

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

MAHAK – the Society to Support Children Suffering from Cancer

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 1/12/2022

To: 30/11/2024

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

Please use the box below to include the statement of continued support signed by your organization's Chief Executive or equivalent.

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that MAHAK- the Society to Support Children Suffering from Cancer reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,



Arasb Ahmadian

Chief Executive Officer

Part II and Part III. Description of Actions and Measurement of Outcomes



The Society to Support Children Suffering from Cancer widely known by its acronym, MAHAK, was set up in 1991 as a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit organization with the registration number 6567 in Iran and operates under the applicable laws of the ministry of interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

MAHAK is exclusively dependent on public support provided in the form of funds, as well as in-kind, goods, services, and technical expertise.

It is a multi-disciplinary organization running the only pediatric cancer hospital in the country offering diagnostic and therapeutic services as well as psycho-social supports to the children with cancer and their families with no discrimination whether gender, religion, culture, race or nationality. It worth mentioning that all services including treatments are performed in context of patients' right charter.

MAHAK is governed by a board of trustees and a board of directors; and operates in close association with Iran Ministry of Health and Medical Education while it covers almost 20% of the whole treatment capacity of the country in the field of pediatric cancer care.

During the past 33 years of activity, MAHAK tried to bring, adapt and implement up to dated knowledge and expertise to children and their families through joining professional and renowned general and specialized associations including global compact in 2016. Since then and according to its principles of transparency and accountability, MAHAK has been reporting periodically on its performance in line with its commitments to specialize associations.

To implement its mission of giving services to children with cancer and their families, MAHAK currently support more than 95% of total childhood cancer patients in Iran with zero tolerance to any sort of discrimination. Since its inception, MAHAK has supported over 45000 children in their cancer journey among from more than 18000 are completed their treatment process. Every day, 7

children join MAHAK to receive support which make the number of annual new cases to over 2500 which increase the number of under treatment children to 12700.



Commitment to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

For the last two years, since our 3rd Communication on Engagement (COE) report in 2024, the importance of acting in line with realizing sustainable development goals has become trended more than before and it shows the urgency for adopting a different approach, strategically shifted the resources available to sustainable ones, and took actions despite all obstacles hindering all efforts. Accordingly, MAHAK also has been striving to increase its implementation to SDGs by preserving the health and wellbeing of children with cancer and their families through its direct and indirect contribution to the goals of:

- SDG 3 - Good health and well-being
- SDG 4 - Quality education
- SDG 5 - Gender equality
- SDG 13 - Climate action
- SDG 15 - Life on land
- SDG 17 - Partnerships for the goals

And subsequently, eradicating poverty in different aspects.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



MAHAK has promoted Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by assuring the access to quality childhood cancer care for children below the age of 18 years. In addition to the cancer treatment, MAHAK has expanded its range of psycho-social services throughout the country to support the patients and their care givers in their journey. (Goal No. 3)

In alignment with its primary mission of alleviating the burdens faced by families of children with cancer, MAHAK offers a holistic suite of psycho-social services. This includes educational and entertainment initiatives designed to keep children engaged as students while simultaneously assisting parents in managing their own and their children's physical and emotional well-being. These educational programs not only help children maintain their academic progress but also empower parents to navigate their circumstances more effectively, ultimately facilitating a smoother reintegration into their communities.

MAHAK's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for children with cancer and their families reflects its dedication to fostering a supportive environment that champions both health and education, thereby contributing to the realization of Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past two years, MAHAK has actively engaged in international awareness campaigns focused on the early symptoms of childhood cancer and the critical importance of early detection. Through these initiatives, MAHAK successfully reached over 2 million individuals both online and offline. These campaigns have been meticulously aligned with the policies and strategies of esteemed cancer-centric associations, including the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and Childhood Cancer International (CCI). (Goal No. 17)



In its efforts, MAHAK collaborated with three prominent charities—Taskin Charity, Khorasan Charity, and Kassa Charity—situated in the provinces of East Azerbaijan (Tabriz), Razavi Khorasan (Mashhad), and Isfahan (Isfahan), respectively. Over the past decade, MAHAK has empowered these charities to provide equitable support services for cancer-stricken children in their own communities and neighboring areas. This collaborative approach underscores MAHAK's unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of life for cancer-stricken children across the region. (Goal No. 17 - Partnerships for the goals)



The importance of receiving timely and high-quality cancer care is universally acknowledged, and this can only be achieved through effective and comprehensive education for caregivers, whether at home or in care centers. In this regard, MAHAK has taken significant steps, not only by preparing and disseminating educational materials for parents concerning the early symptoms of cancer but also by organizing in-service training for its medical team and collaborating with other institutions.

Furthermore, all support services offered to children afflicted with cancer are designed to facilitate their reintegration into everyday life. To this end, children supported by MAHAK benefit from educational assistance provided by volunteer teachers, enabling them to continue their academic pursuits while undergoing treatment (SDG No. 4 – Quality Education).



In May 2024, MAHAK proudly hosted its 4th International Congress on Pediatric Oncology, which emphasized a multidisciplinary approach to common pediatric tumors and featured esteemed medical experts from both national and international backgrounds. This biennial event is held in memory of Professor Parvaneh Vossough, a pioneer in pediatric oncology in Iran, and serves as a platform for experts in the field to exchange the latest knowledge and advancements.

Additionally, according to the training and development section of MAHAK's human resources department, over 147 general and specialized in-service training courses were conducted during the reporting period from December 2022 to December 2024. This amounts to 315 unique training sessions totaling nearly 36,346 hours of education provided to employees in charity and hospital departments (Principle No. 7). A detailed breakdown of the training courses conducted is available in the accompanying table, categorized by gender.

No.	Gender	No. of Courses	Man- Course	Man-hour	Man-day
1	Male	264	3439	12951	1631
2	Female	294	5818	23395	4678

Continuing its collaborative efforts (SDG No. 17 – Partnership for Goals) with United Nations agencies, including UNHCR to support refugees diagnosed with pediatric cancer, and ECOSOC through its consultative status, MAHAK has also maintained its memberships in various specialized international cancer associations. These include:

- International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS) Since 2019
- Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) since 2017
- United Nation Global Compact since 2016
- The Society of Hematologic Oncology (SOHO) since 2015

- The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) since 2014
- MedicRes Institute since 2011
- International Network for Cancer Treatment and Research (INCTR) since 2009
- Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) since 2008
- Iranian National Cancer Network since 2003
- Childhood Cancer International since 2001
- Childhood Cancer International (CCI) since 2000

These partnerships have significantly empowered MAHAK to implement its programs and objectives across various domains, including training initiatives, hosting cancer-focused congresses, and enhancing its organizational strategies and programs.

Founded in 1991 by Ms. Saideh Ghods, a mother inspired by her experience of having a child diagnosed with cancer, MAHAK has always championed gender equality within its workforce. The organization prioritizes equal opportunities for its female employees, ensuring they have the same chances for employment, advancement, and participation in decision-making processes. As of December 2024, MAHAK employs a total of 911 individuals in its charity and hospital departments, reflecting an increase from 890 employees during the same period last year.

Among the 174 employees tasked with management responsibilities, an impressive 63% are women. They occupy pivotal roles including deputy CEO, manager, technical officer, consultant, and nursing supervisor and etc. (SDG 5 – Gender Equality)

In accordance with the guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Iran, MAHAK is committed to gender equity in its payroll practices. All employees receive compensation free from gender discrimination, with job classification and individual capabilities being the sole determinants in salary determination. This process is subject to ongoing assessments by the organization's internal audit team, and systems and methods department, alongside an annual review by an official financial auditor. Furthermore, all employment contracts are established in compliance with the Labor and Social Security Law, under the vigilant oversight of the legal department. (Principle 4 & 6)

The development of sustainable economic and social systems is inherently linked to environmental excellence, and MAHAK has embraced innovative approaches to mitigate its ecological impact. The organization actively promotes an environmentally friendly culture within its offices by studying, identifying, and assessing safety, occupational health, and environmental risks in accordance with national and international regulations. (SDG 13 – Environment and Climate Change)

Through these efforts, MAHAK stands as a beacon of empowerment and sustainability, continuously striving to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those it serves while fostering an inclusive and responsible workplace.



In the past two years, MAHAK has implemented a series of impactful measures aimed at promoting sustainability and environmental responsibility across various domains:

- **Waste management:** MAHAK has significantly enhanced its waste management practices, focusing on the safe collection and disposal of chemical-pharmaceutical waste. This includes autoclaving genotoxic wastes through an official contract with a certified company recognized by the Iranian Department of Environment. A robust waste sorting initiative has been established at the source, leading to a marked reduction in disposable waste and a notable increase in recyclable materials such as paper, cardboard, and plastic. To ensure compliance with national standards, the organization diligently monitors the amount of infectious waste produced per capita, enabling the definition of corrective action plans as necessary.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Committed to the responsible management of energy consumption and the conservation of valuable non-renewable resources, MAHAK has updated the boiler of its disposal device in accordance with environmental permits. A comprehensive schedule for the operation of cooling and heating systems has been developed to minimize energy usage during non-working hours.
- **Water Consumption Management:** MAHAK has adopted a proactive approach to managing water consumption through the identification and repair of leak points, the refurbishment of aging tanks and piping, and the installation of aerators on washbasins, sinks, and faucet hoses within hospital facilities. The organization has also transitioned from pedal-type to sensor-type faucets in high-traffic areas, replaced high-consumption flush tanks with low-consumption alternatives, and conducts monthly microbial tests and seasonal physicochemical evaluations to ensure water quality and promote efficient water use.



- **Wastewater Management:** To safeguard public health and maintain a safe working environment, MAHAK employs a sophisticated wastewater collection and treatment system featuring a multi-stage process designed to eliminate harmful pollutants. Rigorous microbial and physicochemical testing of treated wastewater is conducted to ensure compliance with environmental standards before discharge into the municipal system.
- **Chemical Products Consumption Management:** MAHAK prioritizes the use of plant-based compounds for pest control and avoids the procurement of hazardous chemicals in alignment with policies aimed at reducing chemical product consumption and disposal.
- **Distribution of Educational Content:** By enhancing personnel awareness regarding the importance of resource management, MAHAK fosters a culture of responsibility and adaptability in protecting natural resources.

To cultivate a conducive work environment for employees and patients alike, MAHAK has organized a range of meetings, training sessions, and workshops. These initiatives include quarterly nutrition and diet committee meetings, nutritional consultations, the development of a nutrition booklet for chemotherapy patients, and the establishment of a nutrition and health education board for disseminating informative materials.

In alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth), MAHAK acknowledges that the effective instillation of Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) culture is contingent upon employee participation and accountability. To this end, MAHAK has undertaken the following initiatives leveraging its inter-organizational capacities:

- Implementation of digital reporting methods for personnel to communicate potentially hazardous conditions in the workplace
- Establishment of a technical protection and occupational health committee, inclusive of employee representation.
- Conducting disaster and accident risk committee meetings within the hospital.
- Convening environmental health committee meetings.
- Formation of unit risk assessment committees.

Among the various measures taken by MAHAK to safeguard environmental resources, the following initiatives stand out:

- Construction of a dedicated chemical warehouse
- Comprehensive management of hospital waste through its stages of separation, collection, storage, transportation, and disposal
- Initiation of a contract for the collection of used kitchen oils with Petro Ayman Sharif Company
- Implementation of regulations to reduce the use of plastic bags and containers, supported by a dedicated monitoring group
- Collection and delivery of pharmaceutical and chemical waste to a licensed waste incineration facility
- Adoption of national standard 1-16000 concerning engine room pollutants
- Replacement of traditional washbasin taps with sensor faucets to minimize water consumption
- Transition from fluorescent lamps to SMD and LED lighting within hospital facilities
- Establishment of operational hours for cooling and heating systems, ensuring they are off during non-working hours
- Replacement of defective tape and gaskets on patient and office room windows to optimize energy consumption
- Utilization of a drip irrigation system for the green spaces surrounding the building
- Planting of drought-resistant trees, such as pines, with a scheduled watering regimen
- Monthly cleaning of wire filters in hospital ventilation systems and timely replacement of bag filters as needed
- Treatment of central sewage with chlorine to render it harmless before discharge into the urban sewer system
- Implementation of Article 7 of the Executive Regulations of the Comprehensive Law on National Tobacco Control and Combat (informative materials - field monitoring)
- Utilization of environmentally friendly pesticides and insecticides, prioritizing those that enhance environmental health
- Collection of used paper donation boxes, cardboard, and paper from office environments for recycling
- Reduction of plastic container consumption from 1,500 per week to 700 per week

These comprehensive efforts underscore MAHAK's unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and the promotion of sustainable practices within the healthcare sector.

Commitment to Global Compact Principles

The aforementioned initiatives have been recognized as key contributors to the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is important to highlight that both the SDGs and the principles of the Global Compact (GC) share a common objective. In this context, in addition to fostering a decent workplace environment, MAHAK has undertaken several measures that align

with the principles of human rights, labor, and environmental sustainability. These measures include:

- Providing transportation services for personnel to reduce reliance on private vehicles for daily commuting within the city.
- Ensuring the safety of personnel transportation by adhering to high standards, which include utilizing vehicles that are of recent manufacturing years and conducting monthly inspections and maintenance checks.
- Reviewing and optimizing transportation routes to enhance comfort for personnel while concurrently minimizing costs.
- Designating both covered and open parking areas to alleviate parking concerns for personnel to the greatest extent possible.
- Engaging in negotiations with various financial institutions to secure interest-free loans for personnel.
- Establishing partnerships with recreational facilities to promote the well-being of personnel, including access to amenities such as swimming pools, cinemas, and more.

Over the past two years, MAHAK has diligently pursued a series of initiatives aligned with its comprehensive 3-year *Treatment Transformation Strategy*, grounded in the objectives set forth by the SIOP, as well as its *Digital Transformation Strategy* and annual operational plans:

- **A Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance MAHAK Digital Infrastructures**

In a significant move to bolster its digital capabilities, MAHAK has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Golrang System, a subsidiary of Golrang Industrial Group. This partnership aims to expand and develop MAHAK's digital infrastructures, creating a powerful synergy between the non-governmental and business sectors. Together, they will harness their diverse expertise to enhance digital services, ultimately supporting children with cancer and their families in a more effective manner. (SDG 17)



- **The Bereavement Clinic at MAHAK**

For nearly two years, the Bereavement Clinic at MAHAK has provided crucial support to families who have lost a child to cancer. This clinic is dedicated to addressing the psychological and emotional needs of grieving parents, emphasizing the importance of mental health alongside physical treatment. By offering specialized counseling, the clinic aims to ease the challenging journey of loss, helping parents navigate their grief and find a path toward healing. (SDG 3)

- **Conference on Pediatric Head and Neck Sarcoma**

The MAHAK Pediatric Cancer Treatment and Research Center (MPCTRC), in collaboration with the Iranian Radiology Oncology Society, successfully hosted a conference focused on "Updates on Pediatric Head and Neck Sarcoma (Rhabdomyosarcoma, Ewing Sarcoma)." This event convened distinguished lecturers and specialists from leading national and international institutions, fostering a multidisciplinary approach to treating pediatric tumors and underscoring the importance of multidisciplinary approach to improve the outcomes for affected children.

- **a Motion Graphics Workshop to Raise Awareness about Childhood Cancer”**

MAHAK organized a four-day motion graphics workshop in partnership with the Iranian Motion Graphics Designers Association (IMGDA). Participants were encouraged to develop creative works that spotlight the MAHAK charity institute, the #GoldSeptember initiative, and the broader issues surrounding childhood cancer. Under the mentorship of experienced professionals, attendees engaged in brainstorming and conceptualizing impactful visual narratives.



- **In-service Training Course on SIOP**

During September-October 2024, MAHAK International Department has set up its first Series of training courses, entitled “SIOP Training Course,” for its hospital and research center’s physicians, experts and specialists.

The course served as a great platform for knowledge sharing and it aimed to acquaint MAHAK professionals with the features and opportunities provided by International Society of Pediatric Oncology (SIOP). Currently, MAHAK has 17 active membership at SIOP platform.

The aim of this course was to review of programs, courses, grants and awards; Practicing the process of completing and activating the profiles of members; the methods of communication with other members and experts and etc.



- **A Memorandum of Understanding to Support Innovative Smart Technologies**

To receive new collaboration and support from business entities, MAHAK has signed an MoU with MTN Irancell Co. to enhance the quality of services and ultimately their lives for children with cancer. Accordingly, based on this recent collaboration, MTN Irancell Co. will support MAHAK in the field of smart technologies with the aim to bolster MAHAK efforts in utilizing innovative communication platforms and enhancing smart health solutions.

During a recent joint meeting, representatives from MTN Irancell Co. and MAHAK conducted their partnership, emphasizing a shared vision to support children with cancer. The memorandum outlines a comprehensive framework for cooperation, enabling MAHAK to leverage MTN Irancell Co. expertise in smart technologies to improve operational effectiveness and the overall impact of its initiatives.



- **Elevate the voice of patients**

In alignment with World Patient Safety Day, MAHAK sets up a patient safety station within its hospital each year. This initiative aims to educate children and their families—particularly those newly diagnosed—about various cancer treatments, their associated challenges, and preventive measures to enhance patient safety. Topics include maintaining hand hygiene, preventing complications such as bedsores, and protecting children from contagious diseases.

- **Back to School Campaigns**

Nelson Mandela famously stated that education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world. This truth resonates profoundly with the 18,502 children diagnosed with cancer in the country getting support from MAHAK. In response, MAHAK annually provides school supplies to these children, encouraging their continued education even during treatment. This initiative empowers them to remain hopeful and take steps toward achieving their dreams.

- **Commemorating National Doctors Day**

To honor National Doctors' Day, MAHAK organized a collaborative event with the enthusiastic athlete group "Monoppy." This event aimed to highlight the vital role physicians play in treating children with cancer. MAHAK continually strives to engage diverse strata of society to promote the message of supporting cancer-affected children. The Monoppy group joined MAHAK during the #GoldSeptember2024 campaign to emphasize the critical importance of early diagnosis in improving childhood cancer treatment outcomes.



- **The 16th Asian Congress of SIOP-CCI 2024, Japan**

MAHAK charity institute participated in "The 16th Asian Congress of the International Society of Pediatric Oncology-SIOP and CCI," held in June 2024 in Japan.

During the conference and attending the general assembly session, MAHAK representative successfully nominated a few of MAHAK specialists in the working groups of CCI focusing on research, strategic partnerships and communications.

As a speech, a presentation detailing the charity institute's history, activities, services, mission, and vision for children suffering from cancer and their families was delivered. Furthermore, a research study entitled "The Impact of Gestalt Play Therapy on Resilience & Hope of Children with Cancer," was also presented.



- **The 8th International Congress of Clinical Oncology**

In February 2024, specialists from MAHAK's radiation oncology department participated in the esteemed 8th International Congress of Clinical Oncology, alongside the 18th Annual Conference of the Iranian Society of Radiation-Oncology. Dr. Ghalibafian, the Technical Director of the radiation oncology division, delivered a thought-provoking speech titled “Radiation Oncology Department: An Exemplary Model of Inter-Professional Interaction and Exchange to Enhance Treatment Quality.” On the third day of the conference, he also addressed the “Challenges of Radiotherapy in the Treatment of Pediatric Cancer,” shedding light on the complexities and critical considerations within this specialized field.

- **Book for MAHAK Children**

July 8 is marked on the calendar as "National Children's and Adolescent Literature Day." On the eve of this day, the Ofogh Publishing, visited the inpatient wards of the MAHAK Hospital, and donated more than 150 volumes of books to the children of MAHAK.



- **Playroom Equipping in Different Hospitals throughout the Country**

In alignment with its commitment to social responsibility, MAHAK has been instrumental in equipping playrooms across various hospitals in Tehran, Kerman, and other cities since 2023. These playrooms are designed to facilitate the treatment of children, providing a nurturing environment filled with toys and games under the supervision of trained psychologists. This

initiative underscores the importance of creating a supportive atmosphere for young patients, enhancing their overall treatment experience.

- **Inauguration of New Emergency Room at MAHAK Hospital**

MAHAK Hospital proudly inaugurated its new emergency department, spanning a substantial area of approximately 430 square meters, to effectively meet the evolving demands of patient care. In accordance with the standards set forth by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, every hospital is required to allocate at least 10% of its capacity to emergency beds. MAHAK, currently operating with a minimum of 76 active inpatient beds daily, has exceeded these standards with the establishment of its new emergency room, which features eight monitored beds, two isolation rooms, and one continuous isolation room. Additionally, the facility is equipped to deploy up to ten stretcher beds for crisis situations, ensuring a robust response to emergencies.

- **MAHAK's Presence at NRC Partnership Seminar**

On October 23rd and 24th, 2024, MAHAK participated in a two-day seminar hosted by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Tehran, focusing on partnership strategies. This gathering brought together Iranian non-governmental organizations, including MAHAK, and provincial officials, fostering collaboration and dialogue on pressing humanitarian issues. The seminar aimed to strengthen partnerships among community-based organizations in Iran and promote human rights through collective efforts in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

- **The Conference on “Treatment and Care of Children’s Chronic Wounds after Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy”**

To mark the commencement of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month (CCAM), MAHAK hosted a significant conference on August 31, 2023, titled “Treatment and Care of Children’s Chronic Wounds after Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy.” This event focused on the latest advancements in specialized care for chronic wounds associated with oncology and radiation oncology treatments. Recognizing that wound management is a critical component of comprehensive care for pediatric cancer patients, the conference attracted specialists in radiation therapy, pediatric medicine, emergency medicine, general practice, and nursing. The collaborative exchange of knowledge at this conference exemplifies the synergy among healthcare professionals dedicated to improving outcomes for children with cancer.

Through these initiatives and events, MAHAK continues to demonstrate its unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of care for children with cancer while advocating for social responsibility, partnership, and human rights within the healthcare landscape.

