



United Nations Global Compact Communication on Progress
From February 2017 to February 2018

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15 February 2018

Dear Friends, Partners, Clients, and Stakeholders,

Welcome to our 2017 UN Global Compact Communication on Progress report. It's written for you, because we value our relationship and connection. You might be our client, a supplier, stakeholder, one of our 7000+ employees, or simply interested in our business.

Our mission statement, '*combining strengths, improving lives,*' is at the forefront of the way we conduct business. We continue to align the sustainable development goals (SDGs) into the daily operations of our company. The humanitarian and public health ecosystem is shifting and is facing an increased pressure due to geo-political changes, flat-lining of funds and the ever-growing need for humanitarian assistance. We have seen the new agenda for humanity taking shape, with focus on localization, inclusion and innovation with impact. At NRS International we focus on new product solutions, a sustainable supply chain and by creating a diverse and inclusive work environment.

In 2017 year we have seen significant growth, responded to complex crises, expanded our product range, refined our Lean and Six Sigma production processes, deepened and localized our charitable commitments, and created employment opportunities in our communities. We have redefined our Corporate Social Responsibility agenda and increased our focus on sustainable business and manufacturing practices. We moved from being a Steering Committee Member of the UN Global Compact Network in the United Arab Emirates, to an active partner who is strengthening the local network by creating valuable marketing collateral.

We are delighted to share our actions towards the UN Global Compact, of which we are active supporting members since 2012, and we hope this report will stimulate a dialogue on what it means to be a socially responsible manufacturer for emergency shelters, core relief items, public health products and solar solutions. We invite and welcome your comments, questions and constructive feedback. Please join us on our journey to create more companies that care and build more sustainable communities.

Warmest regards,



P.P.

Farhaj Sarwar,
Managing Director

Making Progress on Corporate Responsibility Measures

Mainstreaming CSR throughout operations

At [NRS International](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility](#) (CSR) is what shapes our approach to business. We leverage a variety of resources in pursuit of economically, environmentally and socially sustainable operations. We understand that this entails an ongoing commitment to the well-being of our employees, the environment and the communities where we work. To activate our sustainability agenda, we follow the classic CSR pillars of People, Planet and Profit – also known as the Triple Bottom Line.

Throughout the past year, our sustainable journey continued with the alignment of our business operations with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of globally agreed targets to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. We have also expanded our Corporate Social Responsibility teams in Dubai and Pakistan and were nominated as Steering Committee Members of the UN Global Compact Network within the United Arab Emirates for our commitment to sustainability, diversity and female empowerment, and core business values. We adhere to the UNGC's principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions to embed them throughout our operations and supply chain.

To ensure a data-driven, measurable approach to sustainability, our subsidiary [TANA Netting](#) also published its first Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in 2016. Using GRI's social, economic and environmental indicators allows us to accurately chart our contribution towards the SDGs and to identify areas for improvement moving forward. We are currently in the process of publishing the second GRI Report (2017).

We hope by leading by example we can inspire companies in the region and those within the manufacturing sector to incorporate the UNGC principles into their operations. This Communication on Progress discusses who we are, our work towards the 10 UNGC Principles and a more sustainable business, as well as our commitments to the SDGs.

Who we Are

NRS International is a family company manufacturing fit-for-purpose relief products that make a difference to the lives of those in need. Responding to the growing global demand for humanitarian aid, we do business in a sustainable way, embracing the 'doing good, doing well' philosophy. We develop and manufacture refugee shelters, multipurpose tents, core relief items, solar products, mobile storage units and long lasting-insecticidal nets. In 2016-2017 we sold 61 million products to UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and government entities. We are an integral part of the humanitarian and global health supply chain and our essential products have improved the lives of 110 million beneficiaries in the past year alone.

We are the parent company to two subsidiaries, who are both market leader in their respective business segment.

- [NRS Relief](#) offers [core relief items \(including solar items\)](#), [family tents](#), [multipurpose shelters](#) and [mobile storage units](#) to the humanitarian sector. Through the innovative products that adhere to the highest international standards, aid organisations can effectively alleviate the suffering of people experiencing disasters and conflicts.
- [TANA Netting](#) manufactures high quality, WHOPES-recommended [DawaPlus® 2.0 insecticide treated nets](#) and the new-generation [DawaPlus® 3.0](#) and [4.0](#) synergist nets as tools for malaria control and prevention.

We manufacture what we sell

Value chain implementation

We fully control our supply chain and manage the entire product development process from manufacturing through to final delivery. Our core relief items and public health products are manufactured exclusively by [H. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din & Sons](#) (HSNDS) in Lahore, Pakistan, our factory that employs 7,000 skilled workers. After leaving the factory, our expert logisticians facilitate the transportation of our products by air, sea and land to wherever they are required, and also maintain strategic stocks in Dubai and Lahore. We also engage in extensive supply chain due diligence; all of our suppliers sign a code of conduct and all contracts include human rights provisions. We aim to audit suppliers every four months to ensure compliance.



We never stand still

Our approach is to lead and innovate. We invest in research and development to continuously improve the products we make and how we make them. By working hand-in-hand with our clients, suppliers and beneficiaries we are able to create new solutions, improve existing products and ensure that our products meet international quality standards. Our clients and their beneficiaries are at the centre of everything we do. This year, we introduced TANA Netting's two new product innovations that use patented insecticide technology to improve efficacy of mosquito nets, DawaPlus 3.0 and 4.0, [find out more.](#)

Commitment to Lean Manufacturing

We have been consistent advocates and practitioners of responsible production. Our businesses strive for environmental, social and financial sustainability through the rigorous control of product

development processes and supply chains, from manufacturing to delivery. Robust quality assurance ensures compliance with environmental and social accountability certifications, such as ISO 14000, ISO 9001, ISO 17025 and SA 8000. Our sustainability culture ensures that we always look for ways to improve production standards. The decision of senior management in 2016 to implement a comprehensive Lean production regime marks an important step in this journey. In 2017, we have further improved and anchored our Lean Manufacturing processes in our daily operations. Watch a short video [here](#).

Our work towards the 10 Principles

We take our work towards the 10 UNGC Principles very seriously. This past year, we continued to deepen our commitment and work towards these important goals to achieve a more sustainable company.

Human Rights

- 1.) Business should support and respect the protection of internally proclaimed human rights
- 2.) Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Our Actions and Outcomes:

Commitment, strategy and policy

- NRS International Code of Conduct explicitly upholds the respect and protection of internationally proclaimed human rights. It is Principle number 4 of “The 16 Ethical Principles”: Safeguarding of fundamental Human Rights.
- In addition, the Bilqees Sarwar Foundation (BSF) is committed to right to freedom of religion and supports religious minorities and the right to education. BSF granted 50 scholarships to orphan students at Forman Christian College (FCC) in Lahore, Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
- Children of widowed or divorced employees, can apply for special scholarships offered by our Foundation.

Management systems

- We offer affordable staff accommodation to our support personnel in the Dubai office.
- We provide free and subsidized quality health care to all HSNDS employees and the greater community through our hospital, Bilqees Sarwar Hospital, in Lahore, Pakistan.
- We offer on-site place of worship (mosque) on the HSNDS factory premises.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Our Legal Office and Human Resource Departments ensures that our business adheres to the protection of human rights and we apply these principles in dealing with joint ventures partners, agents, contractors, and in our day-to-day operations.

Labor Rights

- 3.) Business should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- 4.) The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- 5.) The effective abolition of child labour.
- 6.) The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Our Actions and Outcomes:

Commitment, strategy and policy

- At NRS International and HSNDs we fully implement and adhere to local labour laws.
- We are committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace for all of our employees, customers and other guests who visits our premises.
- We prioritize diversity and inclusion in our workforce. At NRS International, we employ 38 staff (almost 50% women) who speak 19 different languages and who represent over 18 countries. 17 female staff and 21 males. Our Head of Department committee proves our diversity: Four female department heads and three male department heads.
- We have a zero tolerance for child labour and we support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- We are committed to equal pay for equal work and have a strong Female Empowerment agenda, which is solidified by our active role in the UN Women's Empowerment Principles.

Management systems

- At NRS International, we have invested in an external training and development programme for our HR Department to ensure our company is fully aware and compliant with the progressive changes in the UAE Labour law. This has resulted in new guidelines and recommendations to improve employee wellbeing and benefits.

- The company recognizes the importance of a ‘life-long learning’ and is committed to a Continuing education and training (CET) program. Our CET program are post-secondary trainings or courses offered as part our HR philosophy of investing in people and creating equal growth opportunities. Short courses are paid for by the company, longer studies are partially gifted (1/3) and partially remitted (2/3) depending of the length of employment after graduation.

Monitoring and evaluation

- At NRS International a new HR platform has been introduced. This employee self-service portal promotes transparency and empowers staff to manage key HR processes online.
- At HSNDS, we support the upholding of the freedom of association and the recognition of the right to collective bargaining according to the local laws. Management implements an open-door policy for monitoring, reporting and eliminating all forms of harassment and/or abuse.
- We carry out site inspections of third-party suppliers and have provisions in our Code of Conduct that allows us to terminate any contract that does not minimum standards for the health and safety and protection of workers.
- We actively encourage our clients (UN, aid agencies and bilateral donors) to visit our factory to carry out site inspections. In addition, we are audited by our key clients (UNHCR and ICRC to name only a few) on a regular basis.

Environmental Principles

- 7.) Business should support a precautionary approach to environment challenges.
- 8.) Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.
- 9.) Encourage the development and diffusion of environmental-friendly technology.

Our Actions and Outcomes:

Commitment, strategy and policy

- We are planning the conversion from high to low emissions fuel for the TANA Netting production facility (part of HSNDS). Investment has started mid 2017, with expected completion by start of 2018.

Management systems

- TANA Netting has improved the efficiency of loading long-lasting insecticidal nets containers. This has resulted in reducing emissions of CO2 by 5% compared a similar number of containers previously.
- This year HSND and NRS International have fully introduced Systems, Applications & Products (SAP) software to streamline our production.
- HSND operates an internal water recycling and purification system and recycles all production waste water.
- Energy consumption per unit or kg of fabric has been reduced by 6% by improvement of machinery.

Monitoring and evaluation

- We continuously review and improve our efforts to minimize our impact on the environment as per ISO 14001 (accredited).

Anti-Corruption

10.) Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Our Actions and Outcomes:

Commitment, strategy and policy

- Both NRS International and HSND strongly condemn any form of corruption and have a series of policy and procedures to ensure employee and company compliance.
- Our Code of Conduct prohibits promising, offering, and/or giving anything of value directly or indirectly, (e.g. through an intermediary such as agents, business consultants etc.), in order to obtain an improper advantage and/or to influence official action.
- In April 2017, we participated at the EY (Entrepreneurship of the Year) event in Dubai which focused on European, Middle Eastern, African and Indian fraud and corruption trends.

Management systems

- Staff and Line Managers have been trained on policies, covering, bribery and corruption, disclosure of material interests, coercion, conflicts of interest, confidentiality and how to report improper business practices.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Our Management Committee, established in 2016, plays a key role to ensure matters of corporate governance, policy making and processes have been adhered to and are in line with the principles and directions of the Board of Directors and/or Managing Director.
- TANA Netting is a paying member of the LLIN Integrity Pact (Basel Institute of Governance). We signed up three years ago and have since intensified our commitment.

Support of Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and Business for Peace

Supporting UN Goals and Issues and advocacy

We were nominated to co-chair the WEPs in supporting the UNGC platform in the UAE and we are now an active member of WEPs media work stream. We integrate both WEPs into the fabric of our company in the following ways.

Our actions toward WEPs include:

- Co-chair of WEPs Taskforce UAE
- Member of media work stream WEPs UAE
- Created WEPs 2017 strategy for UAE
- Developed marketing material to encourage new signatories to WEPs in the region
- Maintain flexible work hours for all staff members working Dubai
- Reintroduced our female factory in Pakistan to support 200 workers with plans to expand to 500 staff by end of 2018
- Provided scholarships in Pakistan for underprivileged boys and girls from early education to university.

Support to Business for Peace:

- We attended the 'Youth Engagement and the Global Refugee Crisis Conference' hosted by UNHCR and American University of Dubai to better understand the importance of mobilizing youth for humanitarian efforts.
- In March 2017, we launched 'Fly for Peace' exhibition featuring orphaned refugees' artworks that reflect their hopes for a peaceful future. This initiative was hosted by our family-run charity, [Bilgees Sarwar Foundation](#), in partnership with the [Dubai International Humanitarian Aid & Development Conference & Exhibition \(DIHAD\)](#). [Read more here](#)
- In June 2017, we kicked off our #LoveCoats project on World Refugee Day in June 2017 to empower Syrian refugees in Za'atari camp through fashion and design. [Read more here](#)

- We helped raise global awareness about Syrian refugee crisis and women empowerment through our #LoveCoats PR campaign on World Refugee Day. [Read more here](#)
- In May 2017, we participated at the International Refugee Conference organized by Union of Relief and Development Associations (URDA) in Beirut, Lebanon. [Read more here](#)
- In August 2017, we presented at the CEO Clubs Network Worldwide on the importance of board leadership in philanthropy and CSR.

Partnering for Sustainable Solutions

Partnerships

Now more than ever, we know that we cannot work in isolation, and the humanitarian and development landscape is shifting. SDG 17 recognizes that the ambitious goals cannot be achieved unless governments, civil society, the private and the UN systems and other stakeholders work together. This past year, we continued to create meaningful partnerships through various industry platforms to leverage expertise, pool resources, and share best practices. Through this collaborative approach we are creating systematic change to the aid, relief and development sectors. Partners and membership organizations include;

- UN Global Compact UAE
- UN Women's Empowerment Principles UAE
- Roll Back Malaria Partnership
- Vector Control Working Group
- Integrity Pact for global LLIN procurement
- Helen Storey Foundation with London College of Fashion, UAL
- Dubai International Humanitarian Aid & Development (DIHAD)
- Protect The People / Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
- Surge For Water
- Global Off-Grid Lighting Association (GOGLA)
- Energy Access Practitioner Network.

Our Commitment in Action: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDGs have garnered an incredible amount of enthusiasm since their inception in September 2015. These goals have given a platform for the private sector to incorporate social and environmental considerations into their business models and build new strategic public-private partnerships. In order to express our commitment, NRS International has put together a comparative display of our steps towards achieving the SDGs.



- Our company vision states that job creation in our community in Lahore is one of our key drivers, as this promotes economic empowerment, which is the single most successful way to escape poverty.



- Our sister company (owned by same family as NRS International) [Minha Farms](#) is committed to sustainable farming. Its herd of 3000 cows and produces 1.65 m liters quality milk per month
- Distributed over 7,000 iftar meals to HSNDS factory employees during annual Ramadan campaign in Pakistan
- Distributed thousands of food parcels and mobile credit vouchers to labourers in Dubai
- Attended the Holiday Inn – Dubai’s iftar meal to support the Emirates Red Crescent’s programs and malnutrition campaign.



- Our own Bilqees Sarwar Hospital (BSH) treats up to 12,500 patients per month, offering free and subsidized health care services:
- *Launched a kidney care campaign through GlobalGiving, the largest crowdfunding platform that connects NGOs, donors and companies around the world. The project will provide 500 quality dialysis treatments and 25 community awareness campaigns in Lahore*
- *Opened the Razia Begum Dialysis Centre as part of BSH to provide free quality treatment with a 32-bed capacity*
- *Launched the Free Eye Camp campaign to provide eye treatment to over 5,000 patients.*



- Our Foundation offered over 100 scholarships to students in Pakistan.



- Signatories and co-chair of the Women Empowerment Principles in the UAE. In addition, we provide marketing and Social Media support
- Reopened the female-only net stitching unit at HSND in Pakistan, completely managed and run by women. [Watch video](#)



- Developed and designed the Jerry Bucket in collaboration with Oxfam to improve WASH practices
- We have donated buckets to the charity [Surge for Water](#), we will use the buckets in their H2O corporate challenge to raise awareness to super water preservation.



- Produce and supply clean, affordable, solar energy through NRS Enlight
- Certified in environmental management system ISO 14001
- Certified in Social Accountability SA8000.



- Launched Innovation in Action campaign as core of our business strategy
- Improved safety in refugee camps by developing Fire Retardant core relief items
- ISO 9001 certified in quality management
- Launched synergist mosquito nets designed to counter resistance to standard pyrethroid nets using patented insecticide technology.



- Prioritize diversity and inclusion in our workforce
- We are committed to 'equal pay for equal work' principle
- Commitment to eliminate all forms of forced and compulsory labor
- Commitment to take robust measures to continue to improve safety measure policies at HSND.



- We run the Bilqees Sarwar Hospital to give free and subsidized quality healthcare for community members.



- Introduction of LEAN 5S Management program
- Reduced TANA Netting's production waste by 6%.



- We are an active member of multiple partnerships, including UN WEPs, Business for Peace, RBM Partnership, Vector Control Working Group and more. Aim is to create great collective impact through our partnerships.
 - We have donated to Protect the People, who empower and protect people affected by crisis. PTP has formed a partnership with Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) to prevent, mitigate and respond to civilian harm.
- Support causes revolving our education, public health and humanitarian assistance through the Bilqees Sarwar Foundation

Bilqees Sarwar Foundation

Social Investments and philanthropy

Our charitable arm, Bilqees Sarwar Foundation, continues to make contributions to public health, education and humanitarian response effort across the world. It was founded by the chairing family of NRS International and HSNDS, the Sarwar Family. To date, we have opened our own hospital, Bilqees Sarwar Hospital, launched scholarship programs, donated to public health programs in Pakistan, and provided so support to community-based organizations working in Pakistan and the Middle East. To learn more about our work, please visit our website at <http://www.bilqeessarwarfoundation.org/>.