

**CONCERN**  
worldwide

ENDING  
EXTREME POVERTY  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES

# Communication of Engagement (COE) to the United Nations Global Compact

1<sup>st</sup> June 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024



Students at a girl's secondary school in Marsabit, take part in a science experiment. This school runs a STEM programme supported through funding by Datatec. Kenya Photo: Shaloam Strooper / Concern Worldwide

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## Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive

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H.E. António Guterres  
Secretary – General  
United Nations  
New York  
USA

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

### **Statement of continued support:**

Concern Worldwide (hereafter “Concern”) in Ireland and its subsidiaries in the US and the UK continue to support the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Concern recognises that a key requirement for participation in the Global Compact is the submission of a Communication on Engagement (CoE) that describes our organisation’s efforts to support the implementation of the ten principles and to engage with the Global Compact.

Concern has been a member of the UN Global Compact since May 2016. Over the past 2 years, Concern has supported sustainable and socially responsible actions and engaged the private sector in supporting societal change. We support public accountability and transparency, and therefore have included a report on progress according to the Global Compact CoE policy.

Below is a description of our actions and measured progress to support the implementation of the ten principles and to engage with the Global Compact between June 2022 and May 2024. Concern welcomes any feedback from UNGC regarding our accountability.

Sincerely yours,

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David Regan  
Chief Executive Officer, Concern Worldwide

## Part II: Commitment to the 10 principles of UNGC

### Human Rights Principles

***Principle 1: Concern Worldwide supports and respects the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights***

And

***Principle 2: Concern Worldwide ensures we are not complicit in human rights abuses***

Concern Worldwide engages in humanitarian relief and development programmes in 26 countries around the world. Working with people living in extreme poverty, who are very often left vulnerable through conflict, displacement and/or hunger. This environment increases the potential for human rights abuses to occur and Concern has a number of key policies, which guide our work and engagement, including *Child Protection Policy, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Policy, Code of Conduct and Programme Participant Protection Policy and associated policies, (Ethical Fundraising Relationships with the Corporate Sector)*. Concern's partner organisations are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in Concern's Code of Conduct and associated policies when partnering with Concern.

### **Activities over the reporting period**

1. Concern continues to monitor and update detailed policies to reflect our zero tolerance of exploitation and abuse.
2. Comprehensive training for all staff on safeguarding and specific screening questions on Concern's Code of Conduct for new employees.
3. Concern's Board of Trustees oversee policies through specific sub-committees, further information can be found in our Annual Report.
4. In 2023, we launched our Workplace Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027. It sets out what actions we hope to take across our organisation regarding the inclusion of people who experience inequality based on their age, ethnicity or origin, gender, physical or mental abilities, political beliefs, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, socioeconomic disadvantage, or any combination of these. The actions apply to the Board and all staff and are aimed at ensuring that we do not discriminate, that we address any barriers, and that we make additional efforts where necessary to encourage diversity and ensure inclusion in Concern. We raised awareness of the strategy across the whole organisation, developed a broader understanding of it among staff, and devised resources and guidance to support it.
5. In 2022 we introduced an on-line training module regarding staff members' responsibility for promoting dignity, diversity, participation and inclusion in their interactions with colleagues. This training module is also available off-line, to be used with staff members who do not have access to the internet or a computer.
6. Also in 2022 we developed guidance, which has been socialised with HR Managers across all our countries of operation, on applying an equality, diversity and inclusion lens to recruitment.

### Labour Principles

***Principle 3: Concern Worldwide upholds the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining***

And

***Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour***

And

***Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour***

And

***Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation***

As with the broader human rights principles, Concern Worldwide is committed to upholding the UNGC principles associated with labour and take a zero tolerance stance on modern slavery and trafficking.

**Activities over the reporting period**

1. Reviewed Concern's Global Pay Policy and updated to ensure pay structures are consistent across all countries in which Concern operate.
2. Developed and signed off on a Global Pay Structure the purpose of which is to ensure that roles of the same scope, scale and responsibility are treated in the same way irrespective of the location (Country) in which they are based. This framework has been introduced to ten countries in 2024 and plans to introduce to another eight before the end of 2024.
3. Continued to support staff representative groups and worked with Trade Unions where these are present.
4. Updated our Leave Standards to include changes in legislation and emerging best practice.

**Environment Principles**

***Principle 7: Concern Worldwide support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges***

And

***Principle 8: undertakes initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility***

And

***Principle 9: encourages the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies***

**Activities over the reporting period**

1. Concern's commitment to the Charter and the results of the annual Global Carbon Footprint Audits undertaken since 2019 provide a framework from which to develop points of action to reduce the organisation's environmental footprint and improve environmental responsibility in development and humanitarian operations.
2. The organisation defined strategic objectives to reduce the environmental impacts of its programmes and operations via a corporate Environmental Strategy, approved in 2019 and improved over time to ensure accurate measure of progress and alignment with international policies and standards (e.g. the European Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive). The objectives outlined in the Strategy, in line with principles of climate justice, guide the organisation to tackle environmental degradation and climate change, reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and advocate for climate action across Concern's offices and beyond.
3. Measures are underway to mainstream environmental sustainability across the organisation and achieve emission reductions in line with Concern's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by

30% by 2030 from energy use, overseas vehicle fleets and ground travel, supply chain operations and air travel. Examples of these measures include but are not limited to; the development of a green travel policy and green logistics guidance; streamlining waste management and water consumption; raising staff awareness on environmental responsibility through global campaigns and local initiatives; and, where possible, the solarisation of country offices.

## **Anti-Corruption Principle**

### ***Principle 10: Concern Worldwide works against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery***

Concern Worldwide is extremely stringent in preventing and monitoring corruption in any form, in our own work and partners with whom we work. Concern Worldwide is in compliance with all relevant anti bribery legislation and has been recognised by several external organisations for transparency in our financial reporting. Implementing and funding partners of all kinds, including private sector actors, are subject to thorough review before engagement.

#### **Activities over the reporting period**

1. Concern continues to monitor and update all relevant policies related to corruption in any form including but not limited to Concern's Anti- Fraud policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and Anti-Money laundering Policy
2. Comprehensive training for all staff and specific awareness drawn to Concern's whistleblowing process.
3. Robust financial procedures including a checks and balance system to avoid misappropriation of funding.

## Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

During the reporting period, Concern has undertaken over fifty projects with private sector support, each of which promote one or more of the sustainable development goals (SDG's), primarily in the areas of health, education, and livelihoods. In order to promote more awareness of the SDG's among the corporate community in Ireland, we have delivered a number of webinars, newsletters and project updates, for various corporate partners (actual and target) and their staff. Typically, our corporate newsletters are shared with over three hundred companies at least twice a year.

In addition to the above, each year we deliver a major event for over 300 corporate guests, during which we acknowledge and honour the leadership role played by individuals in the broader community in promoting gender equality both at home and abroad. A number of our corporate partners have called out their commitment to specific sustainable development goals through their partnerships with Concern in their public-facing materials. In 2023, one of our major corporate partners won a major prize for their work with Concern Worldwide to improve the food and nutritional security and farming livelihoods of some of the poorest communities in Niger, while another was shortlisted for an award in relation to their commitment for building community resilience to flooding in partnership with Concern.

Also during the reporting period we have been liaising with the Global Compact Irish local network Country Manager, with the restart of this local network, and supporting this goal wherever possible with advice and connections.

## Part IV. Examples of private sector partnerships

Through the following description and examples, Concern demonstrates its efforts of fostering relationships with the private sector and supporting the implementation of the Global Compact's 10 Principles that focus on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. The Concern Strategic Plan sets ambitious targets to tackle extreme poverty through both live-saving humanitarian responses and longer term, sustainable developments which help people living in extreme poverty to make major improvements, which last and spread without ongoing support from Concern. Concern is committed to reaching the furthest behind and our approach fully supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to attain these goals Concern believes it is imperative to work in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including government, non-government, multilateral and private sector. The principles to engage private sector donors in Concern's strategy are:

- A commitment to engaging with businesses with values and principles that resonate with our own. Concern has an Ethical Fundraising policy in place that provides a guidance and framework to assess and analyse prospective partners in terms of potential negative impacts or harms that interests and practices may have on the people and places Concern supports.
- All funding opportunities should be assessed for their potential to grow the 'shared value' pipeline of opportunities.
- We aim to engage private sector actors in a deeper and more sustainable way and to increase their loyalty and longer-term interest in the work of Concern.
- The recognition that every corporation and company is different, and by engaging the right teams for the right opportunities, Concern can offer tailored partnerships of the highest standards, and be seen as an example of best practice in private sector engagement.

### Examples of Concern's work with the private sector;

**Example of Concerns partnership with Datatec**, which has led to several programmes focussed on supporting girls' and boys' access to STEM education (Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics) in Kenya. The programmes have focussed on improving both quality and availability of education in areas with high levels of extreme poverty. As a technology company, Datatec were interested in supporting those living in extreme poverty to develop the knowledge and skills to access jobs related to STEM. This is aligned to Concern's focus on education and our belief that education is one of the key pathways out of extreme poverty.

In 2023, Concern ran a pilot programme funded by Datatec to supply 8 schools with mobile science labs and science kits in Marsabit County, Kenya. Marsabit is among the counties with highest poverty levels of 65.9%, ranking 41 out of 47 counties in Kenya. This situation has had a direct impact on education of children, particularly girls in Marsabit. Children's enrolment rates at primary and secondary school are 50.9% and 8.2% respectively. Access to STEM subjects is particularly hard for girls due to deeply entrenched gender roles – this programme specifically targets schools with a higher number of girls enrolled. The acquisition of mobile labs and integrated science kits has reawakened a focus in science in schools with the administration keen to enhance the subject delivery. At Bubisa Junior Secondary School, for instance, the school administration, successfully advocated with the Ministry of Education for deployment of a science teacher since the teacher assigned the subject was not trained in sciences. As a result, the Ministry deployed two science teachers to strengthen the teaching of the subject in the school. From 2024-2026 the Datatec programme will be expanded to reach 12 more schools and deepen the level of engagement with teachers to strengthen their ability to teach STEM subjects. The programme will also work closely with the board of governance, parents and the local government. In



September 2023, Concern alongside Young Scientists Kenya (YSK) and STEM Impact Center Kenya, hosted a science fair in Marsabit County that is credited with increased interest and uptake of STEM by students. Building on this gain, the proposed project will collaborate with the County Government of Marsabit, STEM Impact Center Kenya and Young Scientist Kenya (YSK) to scale up the science fair targeting 25 Junior Secondary Schools in Marsabit County hosting two fairs in the two years. Concern works directly with two Datatec staff members who provide excellent oversight on the projects. Datatec are also one of Concern's emergency response partners, responding to urgent calls for funding in several sudden onset emergencies and in response to outbursts of conflict around the world. This includes providing funding in Lebanon, Ukraine, Sudan/Chad and Syria/Turkey. Datatec have also engaged their staff in wellbeing fitness challenges to raise awareness of concerns work and much needed funds for the wider education work.

**Example of Concern's partnership with Kerry Group** (also a member of the UN Global Compact), a global leader in sustainable nutrition on a multi-year program in Kenya to improve the lives of 46,000 Kenyans in Tana River. Many of the Tana River farmers are reliant on livestock farming, but climate change has led to water insecurity and pasture deterioration, causing death and declines in livestock productivity, and heavily impacting household income and food security. With financial support from Kerry Group, and using river water for irrigation, the Agricultural Livelihoods Improving Value Chains and the Environment (ALIVE) project, when complete, will create a regional value chain for mango production to benefit female growers, creating a new income stream for their families. The programme will also improve food security, boost household income and reduce malnutrition levels in the Tana River region by providing access to climate resilient seeds, opening new areas for agricultural production and irrigation and training farmers in climate-smart agricultural practices, supporting a number of SDGs in the process.

Kerry Group also applied its nutrition and innovation expertise on an advisory panel for Concern's Lishe Poa urban nutrition project in Kenya (2018-2023) which sought to develop a healthy alternative to commonly consumed snack foods, working with Kerry Group's offices and labs in Kenya and South Africa at project development phase, providing pre-sensory analysis and technical testing.

**Example from the Z Zurich Foundation funded program entitled 'Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance'** in Bangladesh, South Sudan, Kenya and Malawi. Concern partners with Zurich Insurance Group (also a member of the UN Global Compact) through the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance. The Alliance is a cross-sector collaboration of nine member organisations from the private sector, international development and humanitarian sectors, and academia. The Alliance focuses on finding practical ways to empower communities to strengthen their resilience to flood risk and save lives. This innovative approach gives local community groups the technology and insights they need to monitor, predict and plan for the effects of flooding. As part of this partnership, the Z Zurich Foundation is providing multi-annual funding for Concern's flood resilience work in 62 flood-vulnerable communities. The Alliance also works to increase funding for flood resilience, strengthen global, national and subnational policies; and improve flood resilience practice. However, this partnership goes beyond a financial contribution. Funding comes through the Z Zurich Foundation, but Zurich Insurance Group is also a partner in the Alliance. As such, it provides expertise as a global insurer to develop programming that shifts the focus away from post-event recovery and rather stresses the importance of pre-event resilience-building. This helps communities to reduce the devastating impacts of floods, even before a flood hits. This is in synergy with Concern's approach to community resilience building of which disaster risk reduction is the foundation and a cornerstone of our approach to sustainable community-led solutions. Concern have recently signed a new four year partnership (and 12 year ambition) with the Foundation to expand the Alliance to focus on other climate Hazards.