

## 1. Letter of Commitment



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Period covered: 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

His Excellency António Guterres  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

Dear Secretary General

I am pleased to confirm that Self Help Africa reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

SHA is passionate about being a force for good and draws on the principles of the UNGC to shape its internal policies and the programmes that it supports.

In this annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continually improve the integration of the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication. Our Annual Report and Accounts are also available to download [through our website](#).

Sincerely yours,

*Raymond Jordan*

Ray Jordan  
Chief Executive Officer

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Self Help Africa is the trading name of the Gorta Group. The Group vision is an economically thriving and resilient rural Africa. Our values place the protection and advancement of human rights at the core of our organisation. In 2019 Self Help Africa (SHA) implemented a portfolio of 32 projects across Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Togo, Uganda and Zambia, working with smallholder farmers, farmer associations, cooperatives and agribusinesses to help farmers grow and sell more food, improve diets, diversify incomes and make their livelihoods more sustainable and resilient to external shocks. In Self Help Africa we recognise the principle we will respect others and succeed together.

**WHAT WE DO**

- AGRICULTURE & NUTRITION**  
Over 70% of Africa's poorest people live on small farms. We help these farming families achieve their potential to grow much more and earn more from their land.
- COOPERATIVES**  
We bring communities together - working as a cooperative means farmers can access new markets and earn a better income from their produce.
- GENDER**  
We're working to level the gender field in sub-Saharan Africa. When women receive the same support as men, yields increase 20-30%.
- MICROFINANCE**  
We invest in people - providing access to small loans through microfinance gives impoverished rural families the means to improve their farms, so they can grow, eat and sell more.
- CLIMATE SMART**  
Those least responsible for climate change are the most affected by global warming. We support vulnerable communities to adapt to changing climate, through climate smart agricultural techniques.
- ENTERPRISE**  
We nurture small businesses and encourage enterprise, enabling households to earn a vital alternative source of income.

The Group is a partnership of three organisations Self Help Africa, TruTrade and Partner Africa. All three group organisations are united by the common goal of creating a thriving, fair and inclusive economy in Sub-Saharan Africa that provides opportunities for all. We work to provide individuals, communities, and enterprises with access to skills, finance, and markets to help improve livelihoods in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

**Self Help Africa** works with smallholder farmers, farmer associations, cooperatives, and agribusinesses to help poor rural households grow and sell more food, improve diets, diversify, and increase incomes and make their livelihoods more sustainable and resilient to climate change and external shocks. **TruTrade** provides smallholder farmers and small agribusinesses with a reliable route to better, more profitable markets. **Partner Africa** focuses on improving the working conditions of employees that are engaged in international supply chains. It works predominately with major international brands, retailers, and their suppliers in Africa to support the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

### 1. How the Gorta Group has promoted Human Rights in its operations.

The Gorta Group has a set of employment policies and practices that ensure that the Human Rights of all of its employees are met, these policies are reviewed each year in order to ensure that they are in line with best practice. In 2019 Self Help Africa:

- Committed to demonstrating leadership in the area of safeguarding and, in doing so, confirm its responsibility and duty to comply with standards of good practice to safeguard all and prevent harm. We understand Safeguarding to mean protecting people, including children and at risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our employees or programmes. This approach has been paraphrased by the UK Charity Commission to comprise “safeguarding by staff/partners, safeguarding of staff/partner staff and safeguarding from staff/partner’s staff. Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.
- Introduced our Safeguarding Framework, articulated around the principles of *prevention, protection and response*. We defined clear roles and responsibilities, developed structures and protocols and started training on our ‘suite’ of safeguarding policies. We embarked on an in person training programme for our governance and leadership teams and all Self help Africa staff.
- Appointed in Board, HQ and country Safeguarding focal points.
- To further our support of the Sustainable Development Goals and adopt a principles-based approach to doing business, in 2019 SHA became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact ( UNGC).
- In addition to internal reporting options, we have in place a third-party external provider available which allows for on-line reporting and anonymous reporting.
- Shared our message on these principles through our website, in our publications, in recruitment, in procurement documentation.
- Developed a suite of posters to be used in our offices and at sites of operation that give clear messages and provide information on mechanisms for reporting and raising concerns.
- We successfully piloted a new eight-week ‘Social Justice’ module with Professional Master of Education students at NUI Maynooth in Spring 2019.
- We continued collaborating with UCC and UCD, delivering lectures and exploring opportunities for research collaboration. In particular delivered in UCD on SDGs Goal 2.

At the heart of our policies is our [Code of Conduct](#) which all staff, volunteers, contractors, and partners are required to adhere to. The Code of Conduct is supported by whistleblowing/complaints policies so that misconduct can be escalated and dealt with appropriately. We reviewed our policies to ensure they were appropriate. In particular, Safeguarding Policy Statement, Child Protection Policy, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, Complaints Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Email and Internet Use Policy, Recruitment Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Human Rights and Anti Trafficking Policy, Dignity in Work - Anti Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy, Dignity in Work – Anti Bullying Policy, Terms and Conditions applicable to Works, Supplies and Services and Consultants’ templates.

#### *Global Standards*

Our policies are guided by the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance and their PSEAH ((Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment) Implementation Quick Reference Handbook. The IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse form part of our safeguarding training.

## 2. How the Gorta Group promotes Human Rights in its programmes.

The mission of SHA is to support sustainable livelihoods for Africa's smallholder farmers and ensuring that they have the right to a decent income livelihood through which small holders can realise their rights.

- A success story from **Zambia** was the number of women (1,113 F and 392 M) whose financial independence had increased arising from their participation in newly formed Accumulating Savings and Credit Association (ASCAs) in two programmes. This is a common trend in all our Village Savings & Loan associations and ASCAs across our programmes and is one of our key strategies for increasing women's financial independence and their capacity to benefit more equally by having more control over household income.

Part of the Group is Partner Africa, whose mandate it to support companies implement the UNGP's on Business and Human Rights in Africa which are founded on the UNGC.

The Group's third organisation TruTrade focuses on promoting fair trade practices and ensuring that companies pay a fair price to farmers in Uganda and Kenya so that they have monies to realise their basic human rights. Their leading work in this area was recognised several times in 2019:

- TruTrade was chosen as the winner of the 'Award for Global Prosperity' in the Rural Transformation and Zero Hunger category. The Global Prosperity Awards celebrate innovators whose projects were seen to have the greatest potential to have positive impact on society, while aligning closely to the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- TruTrade was also named a Certified B Corporation Best for World honouree, ranking in the top 10% of all B Corps across the impact areas of the environment, workforce, local communities, suppliers, customers, and corporate governance.
- TruTrade were selected by the World Bank Disruptive Agricultural Technology Challenge in Kenya. The award is made under the One Million Farmer Initiative spearheaded by the World Bank Group, along with the Kenya Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture, Fisheries and Irrigation and Korea-World Bank Partnership Facility and others. TruTrade's entry came first in the Market Linkage segment.
- They were shortlisted for a global award for innovation which saw their platform is amongst the projects and ideas that have been selected for the 2019 finals of the prestigious Index Project Awards. "We teach, award and invest in people using design to change the world – what we call design to improve life," explain the award organisers. TruTrade's innovation has transformed how the middleman works in African trade, enabling smallholder farmers to sell secure markets at an agreed price while their crops are still in the ground, and receive payment by mobile money transfer once they have delivered their goods. The system has provided transparency and security for small-holder producers and has allowed them to avoid exploitation by dealers and middlemen.

## LABOUR

### 1. How the Gorta Group has promoted Labour Rights in its operations.

The Gorta Group is committed to creating an environment that promotes equality and diversity at work. The Gorta Group outlines their commitment to respect our employees' right to join, form or not to join a labour union without fear of reprisal, intimidation, or harassment in our Human Rights and Anti-trafficking Policy. A remuneration Committee exists and has ultimate responsibility for the remuneration policy of the organisation in line with best practice in this area.

- Remuneration is reviewed annually with the aid of salary surveys from third party providers to ensure effective decisions are evidence based and salaries keep pace with local markets.
- In 2019 our recruitment policy was revised to ensure employment related decisions are based on relevant and objective criteria and that employees are employed through a competitive and transparent process to ensure employment had been freely chosen.
- The Group has a staff consultation committee -where all workers have the opportunity to express confidently their concerns and ideas on how they want to the organisation can development so that they can flourish in their role that met quarterly.

### 2. How the Gorta Group promotes Labour Rights in its programmes.

The Group has a number of programmes that focus on improving working conditions and ensure decent work. Through its audit and advisory programme Partner Africa supported companies adopt the ILO conventions:-



In 2019 in the Group:

- 'Partner Africa worked with 1,000 African companies engaged in agri-business, apparel, manufacturing and mining sectors.
- Partner Africa is estimated to have improved work conditions for close to 100,000 employees through their work.
- WorldWide Global Schools (WWGS), the Irish Aid global education programme run through a Self Help Africa led consortium, supported more than 200 schools, school clusters, networks and NGOs with a broad range of activities. Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. GCE inspires global solidarity by supporting people to fully realise their rights, responsibilities and potential as global citizens in order to take meaningful action for a just and sustainable world.
- In 2019 7,000 students participated in educational events and activities delivered by our Development Education team. Development Education aims to empower the full participation of all citizens in world-wide poverty eradication, the fight against inequality and the realisation of sustainability. It seeks to influence Irish civil society and government towards more just and sustainable economic, social, environmental, human rights based national and international policies.
- In **Ireland**, we actively engaged in sector consultations following the adoption of the new Government international development policy 'A Better World' and contributed to the OECD DAC Peer Review of Ireland.

## ENVIRONMENT

### 1. How the Gorta Group has promoted good environmental practices in its operations.

We have an Environmental Policy that captures their responsible resource use goals. It is strengthened and supported by our Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy.

- Self Help Africa have an Environmental Committee that meet and advise the organisation on areas they see as appropriate for improvement.
- Self Help Africa host IFIAD (The Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development). IFIAD is a voluntary, multi disciplinary platform, bringing together actors from the agri-food sector to share knowledge and good practices for the benefit of agricultural development programming and policy in support of Irelands development objectives. Self Help Africa hosted and presented at the 2019 conference 'Sustainable Diets & Equitable Food Systems in a Changing Climate'.
- As part of Global Green event at Electric Picnic, more than 500 attendees visited our tent, while close to 1,000 visited our tent at the National Ploughing Championships.
- A new photographic exhibition, 'Women on the Frontline of Climate Change' was displayed at Electric Picnic, at the National Ploughing Championships, and at NUI Galway.

### 2. How the Gorta Group has promoted good environmental practices in its programmes.

SHA's agriculture interventions are designed to achieve ecological intensification of production systems while increasing the climate resilience of farmers, farming communities, agro-entrepreneurs, and food systems at large.

Examples of projects applying these interventions in 2019 include:

Zambia - Protecting and Restoring the Environment by Supporting the Emergence of a Resilient and Vibrant Economy in the Kafue Sub-basin

- PRESERVE Kafue focuses on sustainable utilisation of the wetlands and protection of other natural resources along the Kafue flats in three districts; Mazabuka, Monze and Namwala. 12 communities (3125 project participants) in 12 Wards in the three districts used substantiable natural resource management practices, striking a balance between utilisation and preservation of natural resources. 24 Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMCs) were established in 11 communities (wards) in Mazabuka, Monze and Namwala districts under this project. These spearheaded community activities which included sensitisation meetings, formulation of by-laws to preserve natural resources, establishment of tree nurseries (12,000+ seedlings) and planting of fruit trees, and trees for other uses (fodder, fuel, wood, poles, nitrogen fixing in the soil and general reclaiming of deforested land. The VNRMCs engaged local leadership and other community members in Natural Resource Management campaigns, resource mapping, tree nursery development, tree planting and development of Participatory Land Use Maps (PLUM). Collective community engagement helps develop collective responsibility and instils ownership of process. 1500 SHFs (975 female; 525 male) planted at least two fruit trees and/or Moringa at their homesteads as a way of sensitizing their families in natural resource management through tree planting. Planting of fruit trees has the capacity to restore the environment and will provide the households with nutritious food.

Kenya - KILIMO Value Chains: Kenyan Initiative for Long Term Integration of Market Operators in Value Chains

- 5,822 hectares are under climate smart agriculture, with contracted companies have promoted CSA through farmer activities such as use of climate resilient/ drought tolerant seed varieties (e.g. Hybrid and Bthybridcotton3, pyrethrum, sorghum), resilient livestock breeds, safe use and disposal of chemical products, integrated pest management, soil corrections based on soil testing and fertiliser recommendation, access to micro-irrigation equipment, promotion of conservation agriculture, minimum tillage, use of bio-fertilisers and training on good agricultural practices.
- Across 13 Agri-enterprises who are promoting sustainable environmental practices, 22,974 smallholder farmers are practicing good agricultural and animal husbandry practices, promotion of climate tolerant seed varieties, wastewater management and utilisation technologies, integrated pest management and soil conservation.

#### Ethiopia - Strengthening& Scaling up of rehabilitation of degraded lands and enhancement of livelihoods in Lake Ziway catchment

- To ameliorate the multiphase challenge of the natural resources degradation of the project area, it has been planned to scale up improved fuel efficient stove among the project target community. Community Led Total Stove (CLTS) entails the facilitation of the community's analysis of their fuel wood consumption, their practices of deforestation and the consequences on their livelihood, leading to collective action to adopt more sustainable use strategies. The project provides 300 Mirt improved stove (used for baking injera) to 300 women and the community have also contributed and purchased another 300 Tikikil stove. Twenty four communities established area enclosures to contain gully formation/expansion and restore the natural vegetation on about 200 hectare of land as part of worja washgula micro watershed rehabilitation in 2019. Widespread deforestation has resulted in environmentally, economically and aesthetically impoverished landscapes. In an effort to halt the further degradation of natural resource, the project has followed a functional landscape approach to build local capacity to manage ecosystem services sustainably while enhancing peoples' opportunities to develop their livelihoods. In 2019, the project has raised about 500,000 tree seedlings. As part of the rehabilitation work, construction of 4000 m stone bunds, 8500 m soil bunds, 11000 m stone faced bunds, 336 meter cube of gabion box and 150 trenches and 525 trenches were done by 256 community members organized into working groups.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

### 1. How the Gorta Group has promoted good anti -corruption practices in its operations.

In the group, we revised and developed a “suite” of wrongdoing policies in 2018 central to which are its Code of Conduct and [Anti-Corruption and Anti-Fraud](#) policies. In 2019:

- A staff awareness programme was run with in person training for all staff. The Self Help Africa Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy is linked and strengthened by, Self Help Africa Whistleblowing Policy, Self Help Africa Code of Conduct, Self Help Africa Conflict of Interest Policy and Serious Wrongdoing Reporting and Investigation procedures.
- A series of posters were developed to share the message in our country offices and operations sites in a format that allows translation to local languages and dialects.
- Our tender and contract documents, websites, and partner MOUs were updated to reinforce the message.
- Self Help Africa recognised that key to supporting our anti-fraud and anti-corruption messaging would be reporting and made available multiple methods of reporting which include internal and external options. Our external provider in 2019 was Expolink and the supplier provided phone numbers, email addresses and web reporting options. This allowed anonymous reporting.

### 2. How the Gorta Group has promoted good anti -corruption practices in its programmes.

Fraud, bribery and corruption impact disproportionately on the poor and the most vulnerable people in the world. Such criminal activities divert resources intended for humanitarian assistance and development away from our intended beneficiaries; they increase the costs of basic public services; and undermine economic growth. Such actions are a barrier to poverty alleviation and good governance. We seek to educate in our programmes. Examples in our programmes include:

- **The AgriFI Kenya Challenge Fund** is a European Union initiative to support productive and market-integrated smallholder agriculture through the provision of financial support worth EUR 18,000,000 to agri- enterprises. The aim is to contribute to improvements in the capacity of smallholder farmers/pastoralists to practise environmentally sustainable and climate-smart agriculture as a business in inclusive value chains. The Challenge Fund is funded by the European Union, co-funded by SlovakAid and managed by Self Help Africa. The European Investment Bank (EIB, under the AgriFI Kenya programme is providing long term local currency financing to Equity Bank (Kenya) Limited for on-lending to eligible food and agriculture sector project. In 2019 we opened the first and second round calls on the Agri Fi Challenge Fund At the initial stage. To promote good under Principle 10 of the Compact, the call guidelines included a section entitled “**Ethics clauses, Code of Conduct, Fraud, Bribery and Corruption**”, a comprehensive section which was clear in its detail and outlined a zero tolerance for abuse (financial or safeguarding) which outlined the expectation from participants to the calls to aspire to the highest business standards. We follow this at application stage where we state the policies in our Terms and Conditions and an applicant has to confirm acceptance before proceeding. We include the policies as part of our contract documents that successful applicants sign, in that way binding both parties to work against corruption.
- In Kenya, we worked with 27 micro & small enterprises to build their capacity in governance, financial management and accessing funding (+59% since 2018), we also supported 179 small businesses for youths in Kisumu county.

- In Uganda, Train 40 farmers groups on group dynamics, leadership, governance and financial management and on monitoring, evaluation and learning, so they can track progress and hold group leaders to account.
- In Uganda, Self Help Africa are a member of The Internal Risk Management Group (IMRG) which was established in 2018 to enable Country Directors of international NGOs to engage in a safe space to discuss challenges of fraud, corruption, and safeguarding. The specific objective of the group is to reduce or mitigate the risks of fraud and corruption, SEA and other breaches of organizational codes of conduct by INGO staff and third parties such as local partners, sub awardees, vendors, contractors and local volunteers.

### 3. MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

#### 1. Gorta Group operations.

Group employees 339 = number of employees all of which have benefited from its polices

#### 2. Gorta Group programmes.



378,782 Households supported  
76% INCREASE SINCE 2018



9,156 Households have improved their knowledge of  
Nutrition and Hygiene Practices  
12.5% INCREASE SINCE 2018

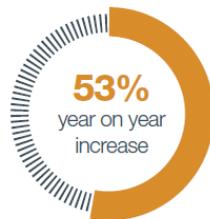


+237% - The increase in Hectares- of Farmland applying  
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT practices since 2018



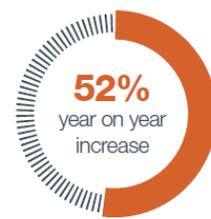
**275,741**

Households with  
increased production



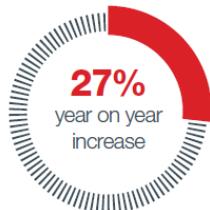
**352,044**

Diversified farming  
systems



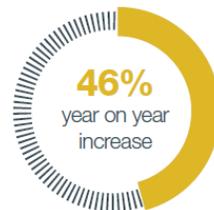
**214,626**

Families with  
increased resilience



**265,018**

Increased access to  
financial services



## Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals

The Gorta group of companies continues to adopt a principles based approach to help companies deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. Our work directly contributes to 8 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

-  **1 NO POVERTY**
  - Supporting smallholder farmers to earn more, grow more and access markets and fair prices
  - Supporting small enterprises to grow, access new markets and provide off-farm job opportunities in rural areas
-  **2 ZERO HUNGER**
  - Providing communities with access high-quality drought seed and training farmers in agricultural techniques to maximise yields
  - Training communities on nutrition, infant nutrition and dietary diversity
-  **3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
  - Founding and supporting community groups to provide training on nutrition, with a particular focus on infant nutrition and combatting infant malnutrition and stunting
-  **5 GENDER EQUALITY**
  - Providing community training and dialogue on gender relations, social inclusion and gender based violence
  - Providing access to skills, markets and finance for female smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs
-  **8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
  - Supporting enterprises to access investment, grow, access new markets and integrate into global supply chains. Doing this promotes inclusive trade and the creation of successful enterprises and new jobs
-  **13 CLIMATE ACTION**
  - Providing training for communities build resilience to climate change, focusing on supporting these communities adapt their agricultural processes and techniques and access new technologies
-  **15 LIFE ON LAND**
  - Training and supporting communities to manage their natural resources, forests, grazing land and soils to ensure agricultural land and rural landscapes are not degraded
-  **17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**
  - Lobbying and influencing to mobilise resources and better target overseas development assistance
  - Partner with academic and research institutions to better integrate new technologies and approaches into development work

The Gorta Group through Self Help Africa is active in a number of partnerships and networks in Ireland. We currently hold the chair of the Dochas Development Education Group, co-chair Irish Development Education Association's Formal Education Working Group, and continue a long-standing relationship with Changemakers Donegal, work is aligned to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contributing to their accredited QQI course delivery.

In 2019 we staged our 17th annual Science for Development Award at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition. We participated in the annual Sustainability Ireland Conference at Croke Park, in the annual WorldWide Global Schools Conference and in the inaugural 'Elements of Change Festival at CloughJordan Eco-Village in Tipperary. In establishing that there was no Global Compact Local Network we organised the first meeting of the Irish participants for Quarter 1, 2020.