
Search For Common Ground's Communication on Engagement

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 01/01/2021

To: 31/12/2023

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive

5/3/2024

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Search For Common Ground reaffirms its support in the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption. Please see below our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions that Search has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for a non-governmental organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely,



Shamil Idriss

Chief Executive Officer

Part II. Description of Actions

Search for Common Ground (Search) is an international organization working to transform the way the world deals with conflict. Since 1982, we have led programs around the world to help societies move away from adversarial approaches to dealing with differences and towards collaborative solutions.

Search's work is guided and supported by the Common Ground Approach, a methodology for addressing conflicts in a way that moves beyond "win-lose", "us-them" thinking and helps identify practical, collaborative solutions to shared problems. The Common Ground Approach recognises that changes must take place across the following five areas: the perception of the self, the perception of "the other", the perception of the issues, the transformation of the relationship, and the transformation of the process. By applying the Common Ground Approach, Search practically supports the UN Global Compact and its principles by working alongside communities, companies, and public authorities to mitigate conflicts and address root causes of instability.

As such, Search supports the Global Compact mainly through in-country programming and global initiatives. An overview of such activities is provided below.

In-Country Programming

Democratic Republic of Congo

- Since June 2022, Search for Common Ground (Search), with funding from USAID, has been implementing a project titled "*Support for the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) adherence to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights*". This project strengthens Search's involvement in extractive sector governance in collaboration with Congolese civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the extractive sector, through advocacy activities at national and international levels, as well as the organization of several mobilization activities for compliance with the Voluntary Principles by the private sector, the government and CSOs.
- Search has also been engaged in empowering indigenous environmental defenders in the DRC. Since 2023, Search has been implementing the "Environ-matters! Promoting environmental defenders' leadership in inclusive natural resource management in DRC" project, funded by the US Department of State, which targets indigenous environmental defenders based in and around Kahuzi-Biega Park in South Kivu, an area marked by interethnic tensions and at risk of severe environmental degradation due to demographic pressure, limited availability of land, increasing industrial exploitation, and conservative conservation practices. Crucially,

the project also engages key actors within the Congolese government, as well as private sector actors and others with vested interests in the area. By providing a combination of capacity building, financial support, coalition- and network-building opportunities, and entry points for advocacy and dialogue with other stakeholders, Search supports local indigenous activists and environmental organizations to safely and meaningfully participate in environmental protection and sustainable natural resource management (NRM) at the local, national and international levels.

Nigeria

- In the "Contributing to the Mitigation of Conflict over Natural Resources between Farmers and Herders in Adamawa State (COMITAS)" project, funded by the EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, (December 2020 - June 2022), Search collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to build trust and strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms across five local government areas (LGAs) in Adamawa State. This initiative included establishing community dialogues, training media practitioners, and providing technical support for local authorities on sustainable resource management.
- In the "Economic and Social Inclusion Recovery Project for the Lake Chad Basin" project, funded by the EU and Agence Française de Développement (December 2017 - June 2022), Search promoted economic recovery and social cohesion in most climate change-impacted areas of the Lake Chad Basin, with a focus on three LGAs in Borno state. Activities included dialogues for marginalized groups (youth, women, minorities); citizen forums with local leaders; sports competitions and cultural events to boost social cohesion; individual and group psychosocial support sessions; economic integration activities for youth; and capacity building for local authorities on sustainable resource management.

Global Initiatives

Leadership role in the Voluntary Principles Initiative

- The [Voluntary Principles Initiative](#) is a multi-stakeholder initiative very much aligned with the mission of the UN Global Compact and bringing together governments, companies, and NGOs to promote implementation of the [Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#). Search is a founding member of the Voluntary Principles Initiative and, since 2020, serves as the chair of its NGO Pillar and a member of its Steering Committee. Search has participated actively in the Voluntary Principles Initiative member verification review processes and other accountability and expertise sharing initiatives.

Joining NGO and private sector initiatives to promote inclusive security approaches

- Since November 2023, Search for Common Ground (Search), in consortium with Stakeholders Democratic Network (SDN), Foundation for Partnership Initiative in The

Niger-Delta (PIND) and Academic Associates Peace Works (AAPW), has been implementing an 18-month action with the overall goal of fostering inclusive community security approaches to address the systemic drivers of violence and criminality in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States. The project is dedicated to addressing the intricate challenges of crime and violence in the Niger Delta region, a significant oil and gas producing area, while upholding human rights as a central tenet. Through targeted interventions and capacity-building initiatives, the project not only seeks to address immediate security concerns but also strives to rectify the underlying socio-economic disparities that perpetuate cycles of conflict and instability. By promoting dialogue, facilitating partnerships, and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, the consortium aims to forge pathways toward sustainable peace and development in Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States, guided by a steadfast commitment to human rights principles.

Advocacy Activities and Engagement with Security Forces

- Search implements the Voluntary Principles by directly engaging with public security forces in contexts where they are involved in conflicts with civilian communities related to business practices like mining. This is exemplified in the before-mentioned "Support for the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) adherence to the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights" project, which spanned both national and international arenas, with significant engagement in VPs working group meetings and the United Nations Forum on "Business and Human Rights" in Geneva. The Matadi National Forum, held on International Human Rights Day in December, served as a significant platform for addressing security and human rights issues. Concurrently, data collection for the White Paper played a crucial role, coinciding with the drafting campaign for the interministerial decree.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

Search's activities over the last two years have produced substantial outcomes furthering the mission of the Global Compact and its principles. An outline of some of these outcomes is provided below.

- In the DRC, Search collaborated closely with the Congolese government and its private sector, contributing substantially to the acceptance of the DRC's candidacy as a country committed to the Voluntary Principles Initiative.
- At the same time, Search conducted a study in the provinces of Haut Katanga, Sud Kivu, and Kongo Central - key in the mining and hydrocarbon sectors in the DRC - to identify best practices and appropriate policies for successful implementation of the Voluntary Principles. The survey targeted government departments, extractive companies and their dependents, communities and civil society organizations/trade

unions. **A total of 197 people were reached, including 31 people by interview and 166 people by 18 focus group discussions.** The results of the study were then shared with the tripartite players (government - private sector - civil society) involved in the Voluntary Principles, so as to contribute significantly to improving the policies framing the Initiative and the successful implementation of VPs in the DRC.

- In Nigeria, Search's COMITAS project led to a significant decrease of conflict in the areas where it operated. According to 160 respondents asked about the impact of the COMITAS project on the levels of violence linked to natural resources in their community, **almost 80% agreed or strongly agreed that the project had led to a significant decrease of violence in their areas** - and, reversely, almost 80% of respondents agreed that the project had not led to an increase in conflict.