

# Statement on Adherence to UN Principles and Intergovernmental Organization Standards

*Asylum Research & Global Assistance*

## **Preamble**

Asylum Research & Global Assistance (“ARGA”) affirms, as a matter of institutional principle and operational discipline, its unequivocal commitment to conduct all governance, strategic planning, program implementation, partnership activity, and administrative practice in a manner consistent with the core principles and normative standards articulated by the United Nations and by leading intergovernmental and multilateral institutions, including, where applicable, the World Trade Organization, the OECD, the International Labour Organization, and other recognized international bodies. This commitment is not merely declaratory. It constitutes a **binding internal standard of conduct**, informing decision-making at every level of the organization and serving as a foundational reference for integrity, accountability, and lawful administration.

ARGA recognizes that international legitimacy is not achieved through rhetoric, but through **disciplined adherence to principles of human dignity, legality, transparency, proportionality, non-discrimination, good faith, and institutional responsibility**. Accordingly, ARGA aligns its activities with the universal objectives advanced by the United Nations system, including the protection of fundamental rights, the promotion of peace and security, the advancement of social and economic justice, the encouragement of cooperation among states and institutions, and the safeguarding of vulnerable persons and communities. In operational terms, this means that ARGA shall not knowingly participate in, support, or tolerate any practice that would materially conflict with these principles, including conduct involving discrimination, exploitation, corruption, coercion, abuse of power, concealment of material facts, or the deliberate circumvention of ethical or legal obligations.

ARGA further acknowledges the significance of the normative architecture developed through international economic, labor, and governance frameworks. **Where its work intersects with trade, labor standards, cross-border cooperation, institutional partnerships, or development-related activity, ARGA shall observe the relevant principles of fairness, due process, equal treatment, decent work, freedom from forced or exploitative labor, respect for lawful competition, responsible conduct, and the rejection of arbitrary or discriminatory practices**. In particular, ARGA recognizes that respect for labor dignity, workplace safety, lawful remuneration, and the protection of human agency are not peripheral concerns, but essential conditions of ethical operations. No operational convenience,

financial incentive, political pressure, or administrative preference shall override these core commitments.

This statement also reflects ARGA's understanding that **accountability is a duty, not a discretionary virtue**. ARGA shall maintain internal governance mechanisms designed to promote traceability of decisions, proportional oversight, documentation integrity, responsible risk management, and corrective action where deficiencies are identified. The organization shall seek to ensure that its policies, procedures, and external engagements are capable of withstanding professional, ethical, and legal scrutiny. ARGA therefore expects its officers, personnel, consultants, representatives, and affiliated counterparts to act with candor, restraint, competence, and fidelity to the purposes of the organization. **Any abuse of authority, misrepresentation of facts, conflict of interest, or material deviation from these standards will be treated as a serious breach of trust.**

In support of these commitments, ARGA shall endeavor to ensure that its programs and partnerships are consistent with the following overriding principles: **respect for human rights and inherent dignity; equality and non-discrimination; lawful and responsible governance; integrity in financial and administrative conduct; transparency in material decision-making; respect for labor rights and social protection; prevention of corruption and abuse; and continuous institutional accountability.** These principles shall guide not only formal policy, but also practical implementation, monitoring, and review.

This statement is issued as a formal expression of ARGA's institutional posture and ethical framework. It shall be interpreted in a manner that preserves the highest standard of lawful and principled conduct, and shall be applied consistently across all relevant functions, unless a stricter legal, regulatory, or contractual obligation applies. **ARGA rejects any interpretation of its mission that would dilute these commitments or permit their selective application.** The organization's credibility, independence, and public purpose depend upon steadfast observance of these standards in both letter and spirit.

**Accordingly, ARGA declares its continuing commitment to act in conformity with the principles of the United Nations and the relevant standards of intergovernmental cooperation, and to hold itself accountable to the highest standards of professional integrity, legal precision, and moral responsibility.**

## **I. ADOPTED UNITED NATIONS PRINCIPLES & DECLARATIONS**

The following **United Nations principles, declarations, and normative instruments** constitute the foundational legal and ethical framework governing the protection of human dignity, the prohibition of abuse and discrimination, the advancement of equality, and the promotion of accountable, rights-based governance. Collectively, they represent **binding moral authority, universal normative standards, and globally recognized interpretive guidance** for states, institutions, private actors, and humanitarian organizations. They affirm that **human rights are inherent, indivisible, interdependent, and universally applicable**, and that no authority, policy, or institutional practice may lawfully or ethically derogate from the core principles of dignity, equality, justice, inclusion, and remedy.

## 1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

**Adopted:** 10 December 1948

**Official Document:** <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/u...>

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** remains the **foundational moral and legal charter of modern human rights law**. It establishes, with unequivocal clarity, that every human being is entitled to **equal dignity, equal rights, and equal protection of the law** without distinction of any kind, including race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The Declaration affirms the absolute primacy of **human dignity** as the source and justification of all rights, and it rejects any system that treats persons as expendable, inferior, or conditionally protected. It guarantees freedom from **arbitrary arrest, torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment**, and it secures the rights to **fair and public hearing, due process, privacy, freedom of movement, thought, conscience, religion, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, and association**. It also recognizes economic and social rights, including the rights to **work, education, an adequate standard of living, health, security, and participation in the cultural life of the community**. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, the UDHR is not merely historical text; it is the **baseline ethical and legal standard** against which all claims of state legitimacy, institutional conduct, and humanitarian practice must be measured. Any action that denies dignity, suppresses liberty, or normalizes discrimination stands in direct conflict with the Declaration's universal mandate.

## 2. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

**Adopted:** 13 September 2007

**Official Document:** <https://www.un.org/development/d...>

The **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to exist, endure, flourish, and govern their own cultural, social, political, and spiritual development according to their own identities, institutions, and traditions. It gives authoritative expression to the principle of **self-determination**, recognizing that Indigenous peoples are not historical remnants or passive beneficiaries of state policy, but **distinct peoples with inherent rights, collective continuity, and legally protected relationships to land, territory, resources, language, and ancestral heritage**. The Declaration requires **free, prior, and informed consent** in matters affecting Indigenous lands, territories, and resources, and it rejects dispossession, forced assimilation, cultural erasure, and exclusion from decision-making. It further affirms the rights to **cultural preservation, language integrity, traditional knowledge, spiritual practice, education, health, and participation in public life on equal and non-discriminatory terms**. UNDRIP is especially significant because it recognizes that harms against Indigenous communities are often not isolated abuses but part of systemic patterns of displacement, structural violence, and historical injustice. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, this instrument demands an uncompromising commitment to **restoration, consultation, cultural respect, land integrity, and the protection of Indigenous collective identity**.

### 3. UN Declaration on the Right to Development

**Adopted:** 4 December 1986

**Official Document:** <https://www.un.org/documents/ga/...>

The **UN Declaration on the Right to Development** establishes development as a **human right**, not a discretionary policy preference, technocratic objective, or macroeconomic privilege. It affirms that every person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development in which **all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized**. The Declaration rejects development models that deepen inequality, exploit vulnerability, centralize benefits among elites, or exclude affected populations from meaningful participation. It requires that development be **equitable, participatory, sustainable, and centered on the human person as the subject and beneficiary of development**, rather than treating communities as instruments of state or market priorities. It also places a responsibility upon states and institutions to ensure fair distribution of resources, transparent governance, and equal access to the benefits of progress, especially for populations historically marginalized by poverty, conflict, corruption, or exclusion. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, the right to development must be understood as a **non-negotiable standard of justice**: development cannot be called legitimate if it is built upon coercion, deprivation, exclusion, or the sacrifice of vulnerable populations for the convenience of others.

### 4. UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

**Adopted:** 13 December 2006

**Official Document:** <https://www.un.org/development/d...>

The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is a landmark legal instrument that decisively rejects the charity-based or paternalistic treatment of persons with disabilities and replaces it with a rights-based framework grounded in **autonomy, dignity, accessibility, inclusion, and equality of opportunity**. The Convention recognizes that disability arises not merely from individual impairment but from the interaction between persons and **physical, institutional, communicative, social, and attitudinal barriers** that deny equal participation. It therefore requires states and institutions to eliminate discrimination in all areas of life, including **education, employment, access to justice, healthcare, political participation, mobility, information, communication, and public services**. The CRPD also emphasizes **reasonable accommodation, universal design, accessibility, independent living, personal autonomy, and full participation in society**. It is a categorical rejection of exclusionary systems that isolate, silence, or devalue persons with disabilities. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, the CRPD imposes an affirmative duty to ensure that disability is never treated as grounds for diminished rights, reduced credibility, or institutional neglect. **Equal access is not a gesture of goodwill; it is a legal and ethical obligation.**

## 5. UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

**Adopted:** 18 December 1979

**Official Document:** <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/da...>

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** is the principal international treaty addressing the structural subordination of women and girls. It requires states and institutions to eliminate discrimination in both law and practice and to dismantle the cultural, social, political, economic, and institutional systems that perpetuate inequality. CEDAW is not limited to formal equality; it requires **substantive equality**, meaning that women must enjoy real and effective access to rights, opportunities, protection, and participation under conditions that are genuinely equal in outcome and not merely equal in theory. The Convention addresses discrimination in **public life, employment, education, healthcare, family relations, nationality, political participation, legal capacity, and access to justice**, while also recognizing the need to address violence, coercion, harmful stereotypes, and reproductive and maternal discrimination. It is grounded in the principle that women are not secondary participants in society, but **equal rights holders whose autonomy, bodily integrity, economic agency, and political voice are indispensable to justice and democratic legitimacy**. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, CEDAW requires a firm rejection of all practices that normalize silence, dependency, exploitation, or exclusion of women and girls. **Gender discrimination is not a private inconvenience; it is a structural violation of human rights.**

## 6. UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

**Adopted:** 21 June 2011

**Official Document:** <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/...>

The **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** establish the authoritative global framework for preventing, addressing, and remedying adverse human rights impacts linked to business activity. They are built on three pillars: the **state duty to protect**, the **corporate responsibility to respect**, and the **right of victims to access effective remedy**. These principles make clear that businesses are not exempt from human rights obligations simply because they are private entities; rather, they are expected to conduct **human rights due diligence**, identify and assess actual and potential harms, cease or mitigate abuses, and provide or cooperate in remediation where harm has occurred. The Guiding Principles apply across supply chains, subcontracting relationships, security arrangements, land acquisition, labor relations, surveillance practices, environmental impacts, and digital operations. They reject impunity, superficial compliance, and public relations-based human rights commitments unsupported by actual safeguards. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, this framework is essential because it clarifies that **profit, scale, and market power never justify abuse, exploitation, forced labor, discrimination, retaliation, or denial of remedy**. A business that benefits from rights violations, whether directly or indirectly, cannot be considered ethically or legally insulated from responsibility.

## 7. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – Paris Agreement

**Adopted:** 12 December 2015

**Official Document:** <https://unfccc.int/process-and-m...>

The **Paris Agreement** constitutes the central global commitment to confront the climate crisis through coordinated mitigation, adaptation, finance, transparency, and international cooperation. It recognizes that climate change is not only an environmental concern but a profound **human rights, public health, security, development, and intergenerational justice issue**. The Agreement commits states to pursuing efforts to limit global temperature increase to **well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels** and to endeavor to limit the increase to **1.5°C**, reflecting the necessity of urgent and measurable emissions reduction. It also establishes obligations related to **adaptation, resilience, climate finance, transparency, capacity-building, and support for vulnerable states and populations**, particularly those least responsible for emissions yet most exposed to their consequences. The Paris framework affirms that climate action must be **equitable, scientifically grounded, and morally serious**, not symbolic or delayed by political convenience. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, climate responsibility is inseparable from human dignity, because environmental degradation directly affects food security, displacement, water access, housing, health, livelihoods, and the viability of future life. **Climate inaction is not neutrality; it is an ethical failure with foreseeable human consequences.**

## 8. UN Declaration on the Right to Education

**Adopted:** 10 December 1948 (Article 26) | Reinforced through SDG 4 and UNESCO commitments

**Official Document:** <https://www.unesco.org/en/right-...>

The **right to education** is one of the most consequential and transformative human rights recognized in international law. It is affirmed in **Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and further strengthened through international education frameworks, including **Sustainable Development Goal 4** and UNESCO's ongoing normative work. This right guarantees that education must be **accessible, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and directed toward the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms**. Education is not merely a service or administrative function; it is the principal mechanism by which individuals acquire the capacity to exercise rights, participate in civic life, secure livelihood, resist manipulation, and contribute meaningfully to society. The right to education requires more than enrollment numbers. It demands **availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability, quality, safety, continuity, and equality of opportunity**, without discrimination based on gender, disability, status, language, religion, origin, displacement, poverty, or any other protected characteristic. For ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE, education is a critical instrument of protection and empowerment, particularly for displaced persons, survivors of persecution, children, minorities, and populations facing structural exclusion. **A society that denies education cannot credibly claim to respect human dignity, social progress, or equal citizenship.**

## II. OECD & INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STANDARDS

### A. OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE (ARGA) expressly aligns its business conduct, governance framework, and operational decision-making with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, recognizing those Guidelines as a foundational benchmark for **responsible, lawful, transparent, and ethically uncompromising enterprise conduct** across all jurisdictions in which ARGA operates, partners, sources, advises, or otherwise exercises influence. ARGA does not treat these standards as aspirational statements of principle; rather, they are integrated into the organization's internal controls, compliance architecture, risk management methodology, contractual practices, and supervisory oversight. In this regard, ARGA maintains that **lawful conduct is the minimum threshold**, while responsible conduct requires continuous vigilance, documented accountability, and proactive prevention of harm.

In the area of **human rights due diligence and impact assessment**, ARGA applies a structured and risk-sensitive approach designed to identify, prevent, mitigate, and where necessary remedy adverse human rights impacts that may arise directly or indirectly through its activities, business relationships, procurement channels, advisory services, operational decisions, and cross-border engagement. This due diligence process is not limited to formal review; it requires **continuous assessment of actual and potential risks**, escalation where concerns are identified, and corrective measures proportionate to the severity and likelihood of the impact. ARGA further recognizes that due diligence must be **context-specific, evidence-based, and ongoing**, taking into account the legal, political, social, and operational realities of each environment in which it acts. In all such assessments, ARGA insists upon respect for dignity, non-exploitation, non-complicity in abuse, and the uncompromising protection of fundamental rights.

With respect to **responsible supply chain management**, ARGA requires that suppliers, contractors, intermediaries, consultants, and other third parties engaged in its business ecosystem meet standards consistent with ethical sourcing, labor integrity, legal compliance, and anti-abuse safeguards. ARGA does not accept the outsourcing of misconduct, nor does it permit commercial expediency to override due diligence obligations. The organization expects its business counterparties to maintain demonstrable controls relating to labor rights, health and safety, anti-corruption, environmental responsibility, sanctions compliance, and transparency of ownership and conduct. **Supply chain responsibility is treated as an extension of ARGA's own integrity obligations**, and ARGA reserves the right to investigate, suspend, restrict, or terminate relationships where material non-compliance, concealment, or repeated disregard of required standards is identified.

In relation to **environmental responsibility**, ARGA supports and operationalizes a precautionary, disciplined, and evidence-driven approach to environmental stewardship. The organization acknowledges that environmental protection is not peripheral to responsible enterprise conduct; it is integral to the long-term legality, sustainability, and legitimacy of business activity. ARGA therefore expects environmental compliance to include, at a minimum,

lawful resource use, pollution prevention, waste minimization, climate-conscious decision-making, and the identification of environmental risks that may affect communities, ecosystems, workers, or institutional resilience. Where applicable, ARGA requires remediation plans, performance monitoring, and corrective action to ensure that environmental obligations are not merely stated but demonstrably fulfilled. **Environmental harm, negligence, or concealment is incompatible with ARGA’s standards of professional responsibility.**

Regarding **tax compliance and transparency**, ARGA upholds the principle that tax conduct must be lawful, substantiated, and free from artificial concealment or abusive structuring. The organization rejects aggressive tax practices that are designed to obscure beneficial ownership, erode legitimate public revenue, or exploit regulatory arbitrage in ways that violate the spirit of applicable law. ARGA supports transparent reporting, accurate recordkeeping, and the faithful declaration of financial and fiscal obligations in each jurisdiction where it operates. **Tax compliance is treated as a matter of institutional integrity and public responsibility**, not merely as an administrative requirement. ARGA further recognizes that tax transparency contributes to trust, accountability, and the preservation of lawful market conduct.

With respect to **stakeholder engagement**, ARGA maintains that meaningful engagement is a necessary component of responsible enterprise governance. Stakeholders, including affected individuals, communities, employees, counterparties, regulators, and relevant civil society actors, must be engaged in a manner that is respectful, substantive, and capable of informing decision-making. Engagement is not reduced to ceremonial consultation; it requires listening, documentation, responsiveness, and the willingness to modify conduct where legitimate concerns are raised. ARGA therefore seeks to ensure that stakeholder engagement is **timely, proportionate, culturally aware, and consistent with human dignity and procedural fairness.**

As to **grievance mechanisms**, ARGA maintains accessible, credible, confidential, and non-retaliatory channels through which concerns, complaints, or allegations of misconduct may be raised, reviewed, and addressed. A grievance mechanism is considered effective only where it is known, trusted, procedurally fair, and capable of producing timely and meaningful outcomes. ARGA rejects any practice that would suppress reporting, punish good-faith complainants, or obscure the truth. **Protection against retaliation is a non-negotiable standard.** ARGA’s grievance architecture is designed not only to receive complaints but also to correct systemic failures, identify recurring risks, and strengthen institutional accountability.

In the domain of **accountability and reporting**, ARGA commits to accurate, disciplined, and transparent disclosure practices that reflect the organization’s actual performance, not merely its stated intentions. Compliance reporting must be grounded in verifiable information, internal review, and senior oversight. ARGA conducts an **annual compliance self-assessment** to evaluate implementation of OECD-aligned standards across relevant operational areas, identify gaps, measure progress, and determine whether further remediation or enhancement is required. The results of this review are disclosed in ARGA’s sustainability reporting, subject to lawful confidentiality constraints and the protection of sensitive operational information. **Self-**

**assessment is not treated as a symbolic exercise;** it is a formal accountability mechanism intended to test integrity, expose weakness, and reinforce continuous improvement.

## **B. OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises**

**ARGA affirms its commitment to the OECD Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises as a governing framework for responsible international conduct, fair treatment, and lawful participation in cross-border economic activity.** ARGA recognizes that international investment carries not only commercial opportunity but also legal, social, and ethical responsibility. Accordingly, ARGA supports a model of engagement in which capital, expertise, advisory services, and institutional influence are exercised with restraint, transparency, and due respect for the public interest, the rule of law, and the dignity of persons affected by business activity.

In relation to **non-discrimination in investment treatment**, ARGA endorses the principle that business decisions, opportunities, and protections must be administered on the basis of lawful criteria and without arbitrary exclusion, bias, or impermissible distinction. ARGA supports equal treatment consistent with applicable law and rejects conduct that would create unfair barriers, concealed preferences, or exclusionary practices lacking legitimate justification. This commitment applies to investment decisions, supplier selection, partnership formation, recruitment, service access, and all other material forms of commercial interaction. **Equality before lawful standards is an essential component of ethical enterprise conduct.**

With regard to **responsible business conduct**, ARGA regards responsibility as a comprehensive obligation encompassing legality, integrity, prudence, and the prevention of foreseeable harm. Responsible conduct requires more than formal compliance with minimum regulatory thresholds; it requires good-faith judgment, institutional discipline, and the refusal to benefit from wrongdoing, opacity, coercion, exploitation, or disregard for human welfare. ARGA therefore expects its own personnel, representatives, and counterparties to act consistently with the highest standards of professional conduct, and to reject arrangements that would compromise ethics, accountability, or lawful process. **No commercial advantage justifies ethical erosion.**

In the area of **transparency**, ARGA supports clear, accurate, and timely disclosure practices that enable regulators, counterparties, stakeholders, and the public where appropriate to understand the nature, scope, and governance of its activities. Transparency is fundamental to lawful investment conduct because it reduces the risk of concealed conflicts, regulatory evasion, reputational manipulation, and operational abuse. ARGA therefore maintains that material information should be recorded honestly, communicated responsibly, and disclosed in accordance with applicable legal obligations and institutional policy. **Opacity is treated as a risk factor, not a business strategy.**

Finally, in respect of **environmental and social standards compliance**, ARGA maintains that international investment and enterprise activity must be conducted in a manner that respects environmental limits, social stability, labor dignity, community well-being, and the legitimate expectations of affected stakeholders. ARGA does not view environmental and social standards

as external constraints to be minimized; they are integral safeguards that preserve lawful continuity, institutional legitimacy, and long-term value. The organization requires that its operations and business relationships be structured to avoid contributing to environmental degradation, social displacement, labor exploitation, or systemic abuse. Where risks are identified, ARGA expects immediate assessment, corrective action, and sustained oversight. **Compliance with environmental and social standards is a fundamental duty, not a discretionary preference.**

### **III. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) CONVENTIONS**

**ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE (ARGA)** is unequivocally committed to the **full observance, implementation, and enforcement of the fundamental principles embodied in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions**. This commitment is not aspirational, symbolic, or discretionary; it is a **binding organizational standard** governing ARGA's internal operations, leadership conduct, field activities, procurement practices, third-party engagement, and all forms of institutional cooperation. ARGA recognizes that labour rights are not merely contractual preferences but **core human rights protections** that must be upheld with legal precision, operational discipline, and moral consistency.

ARGA maintains a **zero-tolerance stance** toward forced labour, child labour, discrimination, exploitation, retaliation, unsafe working conditions, or any practice that undermines human dignity, freedom, equality, or bodily integrity. Where national law offers greater protection than the applicable international standard, ARGA applies the **most protective rule**. Where legal or practical ambiguity exists, ARGA adopts the interpretation that **best preserves human dignity, lawful freedom, and equitable treatment**.

In alignment with the ILO's fundamental labour framework, ARGA affirms the following obligations and standards:

#### **Forced Labour Convention (C029, 1930) and the Protocol of 2014 (P029)**

ARGA categorically prohibits **forced labour, compulsory labour, bonded labour, involuntary servitude, debt bondage, human trafficking for labour purposes, coercion through threat, deception, abuse of vulnerability, confiscation of documents, retention of wages, or any other mechanism that deprives a person of free and informed choice**. No individual may be compelled to work by force, fear, deception, intimidation, or economic dependency engineered through exploitative practice. ARGA requires that all work relationships be entered into **freely, knowingly, and under conditions of genuine consent**, with the clear ability to refuse, withdraw, or terminate participation without punishment, retaliation, or unlawful penalty. Any indication of coercion is treated as a **serious ethical and legal violation** requiring immediate investigation, protective action, and remediation.

#### **Child Labour Convention (C138, 1973)**

ARGA maintains an uncompromising policy of **zero tolerance for child labour**. The minimum age for employment or work is **15 years**, or the higher minimum age prescribed by applicable law, provided that such law meets or exceeds international standards. Any person

under **18 years of age** must not be engaged in hazardous work, night work, exploitative conditions, or duties that expose them to physical danger, psychological harm, abuse, excessive hours, or environments inconsistent with their health, development, or education. ARGA recognizes that children are entitled to **protection, development, education, and safety**, not economic exploitation. Any employment, recruitment, or labour arrangement involving a minor that violates these standards is deemed **fundamentally unacceptable** and subject to immediate corrective action, removal, and referral where legally required.

### **Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining Convention (C087, 1948; C098, 1949)**

ARGA fully recognizes the **right of workers and personnel to organize, associate freely, and engage in collective representation and collective bargaining without interference, intimidation, discrimination, or reprisal**. No individual shall be penalized, marginalized, dismissed, threatened, harassed, or disadvantaged because of union membership, participation in employee representation, collective negotiations, lawful organizing activity, or the exercise of protected associational rights. ARGA further affirms that **freedom of association includes the freedom not to associate**, and that all such rights must be exercised in an environment free from coercive management pressure or retaliatory conduct. Where collective bargaining structures exist or are lawfully recognized, ARGA expects negotiations to be conducted in **good faith, with respect, transparency, and a genuine commitment to equitable resolution**.

### **Equal Remuneration Convention (C100, 1951)**

ARGA is committed to the principle of **equal remuneration for work of equal value**. Compensation practices must be based on objective criteria such as role requirements, qualifications, responsibility, performance, and working conditions, and must not be influenced by sex, gender, or any other irrelevant or discriminatory consideration. ARGA rejects all forms of direct or indirect wage discrimination, including unequal base pay, unequal bonuses, unequal access to benefits, unequal advancement pathways, or structurally biased compensation systems that produce inequitable outcomes. ARGA expects its remuneration framework to be **transparent, reviewable, consistently applied, and demonstrably defensible**, ensuring that every person performing work of equal value is treated with equal dignity and economic fairness. Any deviation from this principle is treated as a **serious breach of organizational integrity**.

### **Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (C111, 1958)**

ARGA rejects all forms of discrimination in employment and occupation, including discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, ethnicity, or any other status protected by law or recognized by international human rights standards. This prohibition applies to **recruitment, selection, onboarding, assignment, compensation, evaluation, promotion, training, discipline, termination, and access to institutional opportunities**. ARGA is committed not only to formal equality but also to **substantive equality**, recognizing that true non-discrimination requires the removal of structural barriers,

biased practices, and exclusionary decision-making. Harassment, stereotyping, retaliatory conduct, and indirect discriminatory practices are incompatible with ARGA’s ethical framework and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

### **Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C155, 1981)**

ARGA considers the protection of life, health, and psychological integrity to be a **non-negotiable duty**. Safe and healthy working conditions are not optional benefits; they are a foundational obligation of responsible governance. ARGA requires the identification, assessment, prevention, and control of occupational hazards in all relevant work environments, including physical, environmental, logistical, psychosocial, and security-related risks. This includes the duty to implement appropriate training, supervision, emergency procedures, incident reporting, risk mitigation, and continuous improvement mechanisms. ARGA also recognizes that **mental health is an integral component of occupational safety and health**. Accordingly, work must not be organized in a manner that produces preventable psychological harm, chronic distress, harassment, burnout, or hostile working conditions. Where a risk cannot be adequately controlled, ARGA requires decisive intervention rather than administrative tolerance.

In furtherance of these obligations, ARGA expects all employees, contractors, consultants, partners, suppliers, and implementing entities to act in strict conformity with these standards. **Compliance is mandatory, monitored, and enforceable**. Violations may result in corrective measures, suspension of engagement, termination of cooperation, reporting to competent authorities, and any other response necessary to preserve legal compliance, institutional integrity, and human dignity. ARGA does not regard labour rights as negotiable. They are **fundamental duties owed to every person**.

### **IV. WTO & GATT Principles**

Where applicable, ASYLUM RESEARCH & GLOBAL ASSISTANCE (“ARGA”) conducts its cross-border activities, institutional relationships, procurement processes, and commercial engagements in strict accordance with the foundational disciplines of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** and the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**. These principles are not treated by ARGAs as formalities of convenience, but as **binding standards of conduct** that require discipline, consistency, accountability, and complete intolerance toward arbitrary distinction, covert preference, discriminatory practice, or procedurally opaque decision-making. In this framework, **nationality, place of origin, ownership composition, political alignment, or market advantage shall never constitute a legitimate basis for unequal treatment**, unless a specific and legally recognized exception expressly applies and is narrowly administered in a documented, proportionate, and reviewable manner.

#### **- Most Favored Nation (MFN) Treatment.**

In accordance with the core logic of **GATT Article I:1**, and with the broader non-discrimination architecture of the multilateral trading system, ARGAs requires that any advantage, preference, privilege, benefit, or operational accommodation granted to one supplier, partner, beneficiary, or contracting counterparty in a relevant cross-border context be extended, **immediately and unconditionally**, to all comparable entities in like

circumstances, without discrimination based on national origin, territorial affiliation, or geopolitical convenience. Within ARGA's internal governance, MFN is reflected in the principle that **access to opportunities, participation in engagements, eligibility for consideration, and commercial or institutional preference shall not be manipulated by nationality or origin**. Any selection process must therefore be founded on objectively verifiable criteria such as competence, compliance history, technical capacity, ethical reliability, lawful status, and performance integrity. ARGA rejects any practice that would use nationality as a proxy for trust, quality, or suitability. Where legal exceptions exist, including those arising from binding sanctions regimes, security restrictions, donor conditions, export-control requirements, or formal legal prohibitions, ARGA will apply such exceptions **strictly, minimally, transparently, and only to the extent expressly required by law**. No exception may be improvised, expanded by implication, or used as a disguised instrument of favoritism or exclusion.

- **National Treatment.**

Consistent with **GATT Article III** and the corresponding non-discrimination standard applied across the multilateral trading system, ARGA commits that, once foreign goods, services, or entities are lawfully admitted into the relevant operational sphere, they shall receive **treatment no less favorable than that accorded to like domestic goods, services, or entities**, insofar as comparable standards, conditions, evaluations, or regulatory requirements apply. This principle is essential to preventing the substitution of overt border discrimination with **hidden internal discrimination**, whether through internal rules, procedural burdens, fee structures, arbitrary qualification thresholds, unequal compliance demands, or selectively enforced standards. ARGA therefore requires that procurement criteria, partnership conditions, vendor assessments, service benchmarks, contractual obligations, monitoring measures, and remedial protocols be formulated and applied in a manner that is **neutral, objective, and substantively equivalent** for comparable parties. Distinctions may be made only where they are demonstrably justified by legitimate operational necessity, are proportionate to the purpose pursued, and are not designed, directly or indirectly, to protect local interests at the expense of foreign participants. ARGA will not tolerate disguised restrictionism, artificial preference, or administrative engineering intended to produce unequal competitive outcomes under the appearance of neutrality. In all cases, **equal treatment means equal dignity, equal procedural fairness, and equal access to lawful consideration**.

- **Transparency.**

In line with **GATT Article X** and the broader WTO transparency discipline, ARGA maintains that trade-related, procurement-related, and partnership-related rules must be **publicly knowable, accessible in principle, consistently administered, and capable of external review**. Transparency is not a decorative obligation; it is a safeguard against arbitrariness, corruption, selective enforcement, retrospective manipulation, and the silent creation of undisclosed barriers. Accordingly, ARGA requires that relevant policies,

eligibility standards, decision criteria, conflict-of-interest rules, award methodologies, procedural timelines, and material changes to governing requirements be **clearly communicated in advance**, in a manner reasonably accessible to affected parties. No undisclosed criterion may be used to evaluate, exclude, delay, or advantage any person or entity. No material rule may be applied retroactively as a hidden condition of participation. No decision affecting rights, expectations, or opportunities may be made on the basis of secret standards or unrecorded discretion. Where decisions are made, they must be **traceable, reasoned, internally reviewable, and supported by adequate records**. Transparency also requires that ARGA's administration of applicable processes be uniform, impartial, and reasonable, with mechanisms for clarification, verification, and, where appropriate, challenge or reconsideration. In every case, **opacity is incompatible with lawful governance**, and deliberate concealment is incompatible with ethical administration.

In summary, ARGA's adherence to WTO and GATT principles reflects a **categorical refusal of discrimination, concealment, and procedural double standards**. Any conduct that undermines equal treatment, distorts competitive fairness, obscures governing criteria, or exploits ambiguity to produce preferential outcomes is incompatible with ARGA's institutional integrity. Where applicable, ARGA therefore applies these principles not merely as a matter of formal legal alignment, but as a **non-negotiable expression of disciplined, honest, and morally uncompromising governance**.

## **V. ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION & ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **A. Policy Alignment**

ARGA shall maintain a governance structure in which **each adopted UN declaration and international principle is expressly translated into binding organizational policy**, with no principle treated as aspirational, incidental, or merely interpretive. Every relevant policy instrument shall contain a clear cross-reference to the applicable declaration, principle, article, or normative standard, together with an explanation of how that standard is operationalized within ARGA's internal architecture. This includes, without limitation, governance policies, human resources regulations, safeguarding procedures, procurement rules, data protection protocols, program implementation standards, partner due diligence requirements, and grievance and remediation mechanisms. The purpose of this alignment is not symbolic compliance, but **verifiable institutional conformity**: each policy must state what is required, who is responsible, how compliance is measured, and what corrective action follows upon deviation.

All staff-facing policies, employment terms, contractor agreements, codes of conduct, and internal directives shall be drafted and interpreted in strict harmony with international standards. Where a policy provision may admit more than one interpretation, the interpretation that **best protects rights, prevents harm, and advances the applicable principle** shall prevail. No internal practice may lawfully contradict a ratified policy commitment, and no manager, consultant, partner, or employee may rely on operational convenience to justify non-compliance. ARGA shall further require that policy revisions are systematically reviewed for consistency

against all adopted principles before approval, ensuring that the organization's written standards remain coherent, current, and legally defensible. In this respect, policy alignment is not a one-time drafting exercise; it is a **continuous duty of institutional fidelity**.

## **B. Program Design**

Every program designed, funded, co-financed, or implemented by ARGA shall be structured so that human rights, equality, inclusion, dignity, sustainability, and accountability are embedded from the outset, rather than retrofitted after implementation has begun. For any program with a budget exceeding **€50,000**, a **mandatory Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA)** shall be conducted prior to approval and, where material changes occur, updated during implementation. The HRIA shall not be a generic risk note; it shall be a rigorous and documented assessment that identifies potential direct and indirect impacts, affected rights-holders, foreseeable harms, mitigation measures, residual risks, and the degree to which the program aligns with each adopted UN principle. The assessment shall specifically examine whether the proposed intervention may reinforce inequality, exclude vulnerable groups, produce unintended environmental or social harm, or create barriers to access, participation, or remedy.

Program logic frameworks, theory-of-change documents, and results matrices shall include **principle-specific indicators, baselines, targets, and verification methods**. This means that each relevant principle must be measurable through defined outputs, outcomes, or qualitative safeguards rather than being left to broad narrative description. Beneficiary feedback mechanisms shall be designed as a core program function, not an ancillary feature, and shall provide accessible, confidential, culturally appropriate, and rights-respecting channels through which individuals and communities may provide input, raise concerns, and seek redress. Complaint handling and resolution shall be aligned with the relevant principle standards, including prompt acknowledgment, impartial review, protection against retaliation, reasoned outcomes, escalation pathways, and follow-up verification. Where a program affects vulnerable populations, Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, children, women, displaced persons, or other at-risk groups, the program design shall include heightened safeguards and consultation requirements proportionate to the nature and severity of the potential impact. ARGAs shall treat program design as a moral and operational gatekeeping function: **no initiative may proceed unless it is demonstrably rights-consistent, harm-aware, and accountability-ready**.

## **C. Monitoring & Compliance**

ARGA shall operate a structured compliance system intended to ensure that organizational conduct remains demonstrably consistent with all adopted UN declarations and international principles at every level of activity. This system shall include an **annual compliance audit** examining policies, procedures, program files, procurement records, safeguarding reports, HR practices, financial controls, partner agreements, and governance decisions against each applicable principle. The audit shall assess not only formal documentation but also actual practice, with particular attention to implementation gaps, recurring non-conformities, unresolved complaints, and systemic risk factors. Findings shall be recorded in a formal report

that identifies the nature of any non-compliance, its root cause, the responsible unit, the severity of impact, and the corrective and preventive measures required.

In addition, ARGA shall commission an **independent external third-party audit every two years** conducted by a qualified governance consultant or equivalent independent reviewer with no material conflict of interest. The external audit shall verify the integrity of internal controls, the credibility of internal reporting, and the adequacy of corrective actions. To support continuous oversight, ARGA shall maintain a **KPI dashboard** tracking, at minimum, gender parity, disability inclusion, environmental performance, Indigenous consultation, education access, labor standards, safeguarding outcomes, complaint resolution timeliness, and remediation closure rates. These indicators shall be reviewed against targets and trend data to detect regressions, disparities, and emerging institutional risks. Quarterly reports shall be submitted to the Board, containing a clear compliance status summary, material incidents, corrective actions taken, overdue actions, and foreseeable issues requiring governance intervention. This quarterly reporting obligation shall be understood as a **duty of active oversight**, not passive information sharing. The Board shall be expected to interrogate risks, demand evidence, and insist on remediation where compliance is incomplete or deteriorating.

#### **D. Transparency & External Accountability**

ARGA shall uphold a standard of **full, disciplined, and responsible transparency** consistent with its mission, its public commitments, and its obligations to stakeholders and oversight mechanisms. The organization shall produce an **Annual Sustainability and Impact Report** that provides detailed reporting on compliance with each adopted principle, including achievements, shortcomings, corrective measures, unresolved matters, and planned improvements. The report shall distinguish clearly between policy commitments, implementation actions, output metrics, and outcome evidence, so that external readers can understand not only what ARGA intends, but what ARGA actually does. Where a principle has not been fully achieved, the report shall state the reasons candidly, without euphemism or concealment, and shall identify the remedial steps and timeframe for completion. Transparency in this context is not reputational messaging; it is **accountability under a public standard of truthfulness**.

Where applicable to its legal status and consultative standing, ARGA shall make all required submissions to **UN ECOSOC** and any other relevant intergovernmental or supervisory body in accordance with governing reporting expectations. Such submissions shall be prepared with accuracy, completeness, and consistency, and shall reflect both substantive compliance and any material constraints, lessons learned, or areas requiring further institutional strengthening. In addition, ARGA shall provide public access through its website to compliance-related documentation, including relevant policies, framework documents, audit summaries, annual reports, grievance procedures, and non-sensitive corrective action summaries, subject only to lawful limitations relating to confidentiality, safeguarding, privacy, or security. ARGA shall also maintain constructive engagement with **civil society organizations, government counterparts, international organizations, donors, and oversight bodies**, recognizing that external accountability is a core condition of legitimate humanitarian and research practice. Engagement shall be candid, responsive, and evidence-based, and shall never be reduced to

ceremonial consultation. **Where oversight reveals deficiency, ARGA shall respond with correction, disclosure, and verifiable improvement.**

## **VI. BINDING NATURE & LEGAL COMMITMENT**

**Asylum Research & Global Assistance (“ARGA”) hereby formally affirms that this Statement constitutes a binding institutional commitment and a governing standard of conduct across the Organization. This commitment is mandatory, universal in application, and non-negotiable in principle. It applies to all organizational entities globally, including, without limitation, all subsidiaries, branches, representative offices, affiliates, partners, contractors, consultants, agents, officers, employees, volunteers, delegates, and any person or entity acting on behalf of, under the authority of, or in coordination with ARGA. No division, office, project, country operation, or affiliated body may interpret, dilute, suspend, or disregard any provision of this Statement on the basis of local custom, operational convenience, commercial consideration, political pressure, administrative burden, or any asserted conflict with expediency. The standards set forth herein are to be treated as mandatory institutional obligations, not discretionary aspirations.**

ARGA recognizes and affirms that the United Nations declarations and international principles referenced in this Statement reflect **universal human values, established moral imperatives, and the international consensus regarding the minimum standards of dignity, freedom, protection, and accountability owed to every person.** Accordingly, **compliance is not optional, conditional, symbolic, or selective; it is central to ARGA’s mission, legitimacy, integrity, and operational credibility.** ARGA further acknowledges that the value of any humanitarian, advocacy, research, or assistance-oriented institution is measured not by declarations of intent alone, but by **consistent, verifiable, and enforceable adherence to the principles it claims to uphold.** For that reason, this Statement shall guide internal governance, decision-making, oversight mechanisms, program implementation, partner relationships, and all external representations made in ARGA’s name.

Any breach, attempted breach, systemic failure, concealment, retaliation, obstruction, negligent supervision, or knowing tolerance of non-compliance shall be treated as a **serious institutional violation.** Upon identification of any such non-compliance, ARGA shall, **without undue delay and in a manner proportionate to the nature and gravity of the violation, initiate internal investigation, documented fact-finding, and corrective action planning.** Where warranted, ARGA shall implement **remediation measures for affected persons, disciplinary or contractual measures against responsible parties, suspension or termination of authority or affiliation, and public disclosure to the extent necessary to preserve accountability, transparency, and trust.** In circumstances requiring higher-level review, the matter shall be escalated to **the Board of Directors and/or appropriate international oversight bodies or competent external authorities.** **No individual or entity acting for ARGA shall be permitted to evade responsibility by reference to hierarchy, delegation, lack of direct control, or failure to report.**

This Statement shall be interpreted and applied **in good faith, in accordance with the highest applicable standards of international human rights protection and organizational**

**accountability**, and, where local law imposes stronger obligations, **the higher standard shall govern to the fullest extent permitted by law. Nothing in this Statement shall be construed as permitting conduct that undermines human dignity, tolerates abuse, or weakens the enforceability of fundamental rights.** ARGA hereby declares that **integrity, protection, and accountability** are not auxiliary values of its work; they are binding obligations at the core of its identity and authority.

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'SK', written in a cursive style.

**Sergei Khrabrykh**

*President, Asylum Research & Global Assistance*

Date: 18 January 2024