



About the United Nations Global Compact



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The United Nations Global Compact is an initiative which aims for organisations in all countries to take on an ethical commitment as an integral part of their strategy and operations. This commitment takes the form of ten principles of conduct and action in the areas of human rights, employment, the environment and the fight against corruption.

Its goal is to foster the creation of a global corporate citizenship, which allows the interests and processes involved in business activities to be reconciled with the values and demands of civil society, as well as the projects of the UN, international organisations, trade unions and NGO's.

In Spain the United Nations Global Compact has been well-received among companies, trade unions, educational bodies and NGO's, creating a strong movement in support of the compact's ten principles.

The idea of a United Nations Global Compact in the area of corporate social responsibility was launched by the UN former secretary general Kofi Annan at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 31st January 1999.

It came into operation on 26th July 2000, when the secretary general himself launched an appeal to the leaders and heads of companies to join together in a broad compact to put into practice the widely-shared commitment to synchronise companies' activities and needs with the principles and goals of the political and institutional policy of the United Nations, labour organisations and civil society itself.

The Compact is an instrument which business, labour and civil organisations are free to sign up to. It is founded upon a commitment to implement the ten principles of the Compact in their strategy and operations. In this sense the Compact is neither a regulatory instrument laying down legal rules of conduct for organisations, nor an instrument granting certification to those who meet certain requirements. Organisations which adhere to the Compact voluntarily take on a commitment to implement the ten principles of the Compact in their everyday activities. Moreover, they take on a commitment to give an open, public account to society of the progress they make in this process of implementation, by drawing up progress reports.

The Compact works as an integrated working network within which participating companies, the UN, its organisations, the global NGO's and international trade union organisations promote its goals and principles. They are to do this by making use of four main components or instruments, which set the manner of working to be followed by the organisations which form part of the Compact:

- Executing joint schemes to foster good business practices.
- Setting up forums for dialogue and networks for co-operation between the market and society in the areas forming the object of the Compact.
- Backing an active forum for education and learning to spread these values among the educational community, as well as case studies and pilot schemes to implement the principles.
- Setting up local and national networks and platforms to allow mutual learning between companies, as well as responding to the specific needs and interests of each business community in its progress towards implementing the ten principles.

All these activities together, as well as everything connected with fostering and carrying them out, are run globally from the United Nations office for the Global Compact, based in New York. In turn, numerous local networks have helped all these efforts to become a dynamic factor at global level, among them the Spanish local Global Compact network.

The Principles of the United Nations Global Compact

Principle 1.- Companies must support and abide by the protection of internationally-recognised basic human rights within their area of influence.

Principle 2.- Companies must ensure that their subsidiaries do not collude in violations of human rights.

Principle 3.- Companies must support freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Principle 4.- Companies must support the eradication of all forms of forced labour or labour subject to coercion.

Principle 5.- Companies must support the eradication of child labour.

Principle 6.- Companies must support the abolition of discriminatory labour and employment practices.

Principle 7.- Companies must maintain an effective preventive approach to protect the environment.

Principle 8.- Companies must back initiatives to foster greater environmental responsibility.

Principle 9.- Companies must encourage the development and spread of environment-friendly technology.

Principle 10.- Companies must work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.



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