

3





Making a corporate commitment on children's rights

This section provides examples, tools and tips for how to craft an organizational commitment to advancing children's rights issues.

When you have developed an initial understanding of how your company’s operating context relates to children and have prioritised your stakeholders, your company can use this information to make better informed commitments and take steps to make these public. However you may also find it useful to make policy commitments once you have undertaken human rights due diligence and have an understanding of your actual impacts on children. By aligning your corporate commitment with the issues identified, you can be certain that your goals are aligned with your business activity and key stakeholders.

ONE WAY IN which companies often communicate their commitments is through policies or guidance documents. Using the following steps, you can incorporate children’s rights into policies effectively:

ADDITIONAL TOOLS

-  **UNICEF:** “Children’s Rights in Policies and Codes of Conduct” is a specific tool on making commitments to children rights which includes guidance on content for certain types of commitments and policies.
-  **The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):** “The Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights” provides broader human rights commitment guidance based on the UN Guiding Principles’ on Business and Human Rights.
-  **The International Labor Organisation’s (ILO):** “Child Labour Guidance” is a tool that provides specific information on content and ensuring your commitments address conflicts between local laws and ILO conventions on child labour.
-  **Global Child Forum:** “Global Child Forum Best Practice on Child Labor Policy” includes best practice and tips on how to craft policy commitments regarding children’s rights in the context of child labor.”

STEP 1

Collate & review

- Collate all current and relevant policies and guidance documents, both those that specifically relate to children and more general guidance around employees, suppliers and business relationships.
- Review all public statements and commitments on children’s rights, human rights and broader sustainability issues.

STEP 2

Assess & develop

- Assess if children are accurately represented based on your operating context, stakeholders and salient issues.
- Review and update policies where appropriate.
- If necessary, consider making new commitments, policies and guidance documents to ensure children’s rights are adequately covered.

STEP 3

Check & test

- Engage relevant stakeholders such as suppliers, NGOs and child rights experts to ensure your policies fit the intended purpose.
- Check and test that the guidance meets the needs of your business. This could be done by asking employees or suppliers to read and use it where appropriate.

STEP 4

Communicate & make operational

- Share your commitments and policies with relevant stakeholders, internally and externally.
- Develop the processes and activities necessary to ensure your commitments and policies are embedded. This could include choosing the appropriate channels for communicating, providing training or developing KPIs to uphold the commitments.



TIPS FOR MAKING COMMITMENTS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- Align the comments to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children's Rights and Business Principles.
- Set clear expectations for the behaviours of employees, suppliers and other business partners, for example in the company's code of conduct.
- Reference or provide links to further guidance for employees and suppliers, etc.
- Relate supporting guidance back to core business activities and give examples relevant to your business.
- Consider where stand-alone commitments and policies are useful, vs integrating into current documents such as child safeguarding guidance.



CHECKLIST: MAKING A CORPORATE COMMITMENT ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Actions for sustainability and human rights practitioners:

Collate all current and relevant policies and guidance documents. Some may be specific to children, others may be more general guidance around employee, suppliers and business relationships.

Review all public statements and commitments on children's rights, human rights and broader sustainability issues.

Assess whether children are accurately represented based on your operating context, stakeholders and salient issues.

Review and update policies where appropriate. If necessary,

consider making new commitments, policies and guidance documents to ensure children's rights are adequately covered.

Engage relevant stakeholders such as suppliers, NGOs and child rights experts to ensure your policies are fit for intended purpose.

Check and test that the guidance meets the needs of your business. This could be done by asking employees or suppliers to read and use it where appropriate.

Share your commitments and policies with relevant stakeholders, internally and externally.

Develop the processes and activities necessary to ensure your commitments and policies are embedded. This could include choosing the right channels for communicating, providing training or developing KPIs to uphold the commitments.

Microsoft

Global Human Rights Statement

MICROSOFT INCORPORATES CHILDREN'S rights into their wider human rights statement, including referencing the Children's Rights and Business Principles and children as a vulnerable group to be given special consideration: "... Our business operations are informed by the human rights guidelines described in the following documents: International Labour Organization's (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and Children's Rights and Business Principles, and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises... Vulnerable groups: In meeting our com-

mitment to respect human rights, we give special consideration to vulnerable groups such as children, women, and persons with disabilities. We strive to ensure that our technology, business activities, and employment practices are respectful of the human rights of all individuals and empower every person to achieve more, consistent with the relevant human rights defined in the: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities".⁶

TUI: CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

TUI has developed a stand-alone child protection policy recognising its direct contact with children

"TUI Travel PLC is committed to child protection – both those we take on holiday and those in destinations. We condemn the exploitation of children, a fundamental abuse of a child's human rights and dignity, and we reserve the right to immediately terminate business with any person or company that is engaged or associated with any form of exploitation. Travel and tourism businesses have an important role to play in protecting children's rights. The TUI Travel PLC Code of Conduct commits the Group to upholding the principles of the UN Global Compact."⁷

ISS: POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

ISS undertook a deep dive of their policies and developed a dedicated child protection policy to protect children their employees come into contact with. They outline the environments that are relevant and discuss local implementation requirements.⁸

