

Brussels, 1 June 2017

To the UN Global Compact

**Regarding the dialogue facilitation process between WSRW and UN Global Compact**

Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) thanks Global Compact for the email of 22 May 2017, in which it refers to a statement published on Global Compact's website dated 16 May 2017. The statement relates to the dialogue facilitation process which Global Compact had started between Vigeo Eiris and "a third party".

[https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/publications/UN\\_Global\\_Compact\\_Statement\\_16%20May\\_2017.pdf](https://www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/publications/UN_Global_Compact_Statement_16%20May_2017.pdf)

That third party is our association, Western Sahara Resource Watch. The question at stake is that Vigeo Eiris has failed – and still fails – to reply to questions relating to certification of Moroccan energy projects in occupied Western Sahara. It is our understanding that adherents to Global Compact are expected to respond to concerns from civil society.

We are, however, disappointed to read your statement, both the conclusion and the argumentation.

Allow us to reconstruct the chronology of this matter.

3 March 2017, the magazine *Responsible Investor* covers a request by WSRW to UNGC for help to facilitate dialogue. Vigeo Eiris had at the time failed to respond to our questions for more than 3 months.

16 March 2017, Global Compact sends a mail to Vigeo Eiris explaining that it had taken on a dialogue facilitation process and that Vigeo Eiris has "2 months from today" to respond to WSRW.

20 March 2017, a source in Global Compact confirm in a new article by *Responsible Investor*, that a dialogue facilitation process has been initiated. No information about the process itself is covered. Comments previously given by Vigeo Eiris to *Responsible Investor* are reproduced.

20 April 2017, Global Compact has a phone conference with WSRW relating to the general principles involved in a dialogue facilitation process. The Vigeo Eiris case is specifically avoided in the talks. WSRW expressed to Global Compact that it was aware of the confidential nature of such process, and that it could not comment externally.

16 May 2017, exactly two months after dialogue started, and without WSRW having heard from the company, Global Compact decides to drop the case, underlining that it "expects parties to maintain the confidentiality of the process to foster collaboration and regrets that this has not happened in the present case". The decision is posted on the UNGC website.

22 May 2017, Global Compact communicates to WSRW the decision which had already been taken, and the statement that was already published.

It should be stressed that at no point in time did WSRW contact the media during the facilitation process and that Global Compact was the one responsible for confirming that the process had started. From what WSRW understands, neither of the two parties commented to any media regarding the facilitation process. WSRW was asked by the mentioned journal regarding the

facilitation process, but WSRW purposely stated that it did not want to comment on it, as we are aware of the importance of confidentiality in such processes.

We believe that the unfair character of the decision to stop the process is only made more blatant by the fact that “the parties” seem to have been given the blame in a public statement on your website.

We, who asked for Global Compact’s assistance, have not leaked any information during the process, we have not been consulted regarding the termination of the dialogue, and we find the argumentation invalid and misleading.

Based on this process, WSRW has the following questions to Global Compact:

- 1) Why did Global Compact choose to tell the media about the facilitation shortly after the mediation had started?
- 2) Was a decision to stop the process communicated to or discussed with Vigeo Eiris in advance of the publication of the decision on 16 May 2017?
- 3) Was Vigeo Eiris allowed to give input to the statement prior to its publication?
- 4) Was the board of UNGC involved in the decision to stop the process, or was the decision made by the secretariat?
- 5) Why does UN Global Compact formulate the statement as if the case was leaked by “the parties”, when this is not the case?
- 6) Taking into account that none of our letters or questions have been answered, why does UN Global Compact write in its public statement that it “acknowledges Vigeo Eiris’ responses to the third party’s concerns that can be found in the public domain”?

We regret to see this process conclude in this way. We believe such decisions do not contribute to strengthen the integrity and image of Global Compact.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding our questions.

A copy of this mail is sent to Vigeo Eiris and *Responsible Investor*.

Finally, WSRW refers to a letter sent from us to UN Global Compact 30 May, in which WSRW had mentioned that Vigeo Eiris had confirmed the facilitation in an article in *Responsible Investor* on 20 March. After sending that letter, we were made aware that these Vigeo Eiris quotes were copied from an earlier published article in the same journal. This letter we send you here, dated 1 June, has removed the erroneous references to Vigeo Eiris’s quotes, *and we ask you to look away from the letter we sent you on 30 May*.

Sincerely,

/sign/.

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