Commitment Statement

Priority Practices to Strengthen Worker Welfare
in Times of Uncertainty

The Moment We Are In

Times of disruption, whether driven by geopolitical instability, economic shocks, or sudden operational crises, test the character of organizations and the systems they are part of, and disproportionately affect those already facing structural vulnerabilities. They also reveal opportunity. Uncertainty creates permission to act: to move past institutional inertia, to accelerate decisions that might otherwise take years, and to build practices that endure well beyond the moment that prompted them.

The companies that emerge strongest from uncertainty are those that choose to strengthen rather than retreat, that use disruption not as a reason to lower standards, but as a catalyst to raise them. For workers and for migrant workers in particular, who are often the most exposed and the least protected; what companies choose to do in these moments is not incidental. It is defining.

About the Decent Work Taskforce

The Decent Work Taskforce is a business-led platform convened by the UN Global Compact Network UAE and The Climate Consultancy. It exists to help companies turn commitment into practice, strengthening decent work standards across operations and supply chains in the UAE, in alignment with the UAE government's ongoing efforts to protect and advance the rights of workers.

Its current focus is worker welfare during times of uncertainty, with particular attention to those most exposed to risk, including migrant workers, frontline workers, workers employed through contractors and subcontractors, and other vulnerable workers whose welfare is affected by the decisions of the businesses they serve. The Taskforce believes that the private sector has an important responsibility to advance decent work.

Our Commitment

As members of the Decent Work Taskforce, we reaffirm our shared commitment to advancing decent work and strengthening worker welfare across our operations and value chains, in support of the UAE's broader commitment to promoting decent work and worker wellbeing.

Recognizing that companies operate in different contexts and at different stages of maturity, we commit to acting in good faith, continually strengthening our approaches, sharing practical experience with peers, and contributing to collective progress.

The accompanying Priority Practices provide a practical reference point to support reflection, dialogue and continuous improvement.

Through this commitment, we aim to use the Taskforce as a platform to raise ambition, strengthen resilience and advance responsible employment practices across the UAE.

KEY ACTIONS

- Quick win — low cost, high impact, achievable within days
- Strong candidate to become permanent practice

Priority Practices

The actions below provide a practical reference point to support reflection, dialogue and continuous improvement. They represent practices that could require little investment but make a meaningful difference to workers' safety, security, and dignity during periods of disruption. They are not exhaustive, and they are not a ceiling. They are a starting point, a shared baseline that any responsible employer can act on, sometimes within days. The goal is not compliance, but a genuine commitment to do better by the people who keep operations running when conditions are hardest. Translation of these practices into policy will differ from one organisation to another.

Your Workforce

PART A

Workers over whom the company has the most direct operational responsibility.

A1 Communication & Access to Information

- Establish a fast, multi-language communication channel (WhatsApp group, SMS tree, or dedicated app) to reach all workers within minutes of an alert.
- Encourage all workers to save the direct number of their line manager or HR contact on their personal phone.
- Communicate clearly, early, and in workers' languages: what is happening, what they should do, where they can go.
- Designate trained 'floor ambassadors' or peer communicators: trusted workers from key language communities who relay information and raise concerns.

A2 Safety, Shelter & Operational Protocols

- Know where your workers live and how they commute. Consider mapping your exposure before the next escalation.
- Identify shelter locations and communicate them to workers in advance, not just in the moment of an alert.
- Have and communicate a clear operational protocol for suspending or adjusting work during escalations. Workers should know what to expect before an incident, not during it.
- Consider adapting existing heat-stress and hazardous-conditions protocols as a model to cover broader disruption scenarios.

A3 Financial Continuity & Wage Protection

- Commit, in writing, to paying wages on time regardless of operational disruption.
- Where workers cannot safely travel to or attend work because of hazardous conditions or events, such as extreme weather, flooding, fire or comparable safety risks, treat the absence as excused and do not deduct pay.
- Review and, where possible, pause non-essential salary deductions during disruption periods.
- Establish a written Emergency Wage Continuity Policy as a permanent document.

A4 Mental Health & Psychosocial Wellbeing

- Send a message from senior leadership acknowledging the situation and communicating that worker safety is the company's priority. Do not go silent.
- Actively promote any existing Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or wellbeing resource. Many workers do not know these exist.
- Train line managers to recognise stress signals and create space for workers to raise concerns without fear.
- Consider peer support networks or buddy systems, especially for workers in isolated roles or shared accommodation.

A5 Inclusion, Accessibility & Vulnerable Workers

- Identify workforce groups that may require additional support during disruption periods, including women, people of determination, and workers in isolated or vulnerable conditions.
- Where accommodation or is provided, consider safety, privacy, and accessibility needs across different worker groups.
- Ensure workers can raise concerns or request support without fear of retaliation or discrimination.

Contracted & Supply Chain Workers

PART B

Contractors, frontline workers on your premises, and supply chain workers

B1 Visibility & Oversight

- Create and maintain a list of all contractors, subcontractors, and labour suppliers currently operating on your premises or delivering your services, where possible.
- For your highest-risk or highest-volume contractors, particularly those providing cleaning, security, facilities management, catering, or logistics, make a direct call: ask what welfare measures they have in place for their workers.
- Ask contractors to designate a named welfare contact: someone who can be reached during an incident.
- Build a simple contractor welfare register: who are your contractors, how many workers do they employ, and what welfare measures have they confirmed?

B2 Minimum Standards for Contracted Workers

- Ensure contracted workers on your premises are included in emergency communication and shelter protocols. At minimum, they should know where to go and who to call.
- Confirm with contractors that their workers retain access to their own identity documents at all times.
- Confirm that contracted workers are being paid on time and in full, particularly during disruption periods.
- Include minimum worker welfare expectations in all new and renewed contracts, covering communication, safety, wages, and document retention.
- Encourage suppliers and contractors to consider the needs of vulnerable worker groups, including women and people of determination, within welfare and preparedness measures.

B3 Broader Supply Chain

- Issue a short communication to your tier-1 suppliers asking them to confirm they have basic worker welfare measures in place.
- Where supplier relationships allow, offer to share guidance, checklists, or communication templates.
- Incorporate worker welfare criteria into your standard supplier assessment.
- Consider establishing and maintaining a written Emergency Wage Continuity Policy covering directly contracted workers, and require equivalent policies from direct suppliers and contractors as a condition of engagement. The policy should define trigger conditions, coverage scope, and payment continuity duration.

The power of acting together

SHARE WHAT'S WORKING

Every company in this Taskforce has done something others can learn from. Peer examples are more persuasive than any guidance note.

THINK DIFFERENTLY

Some of the best solutions are unexpected: a WhatsApp group, a peer ambassador, a single phone call to a contractor. Small actions, done consistently, change culture.

STRENGTHEN GOOD PRACTICE

Collaboration among companies can help raise the bar across industries and sectors by sharing practical approaches and encouraging continuous improvement throughout supply chains.

PRIORITIZE INCLUSION

Resilient workforce systems are also inclusive systems, ones that recognise different workers may experience disruption differently.