

# **UN global compact communication on engagement**

March 2025



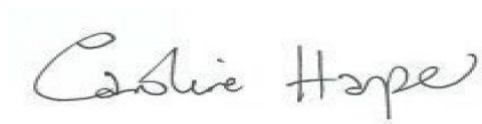
## Statement of continued support

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It is my pleasure to reiterate the continued commitment of Sightsavers to upholding the principles of the United Nations Global Compact and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Developments Goals by 2030.

We remain committed to embedding these throughout our organisation and the work we do. They are reflected in our culture and strategy, particularly those relating to human and labour rights, which forms the core of our advocacy work. We will continue to promote the principles through our actions and ensure that Sightsavers supports other organisations in their work to embody them, particularly for those who are not themselves signatories.

We will continue to do our part in living and strengthening these principles, and, as always, we will be actively thinking and re-thinking ways in which we can do more and better, for our community and our world.



**Dr Caroline Harper, CBE**  
Chief executive officer

# Actions in support of the global compact principles

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## Human rights

Safeguarding our project participants and communities where we work is core to what we do at Sightsavers. We employ a global safeguarding team and have a network of designated leads based in all country offices to ensure our practice fully aligns with our policy. During programme design, risk of harm, abuse and exploitation are assessed and for any identified risks appropriate mitigation strategies are outlined and implemented. These are supported by the inclusion of safeguarding activities in the budgets for new projects.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) are both referenced in our safeguarding policy, and we work closely with partners and communities to ensure the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, in line with Global Compact principles one and two.

We do this through safe recruitment, due diligence assessments, training, incident response and strengthening of feedback mechanisms. We continue to invest in our safeguarding approach and champion the rights of all people we work with, particularly children, women and adults with disabilities.

## Labour

Sightsavers maintains its zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery within its operations and strives to act ethically and with integrity to ensure modern slavery is not taking place in any part of our organisation or supply chain.

Sightsavers has in place a robust global anti-slavery policy, a copy of which can be viewed on our website at [www.sightsavers.org/policies](http://www.sightsavers.org/policies).

In compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (UK) we publish an annual statement which outlines the steps taken by Sightsavers to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking throughout our operations during each year. This can also be viewed on our website at <https://www.sightsavers.org/how-were-run/accountability-and-transparency/slavery-human-trafficking-statement/>

During 2022, Sightsavers developed an anti-human trafficking monitoring tool for partners working on a number of our projects. During 2024, Sightsavers Due Diligence tool has been expanded to include a section on Modern Slavery with indicators to robustly assess our partners' current processes and framework to help combat Modern Slavery.

Modern Slavery is embedded into our due diligence processes and an essential element in our Safeguarding trainings. We ensure that our partners are monitored and evaluated and our new staff in the Supply Chain, Procurement, and Resilience teams receive the necessary trainings on Modern Slavery. We ensure that our key performance indicators (KPIs) remain current and applicable in assessing our progress in tackling Modern Slavery.

Founded in 2016, Sightsavers' Disability Inclusion Working Group draws its members from across the organisation to improve our diversity and accessibility.

The group's objectives are to:

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- Promote staff commitment to inclusion
- Monitor inclusion efforts and identify gaps
- Enable Sightsavers to become an employer of choice for people with disabilities.

In 2020, Sightsavers introduced a Racial Diversity Working Group with a purpose of ensuring that Sightsavers continues to focus on being an inclusive and racially diverse organisation.

The group also assesses Sightsavers' working environment to identify potential issues of racism. It monitors the mechanisms for preventing, investigating and addressing incidents of racism and supports internal and external communications on Sightsavers' values of equity and inclusion, which counter racist behaviour.

The Racial Diversity Working Group is responsible for taking forward an agreed action plan which aims to foster and further improve racial diversity and inclusion across the global organisation.

A copy of our global equality and diversity policy can be viewed on our website at [www.sightsavers.org/policies](http://www.sightsavers.org/policies)

## Environment

Sightsavers recognises the negative effects of climate change on the communities and systems that we work with, as well as the potential negative effects that our programmes may have on the environment. As a global development organisation, we have a responsibility to monitor and limit our environmental impact and support the communities and systems we work with to increase their resilience and adaptability to the negative effects of climate change.

Sightsavers has emphasised climate action as a priority for the organisation through:

1. Implementing a Global Environmental Policy in October 2023 encompassing an environmental management system (EMS) in the UK office. Our EMS recognises a responsibility to monitor and limit our environmental impact and thereby play a role in mitigating the risks posed
2. Incorporating climate action as a cross-cutting priority in each of the thematic strategies
3. Endorsing the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness's 'Call to action for environmentally sustainable practices in the eye health sector'

Sightsavers plans for its Carbon Footprint and Carbon Reduction Plans to align with the goal to be carbon net zero in 2050. In 2023, Sightsavers hit its target, and is committed to being consistent with these results. We ensure continual improvement and a reduction in our carbon footprint through monitoring the usage of the following: energy, water, waste, travel and paper.

We have progressed our organisational carbon accounting activities. We have clearly defined our organisational and operational boundaries for our carbon footprint in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol: A Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, a well-recognised international standard. We have worked with environmental leads in our country offices, who manage our carbon footprint data and report on energy efficiency initiatives in the countries where we operate.

We have set up an Environmental Steering Group, which consists of members from the senior management team who review the organisation's environmental management plans to ensure continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

During 2022, our climate action strategy team (CAST) was founded. Given the strategic and programmatic focus of our climate action work, CAST is responsible for leading the organisation's programmatic climate action work. It will be a place to share relevant activities that are being undertaken by contributing teams and incorporate learnings/policies into programmatic activities. These will be considered in line with national plans and relevant legislation.

CAST will bring together the various teams focusing on climate change within their respective areas of expertise, including global technical leads, policy and global advocacy, campaigns and communications, fundraising, monitoring evaluation and learning, research, regional offices, and representatives from country offices.

In 2023, Sightsavers UK office became certified in the international standard Environmental Management System ISO14001. In 2024, our internal audit team conducted an annual review to assess the extent to which the work completed to date is sufficient to meet the ISO's prescribed standards and retain our certification. Our current systems were found to be fully effective, and no non-conformities were found.

## Anti-corruption

Sightsavers has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery, corruption and the support of terrorism.

We have robust policies addressing these areas which are regularly reviewed and updated. Most recently our conflict of interest, anti-fraud, and corruption and counter-terrorism financing policies were updated in September 2022.

We have appropriate processes to monitor and investigate fraud within our organisations and in our work with others. In 2021, we put in place a global reporting mechanism, 'Speak Up', whereby any Sightsavers beneficiary, employee, volunteer, partner, vendor, programme participant or other outside party can use the Speak Up service to report any inappropriate conduct, providing a confidential mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing. The platform can be accessed on our website at [www.sightsavers.org/speakup](http://www.sightsavers.org/speakup).

Our staff receive training on the signs of fraud, reporting channels and Sightsavers' policy.

Sightsavers also has processes in place to ensure that we do not employ or work with anyone who is the subject of a range of international and government sanctions, which undergo regular reviews.

## Our work to support the sustainable development goals

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In addition to aligning our strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, Sightsavers also takes actions that advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Some of these actions are listed below and you can

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read more about how we are advancing the Sustainable Development Goals on our website at [www.sightsavers.org/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.sightsavers.org/sustainable-development-goals)

The Sustainable Development Goals include:

- **Goal 1: no poverty.** Our Economic Empowerment Programme supports people that are marginalised or disabled to enter the work force, set up businesses or enhance their means of living enabling them to earn money to support themselves and their families.
- **Goal 3: good health and wellbeing.** We provide eye care in some of the world's poorest countries, ensuring people can be treated for eye conditions. We also help to treat and prevent Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) that affect more than a billion people around the world.
- **Goal 4: quality education.** Our education programmes aim to ensure that all children, including those with disabilities, have the opportunity to receive quality education.
- **Goal 5: gender equality.** We strive for gender equality in all our programmes, right from the planning stages, to make sure we are as equitable as possible.
- **Goal 6: clean water and sanitation.** We promote good hygiene to help eliminate NTDs such as trachoma and river blindness.
- **Goal 10: reduced inequalities.** Our Equal World campaign promotes equality for people with disabilities, to ensure their rights are upheld.
- **Goal 17: partnerships for the goals.** We work in partnership with local, national and international organisations, governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).