providing companies and investors with comprehensive and comparable data, helping to increase the provision of good jobs worldwide.

WDI's investor coalition is made up of 50+ institutions, with \$7 trillion in assets under management. Through an annual survey and engagement programme they have a proven track record in generating new data on workforce practices, which signatories can integrate into their investment analysis, and practical insights on how to address pressing workforce issues.

At a time of rapid change in the labour market, stark social and economic inequalities and growing distrust in the corporate sector, investors, regulators, and consumers alike are calling for greater transparency. Workforce disclosure – or reporting – offers companies a way to hold a mirror to their own activities, ensure their policies and practices are aligned with international standards, and demonstrate publicly that their workforce practices are delivering for both the company and its workers.

Trust Conference

We convene experts to build global awareness of the critical issues linked to our areas of work and inspire collective leadership.

In 2023, Trust Conference was attended by more than 600 delegates spanning 46 countries. As a powerful convening of key players representing the scope of our work, it was an opportunity to platform expertise and insights to a diverse audience of NGOs, media, data and tech organisations, government bodies, social enterprises, and representatives from the legal and corporate sector. As ever, it was a moment to reflect on the sheer breadth of our work, and how dramatically the organisation has evolved over the past few years.

Reporting on human rights issues in global supply chains was the subject of a panel at Trust Conference 2023. Speakers representing business, government, and academic research discussed the challenges of making mandatory requirements effective in all markets and the importance of meeting the needs of businesses, communities, and workers across global supply chains.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Please use the box below to include the most relevant qualitative and/or quantitative indicators to measure the outcome of the activities described in Part II above.

	2022	2023
Number of research reports	66	84
Number of organisations receiving legal support *	529	422
Total value of free legal assistance	\$18million	\$29million
Number of convenings delivered	128	209***
Number of convening participants**	1581	1379
Total number of stories and op-eds, including video output on YouTube and other social media	853	934

*In 2023 we continued to consolidate our work under the Foundation's three strategic pillars. As a result, we are shifting away from growth in numbers and towards meaningful engagement with pro bono connections.

** Our activities continue to shift away from the traditional training model towards working groups and roundtables. These convenings typically have fewer attendees than other models but allow for greater engagement.

*** This includes 10 convenings that we hosted with businesses, which were collectively attended by about 350 attendees, some of which we know anecdotally to be UNGC members, however, UNGC membership is not a specific metric that we track in our networks.