

Restless Development
Communication on Engagement (COE) with the United Nations Global Compact
Period covered by this COE: November 2021 – November 2023

CEO Statement of Continued Support

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Subject: Communication on Engagement (COE) with the United Nations Global Compact

With this letter I am pleased to reaffirm Restless Development's support for the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. With this commitment, we express our intent to continue our partnership with the Global Compact to advance these principles through the agency's work.

Our vision for 2030 is that young people everywhere are supported to realise their collective power to create a better world. But, in many places, instead of being listened to and supported to lead change, young people are often ignored and overlooked. Our mission is to change that by supporting young people to be leaders. This includes working with young people to identify problems and work on solutions in their communities, proactively shift power and it also includes supporting young people to advocate for long-lasting change that gets to the root causes of issues, like youth unemployment and climate change.

Restless Development formed in 1985 and have been working with young people ever since. We work with young people around the world and are led by nine hubs spread across Africa, Asia, in the USA and UK.

This is Restless Development's Communication on Engagement (COE) with the United Nations Global Compact, which describes the actions that our agency has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its principles over the last two years.

Sincerely yours,



Natalie Agboeze
Strategic Partnerships Director

Description of Actions and Measurement of Outcomes

Protecting Human Rights

We continue to prioritise diversity and inclusion, the protection of human rights and the promotion of women's rights, gender equality and antiracism. This cuts across both our operations, including how we recruit and support staff, and our programmes.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion & Power Shifting in our Agency:

We have continued to implement our [global Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy](#), with clearly defined goals and metrics to hold us to account. This strategy pushes for diversity in our recruitment; our inclusive working culture; and our external relations - building partnerships with organisations who can strengthen our knowledge in this area. We have also become increasingly data driven; over the past two years we have collected and analysed diversity data, at both a global and Hub level. This looked at factors such as age, gender, disability, religion and education. This has in turn led to the development of Hub specific action plans, focusing on relevant national issues such as tribalistic or caste discrimination or the promotion of local language.

In March 2022, we launched our [Global Strategy](#) (2022-2030) which emphasised our intention to shift power to young people and communities, who have previously been marginalised, to lead change. We recognise the barriers that women, girls, non-binary people, people living with disabilities, and young people with different ethnicities, religion and sexual preferences face in the communities in which we work. To support our efforts to proactively shift power and ensure every young person is able to lead and create a just and sustainable world and access their rights, we created a [Power Shifting Checklist](#), a practical tool that has formed the basis for our strategy and operations delivery. While the Power Shifting Checklist forms an integral part of our programme design and strategy delivery, it has also formed the basis for revising our [Agency Plan](#) to inform how we operate as a global agency and walk the talk by applying it to ourselves.

Our power shifting approach outlines our intention and commitment towards breaking down barriers and systems of oppression to address the growing inequalities and injustices in the world. We continue to champion a Gender Transformative Approach across all our impact priority areas, thereby building the agency of women that are able to make decisions over the issues that affect them. We are also taking a [feminist approach](#) to our work, rooted in equality, sharing power and taking care of each other. We have 51% of women in leadership positions and have a co-leadership model with two female CEOs sharing power collectively and demonstrating [feminist leadership](#) in practice.

Aside from these operational changes, we have also taken a number of steps to **restore power to communities around the world**, providing an alternative to traditional power structures. We have started to design new programmes focusing on decolonising development; pursued funding and partnerships in line with our global strategy and power shifting ambitions; and in our external communications, actively commissioned more diverse voices.

Our Programmes and research:

Gender and Sexual Rights continues to form a core part of Restless Development's work with programmes and initiatives continuing to be based on gender awareness and a strong agency level commitment to **gender equality**. To support this, we have a specific Gender principle (and set of [sub-principles](#)) within our Programme principles, which guide the design and delivery of our work. For example, *"All programmes specifically address gender across the model, resourcing activities appropriately and not assuming that outcomes for all genders will be the same with the same activities"*. Our Sierra Leone Hub provides an excellent example of the progress we have

been making with respect to making our programmes more gender transformative. Their Community-led Action programme has been successful in reaching out to almost 200,000 young people to reflect on gender biases leading to attitudinal improvements in family planning and ending child marriage. We are also part of a partnership of four organisations calling for feminist foreign policies in the UK and European Union that champion gender equality and reflect the voices of women and LGBTIQ+ people from the Global North and South.

More broadly, within our Programme Principles we also have a principle focused on **'Inclusion and Participation'** which includes a commitment to ensuring all our programmes are inclusive, and engage young people regardless of their age, sexuality, gender, ethnicity and background. This also includes commitments to: making reasonable adjustments to our work; recognising diversity in learning requirements; and building the capacity of staff to work with a diverse range of young people.

We have seen an increase in **disability inclusion** across our programmes; for example, the [We Lead](#) programme in Africa, Central America and the Middle East and the [Tusunge Lobono](#) programme in Zambia are working with marginalised young people such as those living with HIV, LGBTIQ+, with disability and affected by displacement on realising their sexual rights and financial inclusion respectively.

Environment

We know that those who have contributed the least to climate change - young people - will face the biggest impact of climate change if we do not take steps to reduce our impact on the planet. Our ambition is to be an agency which will protect the natural environment and ensure its ability to support life for future generations, through our agency, operations, programmes and a Youth Collective. As an agency accountable to young people we need to mitigate our own impact on the environment, whilst proudly and pro-actively aiming to tackle climate change through our programmes.

Our programmes:

Restless Development's latest global strategy, launched in 2022, recognised [Climate Justice](#) as an impact priority area for the first time. Our ambition is to empower young people to take a lead role in the decisions on climate that affect them most - for example, by supporting young climate activists, such as those attending COP through the #MissingMajority campaign in [2021](#) and [2022](#), launching programmes that focussed on [climate change education in schools](#) in Uganda, [youth-led accountability on the climate related challenges](#) faced by communities in India, setting up a Youth Fund to support youth civil society to undertake climate action in communities, supporting young people with entrepreneurship skills and start-up capital to initiate [climate-friendly businesses](#) in Tanzania and supporting young people to [capacitate local governments](#) to develop Local Disaster and Climate Resilient Plans in Nepal through an [European Union funded consortium project](#) for which Restless Development is leading youth engagement.

In line with our global strategy, we will continue to identify opportunities to support young people and youth civil society to lead climate related initiatives in their communities.

Environment Principles:

We continue to work towards operationalizing our [Environmental Principles](#) (created in 2019), which outline our commitment to protecting the natural environment in five focused ways: managing our carbon footprint; greener programming; building our staff knowledge and commitment; ensuring sustainable financing decisions; and engaging our Restless networks. These have been further used in the drafting of our new Quality Assurance Framework based on the new Agency Plan.

Systems in place to track our environmental impact:

Agency Survey:

Through our annual Agency Survey we ask staff to assess understanding and perceived progress against our environmental commitments. The data below shows the percentage of respondents reporting that they either agree or strongly agree.

Our new Agency Plan and associated Quality Assurance Framework was developed in 2022-2023, which means that we are unable to compare data pertaining to the environment for the period under consideration. Hence, data captured under the Agency Survey in relation to environment can only be compared across 2020 and 2021.

	2019/20	2020/21
Restless Development understands and mitigates its impact on the environment across its agency, operations and programmes.	76%	80%
I am aware of and understand our Environmental Principles and how I can contribute to their success	79%	77%

It is positive to see some improvements in the scores, especially in terms of how Restless Development mitigates its impact on the environment across the agency. Recommendations from the reduction on the proportion of how one can contribute to the success of environment principles was taken into consideration while drafting the new Agency Plan.

Data from our **Quality Assurance framework** also demonstrates performance against our environmental commitments at the end of the 2022/23 financial year. Our Quality Assurance framework was adapted in line with the new agency plan and there have been some changes in the Essential Standards and Key Performance Indicators with respect to climate protection.

Essential Standards	Key Performance Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time Climate Protection Lead in place • Climate Protection Strategy Developed and shared with Hubs for adoption • Climate Protection tracking system in place • Global climate protection strategy plan in place • Global Green Principles are in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Protection Group / Community of Practice meeting organised quarterly • Comprehensive guidance developed and shared with Hub how to develop "Green Action Plans"

As an agency, our progress towards achieving the Essential Standards for climate protection is 69% and 51% for the Key Performance Indicators. We will continue to monitor our progress in the coming years and develop clear action plans to improve the score. Our focus will also be on creating the Global Climate Protection strategy and allied principles to guide our work and operations.

Carbon footprint:

We have seen a significant reduction in our carbon footprint as a result of the hugely reduced

number of flights being taken by both staff and volunteers. This relates largely to travel restrictions in response to Covid-19 as well as the increased modes of virtual connection. Our Carbon footprint tracker tool takes data from a much broader range of categories, including flights, travel, utilities, waste and materials, as compared to figures from previous years based purely on flights. As a means of comparison our estimated Carbon Footprint for November 2021 was 33,378 kg as compared to March 2020 when it was 48,619kgs (with 2,364kgs relating to flights).

Anti-Corruption and Accountability

As a values led agency, how we work is as important as what we do. We minimise our agency's negative impact in a number of ways, through our comprehensive safeguarding policy and systems; our code of conduct; our approach to programme design and implementation; and in the unique way we engage local partners through the Youth Collective.

Safeguarding:

Restless Development remains steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding, emphasizing a zero-tolerance approach to sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment. We continue to prioritise the safety and well-being of all those we work with, ensuring that safeguarding is at the core of our operations. We are committed to preventing harm, and to promoting the health, well-being and human rights of children, young people and adults. Our [approach](#) is one of continual learning and adaptation, which involves listening and learning from our experience, the experience of people we serve, our partners and the development sector at large. We have robust measures in place to equip us to prevent and respond to issues of safeguarding across our agency and activities. Our [safeguarding policy](#) details the framework through which Restless Development continues to prioritise a culture of safety and well-being at all levels throughout the organisation and communities where we work.

Between 2021 and 2023, there has been a steady decline in recorded **safeguarding incidents** across the global agency and all the received cases were resolved and closed using a survivor centred approach. Key factors in this success include safeguarding inductions, ongoing training on high-risk areas, and the establishment of hub safeguarding working groups dedicated to advancing safeguarding initiatives. Additionally, the creation of a cross-hub safeguarding community of practice, with representatives from all hubs, has been instrumental in facilitating shared learning and the adoption of best practices.

Our safeguarding preparedness continues to be owned by our hub leadership teams, with the hub director performing the duty of the Lead Safeguarding Officer as well. We have shifted the ownership of safeguarding away from a centralised system towards a more tailored approach of case management and incident response that is responsive to contexts. Hub safeguarding working groups have been pivotal in leading operations towards safe programming whilst ensuring staff receive appropriate support.

We have a **Code of Conduct** which provides guidance for all staff and volunteers on the standards we expect them to uphold. We have a wide variety of prohibited behaviours which include sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation. We also have a commitment to do no harm to those we work with. Prevention of harm is a primary objective of our safeguarding principle, throughout programme design, inception and implementation. Our national and programme level risk assessment templates guide our teams through a thorough process of consulting relevant stakeholders; identifying and prioritising risks and threats; and planning mitigation.

We also have a [whistleblowing](#) process as part of our full set of safety, security and safeguarding

policies. A confidential email provides a safe means to raise concerns outside of main reporting lines.

Prioritising safety and wellbeing:

We take the Safety, Wellbeing and Happiness of our people very seriously. As part of our Power Shifting Checklist we are committed to our responsibility of providing and fulfilling a reasonable standard of care to those driving our impact. We recognise the importance of ownership and we incorporate wellbeing goals into our performance goals that are reviewed annually. We conduct a quarterly Wellbeing Survey to track the overall happiness of our people and constantly work to improve on this. As a global agency working in some instances virtually, we value connections and creating a sense of belonging for all. In 2023, we recorded feedback from annual performance reviews and 'pulse surveys' to check in on key wellbeing areas, such as relationships and happiness. The annual performance reviews indicated that 97% of staff felt valued, an increase from 95% last year, and 87% were rated as having high or good engagement at work.

Dynamic accountability and transparency:

Accountability and transparency are core values of Restless Development. We want everyone we work with, especially young people, to be engaged and informed participants in all we do. Radical Transparency is one part of our [Dynamic Accountability model](#).

We share a wide variety of documents and information relating to governance, finance, programmes, policies and performance through a dedicated [accountability](#) page on our website. This also includes organisation commitments, such as those underpinning our anti-racism work; key principles guiding our work such as on gender and the environment; our code of conduct and employee handbook so that we are transparent on our internal operations; our global salary scales; and minutes from our trustee meetings.

We also commit to sharing information with individuals through our [Open Information Policy](#), which clearly sets out the information we will make publicly available, either on our website or by request (including in other languages or formats to ensure accessibility). It also sets out exceptions, why these are exceptions and the appeals process if individuals are not satisfied with the decision and response they have received. Staff are trained on our Open Information Policy on an annual basis as part of our all staff reinduction to ensure they are confident and equipped to manage requests from our stakeholders and to proactively share information we commit to making available.

We take part in the International [Aid Transparency Initiative \(ATI\)](#), a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to improve the transparency of aid, development, and humanitarian resources in order to increase their effectiveness in tackling poverty.

Supporting local organisations:

Over the past two years we have accelerated our strategic commitment to strengthen youth civil society. We are responding to what youth civil society tells us they need through our annual flagship State of Youth Civil Society Research by bringing donors, young leaders and many more together to envision new ways of supporting this dynamic sector as leaders, not recipients of change. Our youth-led research has told us that despite challenges, youth civil society can play a unique role in rebuilding societies post the COVID pandemic ([Youth Power in a pandemic](#)) and the critical role that feminist organisations and movements ([Young, Feminist, and Fearless: Holding the Line](#)) can play in dismantling systems of oppression and making the world more equitable, safe and accessible for everyone.

Restless Development continues to convene and strengthen the [Youth Collective](#), an inclusive community of youth civil society that is focussed on connection, collaboration and peer-to-peer

learning. The digital platform has over 3800 registered youth led civil society organisations from across the world, who can register in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Hindi.

Restless Development is committed to support strengthening the Youth Collective by providing spaces for connection, collaboration and learning. Between 2021-2023, building on the findings from the youth-led research on the state of youth civil society, we have organised [Leadership Labs](#), a peer-led series to explore effective leadership approaches and develop stronger collaboration and [Donor Dialogues](#) to bring together members of the Youth Collective and funders to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the youth civil society sector.

Restless Development will continue to support youth civil society by advocating for greater and more flexible funding to youth organisations. Our Sierra Leone hub has shown the impact of a youth fund for education which funded 12 youth organisations to lead community projects on education, with success looking like the provision of 380 hygiene kits including menstrual products, improving the quality of existing infrastructure such as installing ramps to make classrooms more accessible, training teachers in inclusive education and providing employability skills to young people with disabilities. We will continue to build on such initiatives and strengthen the Youth Collective to facilitate a greater sense of ownership in development interventions.

Data Protection:

Restless Development takes protecting the privacy of individuals we work with seriously and takes all reasonable steps to ensure their information is secure. It's important that they feel completely comfortable and confident that their personal information is safe in our care. We have a [Privacy Statement](#) which sets out how we will meet our responsibilities to keep personal data safe and secure

Our International Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible and have ownership for ensuring we are acting in accordance with our legal requirements in the countries we operate in. They have designated the implementation and delivery of our Data Protection Policy to our Senior Leadership Team. They are responsible for ensuring this Data Protection Policy is implemented, ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities within the Policy and are effectively equipped to meet these responsibilities.

All staff within Restless Development are responsible for the understanding and implementation of the guidelines. Failure of individual staff members or volunteers to comply with our policies will result in disciplinary action. We will ensure all individuals receive training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.