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CSR ARABIA

Arabia CSR
Network newsletter

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Note by the CEO / President Arabia CSR Network

Habiba Al Mar'ashi



As-Salamu Alaykum and greetings from the Arabia CSR Network!

This past month has been an eventful one for the world as well as our organization. The monumental summit in Rio has just concluded and there is much talk about how effective this gathering was. Let's hope there are some short-term achievements as well as long-term outcomes from this Summit.

At home, we successfully conducted the Arabia CSR Awards Clinic - a workshop meant to assist organizations applying for this Awards cycle. After that, we went on to deliver the first comprehensive "CSR Strategy and Leadership Training". This was followed by a specialized training conducted at the request of Ducab which sought to specifically address their CSR Strategy formulation needs. The summer months are an excellent opportunity to reflect on the progress that has been made, the challenges that were faced and the plans for the remainder of the year. At ACSRN, preparations are underway for the upcoming trainings cycle beginning in September which will cover a range of topics from CSR and sustainability strategy formulation to GRI reporting.

The deadline for the Arabia CSR Awards is fast approaching with organizations and companies from 13 Arab countries applying. This year and for the first time, Tunisia will be participating in the Awards. In light of the political and socio-economic situation in many countries in the region, the struggle for establishing a new status quo based on values of human dignity and prosperity is imperative. On a personal and professional capacity, we all have an obligation to contribute to that process. Organizations offer us a strong platform through which our efforts can be channeled. By working together we can ensure that our actions and joint initiatives have a stabilizing effect on our present and contribute to the construction of a sustainable future. The key lesson to take from our past experience is that we can no longer afford to watch from the sidelines and go about business as usual.

Connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) and let us know how we can build partnerships for a sustainable future.

Training & Workshops

ACSRN conducts Leadership and Strategy Course for CSR professionals

As part of its efforts to advance the sustainability agenda in the region, Arabia CSR Network conducted a two-day specialized training event on CSR Leadership and Strategy at the Millennium Plaza Hotel in Dubai. This training aimed to build the capacity of CSR teams to incorporate sustainability strategies into their business in an innovative way.

The training was conducted by Dr. Gracia S. Ugut who is currently the Associate Dean of the Executive Education and Life Long Learning at the Asian Institute of Management. Prof. Ugut holds a Doctor of Philosophy in International Finance from the Vienna University of Economics, Austria (1995).

"In a climate heightened by economic crisis and political turbulence, the call for enhanced corporate social responsibility and corporate oversight places greater pressure on many companies in the region. To position their organizations for success, CSR departments must ensure the integrity of their strategy and plan and their execution will be done in alignment with the company's corporate strategies and benchmarking with the world standards." stated the President and CEO of the Arabia CSR Network during her opening note at the training.



The CSR Leadership and Strategy course was attended by 14 training participants from various organizations and sectors. Some of the participants came from outside the UAE, such as from Egypt and Oman. The Training course included an examination of CSR theory, case-studies and exercises which sought to help participants acquire an in-depth understanding of the process of developing and implementing a comprehensive CSR strategy and policy framework. Through workshops, seminars and networking opportunities, members of the Arabia CSR Network and other corporate organizations are exposed to a unique platform where they can share CSR experiences and seek sustainable solutions in a rapidly changing world. In this regard, the CSR Leadership and Strategy training played a very valuable role in the exchange of sustainability related values and ideas, sharing of knowledge and best practice amongst a diverse and critical mass of CSR professionals.



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Dr. Grace Ugut's research focus is on the incorporation of the CSR to the corporate strategy and on performance metrics of social and environmental performance. Prof. Ugut is also currently working on research on strategic risk and its link to the corporate social responsibility practices, particularly for mining and pharmaceutical industries. She has been associated with the Arabia CSR Network since its early formation years and was the head of the jury of the ACSRN Awards in the second cycle of the award.

ACSRN offers CSR Strategy Development Training to Ducab

Arabia CSR Network has introduced customized trainings for organizations to develop and enhance their CSR strategies and implementation. The first of these in-house trainings was provided to UAE-based Dubai Cable Company (Private) Ltd.

"I have immense respect for Ducab in that it is a company that has grown along with UAE. Over the years it has significantly expanded its production capacity and also embellished its portfolio by taking on world class projects. There is much that Ducab can do to enhance its contribution to the UAE and the region and to stand out as a world class champion for sustainable manufacturing," said Habiba Al Marashi, President of Arabia CSR Network and the UN Global Compact GCC Network.

Ducab places utmost emphasis on the quality and excellence of its products and services, which are used in high profile projects such as the Bahrain Formula 1 track, Burj Al Arab, Delhi Metro, Dubai Metro, Palm Jumeirah, Ras Laffan Qatar, The Dubai Mall and many more. The company also strives to be the lowest cost, highest quality cable manufacturer in the world and thus generate the necessary income to satisfy the aims and aspirations of its shareholders, employees and the community in which it operates.

"We have always realized the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility. At Ducab, we have introduced many programs and initiatives that benefit our employees, the environment and our communities. We would like to enhance our knowledge by following best practices and becoming an inspiration to others by developing a thorough sustainability plan," said Ashish Chaturvedy, Marketing

Manager at Ducab. "Our aim is to be a CSR leader in the region and, through this course organized by Arabia CSR Network, we would like to re-affirm our commitment to a green tomorrow," he added.

The training was conducted by Ralph Thurm, a jury member of the prestigious Arabia CSR Awards, which is currently in its fifth cycle of collecting and assessing applications from organizations across the Arab world. "The manufacturing sector has immense opportunities to become sustainable for bottom-line profits as well as have minimal environmental impacts and positive social contribution, and I feel that the Arabia CSR Network is in a frontline position to provide such trainings to companies in the Arab world, such as Ducab," said Thurm.

The training was attended by a 15 member CSR committee that Ducab has recently established to implement the company's CSR strategy. The committee is represented by key staff members from almost all departments that will contribute to drive sustainable performance in the entire company of almost 1000 staff members.

In-house trainings are one of many services that the Arabia CSR Network offers. ACSRN also provides general 'CSR Strategy and Leadership', 'Sustainability Report Writing' and other training courses to assist companies to become positive corporate citizens in the MENA region. If you wish to approach the Arabia CSR Network for a customized in-house training on sustainability strategy development, CSR implementation or sustainability report writing, please contact us on admin@arabiacsrn.com or call us on +971-4-3448622.



TESTIMONIALS

"This training course really helped me in understanding the sustainability fundamentals. Also, it will go a long way in helping us all set up a sustainability strategy for Ducab."

- Vishal Joshi - Management Systems Officer, Ducab

"The training changed my perception of sustainability. It was very well-planned and executed and all the participants were taken to a journey of awareness to commitment to sustainability."

- Manoharan Raghavan - Officer Management Executive Office, Ducab

"ACSRN's training was wonderfully designed and structured to cover the topic. The trainer managed to engaged all participants, who are now richer on sustainability."

- Shailendra Pratap Singh - Country Manager, UAE, Oman & Qatar, Ducab



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Awards Update

Raising the bar of sustainability through the Arabia CSR Awards

In order to provide applicants to the Arabia CSR Awards with a complete outline of the application procedure and help them acquire an in-depth understanding of the questionnaire, the Arabia CSR Network organized a complimentary 'Awards Clinic' at the Southern Sun Qamardeen Hotel in Downtown Dubai. The Clinic also informed the participants of the required supporting documents and provide helpful hints on submitting a good application.

Dr. Gracia Ugut, Member of the Jury of the Arabia CSR Awards facilitated the Clinic. Dr. Ugut is currently the Associate Dean of the Executive Education and Lifelong Learning (EXCELL) Center at the Asian Institute of Management. She is a resource speaker on sustainable banking in Asia CSR Forum since 2004 and has also conducted research on Corporate Governance, particularly for Banking and Financial Institutions in Asia.

Finalists from the 2011 Awards cycle, ABB, Canon Middle East, and the Health Authority Abu Dhabi participated in the Clinic to share their Awards experience, the challenges they faced and the benefits gained from the whole Awards process. They also advised participants on how to submit an award winning application,

Events & Meeting

Arabia CSR Network presents at Ministry of Economy's Forum

Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi was invited by UAE's Ministry of Economy to speak at a Conference titled 'The Forum of the Contribution of the Private Sector on the Development Process'. The Conference was organized under the patronage of H.E. Sultan Bin Saeed Al Mansouri, UAE's Minister of Economy.

At the Forum, Mrs. Al Marashi's presentation touched upon several topics that were very useful for the overall theme to strengthen the role of the private sector in the development of UAE. "Organizations in the Arab world are fortunate in that they can learn from the best practices and the failures of the developed world, eliminating the need to reinvent the wheel. At the same time, sustainable practices need to be tailored to this region, with our specific practices, culture, and customs," said Mrs. Al Marashi.

Mrs. Al Marashi also quoted several CSR best practices from across the region. These best practices have been recognized through the Arabia CSR Awards. Mrs. Al Marashi also spoke about the Arabia CSR Network, the UN Global Compact, the value of GRI's sustainability reporting framework and ACSRN's research output through its Awards program.



emphasizing the importance of proving to the judges that they are actively measuring and refining the outcomes of their CSR initiatives for a larger and more sustainable impact.

The presentations were followed by an interactive question and answer session. The informative workshop was appreciated by all potential applicants who actively asked questions to ensure that their application had the best chance to win this prestigious Award. The Arabia CSR Awards - held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President, Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman and CEO Emirates Group, Chairman, Dubai Airports and supported by the United Nations Global Compact - is welcoming entries from government departments, corporate organizations and NGOs for the fifth cycle of the Awards. The Awards Secretariat has received applications from 13 Arab countries.

To register for the Awards program please contact the Arabia CSR Network team on +971 (0)4 3448622 or visit www.arabiacsrnetwork.com for more information

Arabia CSR Network participates in UAE Social Responsibility Majlis by du

Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi was invited by du to speak at the second Majlis on Social Responsibility in the UAE. The objective of the event was to broaden the scope of the attendee's knowledge and enable them to become better ambassadors for CSR.

Mrs. Al Marashi introduced the Arabia CSR Network and its value in providing a platform to share CSR best practices and build organizational capacity. She also spoke about how the Arabia CSR Awards program provides that much-needed incentive for companies to speak about and continually improve the way they have integrated sustainability into their core business. Mrs. Al Marashi's presentation also shed light on GRI's sustainability reporting framework. She took the participants through the necessary steps of joining UNGC and elaborated on the importance of this body - she also informed the attendees that ACSRN's sister organization - the Emirates Environmental Group - is the focal point for the UNGC's GCC Network.

Other presenters included Luma Bourisly, VP Corporate Communications in du, who spoke about du's first sustainability report and also summarized du's journey within the past 5 years of operation; and Fatma Al Khaja, Manager, Corporate Social Responsibility, Community Affairs & Gov, Dubai Customs who presented how Dubai Customs achieved an A GRI ranked Sustainability Report this year.



Feature Article

Selling a CSR Report: How to Craft the Perfect Pitch - Bushra Azhar

According to this [report](#) from Global Reporting Initiative, the number of sustainability reports registered on the GRI Reports List increased by 22 percent in year 2010. This [article](#) tells us that 80% of the top 15 global brands and 43% of the top 100 global brands also issue CSR reports. Looking at these numbers, it would seem that any company would willingly hop on to the CSR reporting bandwagon. Sadly, that is not true, whether you are practitioner or the CSR champion in a company, selling anything CSR to the top management is a challenge and a report is no exception.

When dealing with companies and individuals who are convinced on the value of CSR but are not entirely sold on a report, the biggest mistake one could make is to pitch a report as a way to gain visibility. Yes, it will give you visibility but so will a PR campaign and with much less effort. The argument just doesn't hold enough ground. It is important to make an argument for a report beyond the PR benefits and this post will tell you how to do exactly that.

1. Pitch it as a Starting Point

Sustainability reports don't always have to be outcomes of the sustainability process. The fact is that it is inherently about disclosure and for companies who understand the significance of ethics and responsibility in business often have processes and policies in place that when disclosed in the form of a report serves as an excellent baseline for sustainability efforts. Yes, the report may not be at a higher application level; yes the reporter may have to come clean on some of the missing aspects of sustainability, but it is still a great first step and public commitment towards a full blown sustainability agenda.

2. Pitch it as a Learning Exercise

I firmly believe that the most substantial benefits of a report actually come from the learning process gained during the reporting process. Taking the GRI framework for example, after having gone through the company procedures during the data collection for all indicator categories, most people see the company in a new light. You identify your areas of strength and the loopholes and by the end, you will have identified not only your sustainability challenges but also the solutions. I have often suggested to clients who think they are not ready for a report to actually take the GRI guidelines as a check-list and see where they fall short and where they hold strong. Most companies are often very excited with the results...in a good way!

3. Pitch it as an Engagement Tool

The amount of stakeholder interaction that usually goes on during the reporting process is incomparable to any other activity. Done strategically and in such way that this engagement serves a higher purpose than just data collection will not only give you the

required data but will also get the buy-in of the person engaged. One key way to address this to shape it like an interview with the specific data items coming towards the end and the bulk of the interview time spent on a carefully planned engagement process that tackles their fears, their expectations and perceptions. With respect to external stakeholders, it makes sense to have at least 2 workshops/forums to have their buy-in onto the report and to gather their insights and suggestions.

4. Pitch it as a Competitive Edge

According to Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting in the United States report by McNair Scholars Research Journal, industries like real estate, water, life insurance and steel are very low in terms of CSR reporting. Globally, there are countries and regions where only less than 5% of the companies issue Sustainability reports. If your target company is operating in such regions or industries, a report can give the company a competitive advantage.

5. Pitch it is a Celebratory Exercise

Last but not the least, a CSR report is testament to the CSR successes AND failures of a company. By making these public, the company is not just being transparent but gives a sense of pride to everyone associated with it. The fact that a company is being proactive and transparent in talking about its challenges and victories says volumes about its long term commitment to CSR and Sustainability.

There are two types of Report Naysayers:

Type 1:

Those who don't see the report as anything beyond a PR activity

Type 2:

Those who view it as the end-all of CSR and Sustainability

Your perfect pitch is the one that is tailored to their personalities.

The problem often is not in the report itself but in the way most people view a report. For them it is a report card of how well or badly they have fared on their sustainability programs. This fact alone is enough to scare anyone. Nobody wants to be judged, nobody wants to be put on the witness stand and answer questions about what they did and why they did it. Your job is to tell them that a report is more than a report card and I hope the above points will help you do just that.

Bushra Azhar is a CSR and Sustainability Consultant based in the Middle East with experience in mining, healthcare, utilities and family owned business conglomerates. She works with local companies in helping their businesses become more sustainable and their practices more ethical. She is the founder of Good Business Sense, a blog dedicated to spreading simple, practical CSR knowledge and the idea that good CSR is simply Good Business Sense. You can contact her through her email bushra@pbsense.com or via Twitter [@bushraazhar](https://twitter.com/bushraazhar)



Members Update

ABB UAE receives the Dubai Chamber CSR Label Award



Eight major Dubai-based companies were recently awarded the Dubai Chamber CSR Label for their CSR and sustainability efforts. Amongst these was ABB UAE. H.E. Hisham Al Shirawi, 2nd Vice Chairman, Dubai Chamber, presented the CSR Label certificates to the receiving companies, saying that they were pioneers in the region. “The receiving companies today send a signal to Dubai’s business community that regardless of the type or size of the organisation, CSR can be incorporated across all operations to the benefit of the business,” he said. As one of the world’s leading engineering companies, ABB plays a very big role in helping its customers to use electrical power effectively and to increase industrial productivity in a sustainable way.

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) prioritizes gender balance in the work force



At a recently held Women’s Committee, Khawla Al Mehairi, Chairperson of the Women’s Committee at DEWA, stated that currently, the total number of female employees at DEWA is 981 with roles in all sectors and departments. This number constitutes 11 per cent of all staff recruited by the authority. Meanwhile, Emiratis account for 77 per cent of the total female workforce.

Al Mehairi also pointed out that the UAE has the highest percentage of women graduates in the GCC and the highest percentage of women in the workplace. The event was attended by Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, Managing Director and CEO of Dewa; Dr Mona Bahar, Member of the Federal National Council and Assistant Director-General for Care and Community Services at the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children.

DEWA also recently sponsored a range of activities for children at the Emirates Human Rights Association (EHRA) to raise awareness about protecting children and their rights.

“Building on this support, we call upon everyone to educate children about their rights and responsibilities,” said HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of DEWA.

EHRA is actively engaging children and their families through workshops and lectures at schools, publishing brochures and arranging activities that suit children’s mindsets and helps to deliver the message to all members of UAE’s society. EHRA, through its awareness-raising material, will also highlight a number of clauses in the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the UAE is a signatory.

SERCO promotes aviation safety management



SERCO Middle East recently sponsored the 5th Annual ANA Safety Workshop in Dubai. The event, organized by the General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Air Navigation and Aerodrome Department (ANA), was titled ‘Integrated Aviation Safety Management’. Over 100 participants from UAE air traffic control units, airports, airlines, military, government agencies and the wider industry attended the two day workshop. The workshop was focused on Integrated Aviation Safety Management Systems and consisted of a comprehensive schedule of presentations and workshop exercises.

AlSafi Danone assists Overseas Filipino Workers



AlSafi Danone was one of the sponsors of an event by the Filipino Artiste Migrant Ensemble organized to provide financial assistance to a couple of distressed OFWs in Jeddah. At the event Alexander Inza Cruz, Acting Labor Attache of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO-OWWA) in Jeddah, took the opportunity in reminding OFWs of the disadvantages of absconding from their jobs and urged them to respect the laws and the culture of the Kingdom.

Al Safi Danone - operating under the slogan “Good health Tastes Great” - is one of the largest producers and distributors of fresh dairy products, juices, desserts, and UHT milk in the Middle East. The company is fully dedicated to producing and delivering nutritious high-quality products every day to about 30, 000 retail stores in 11 countries.



du wins The M+Health Award for the Best Health Care Initiative



A panel of industry leaders at the recently-held 2012 Hospital Build and Infrastructure Awards selected du as the winner of The M+Health Award for the Best Health Care Initiative by a Telecom Provider. Smart Health is du's strategic mobile health initiative designed to build an informative and collaborative healthcare eco-system through innovative services, smart networks and technology. In partnership with Mobile Doctors 24-7 International, who are licensed by Dubai Healthcare City, du has also launched a unique Physician Helpline. This affordable around-the-clock phone service provides indispensable support to du's customers by giving them access to quality healthcare services through experienced medical professionals at any time - day or night.

du also recently announced that it has entered an official partnership with the UAE National Olympic Committee (NOC) in support of the country's participation in the London 2012 Olympics. Through the establishment of an online and mobile communication campaign, this exciting joint venture aims to provide UAE nationals and residents with the most up-to-date source of news – chronicling the country's every triumph and achievement during the Olympics.

"We are an Emirati company to the core, and it is a great honor to be able to support our country's participation in the London 2012 Olympics by partnering with the UAE National Olympic Committee," said Osman Sultan, CEO, du. "On behalf of all of my colleagues, I would like to wish the UAE delegation the very best of luck."

In celebration of Give and Gain Day 2012, du also invited 30 Emiratis from The Elderly Rehabilitation Centre to a special lunch event, held at Al Fanar restaurant in Dubai Festival City. The elderly guests were entertained with quizzes and competitions, and poetry recitation by Saoud Al Kaabi and Jumaa Bin Thalith, in surroundings reminiscent of the UAE in the 60s. Additionally, 30 du employees, from graduate trainees to management, volunteered a total of 90 hours to put a smile on the face of the elderly Emiratis. du strongly believes in giving back to the UAE community and organizes several volunteering opportunities for its employees throughout the year, allowing them to participate in whatever way they can.

PaITel Group Foundation provides computer equipment and constructs computer labs



Under the auspices of President Mahmoud Abbas, the PaITel Group Foundation for Community Development Initiative handed over 250 computers for 23 laboratories and 46 institutions and societies in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Ammar Aker, CEO of the Palestinian Telecommunication Group stated that this initiative is aimed at dissemination of technological knowledge and to achieve digital inclusion for all groups and areas by supporting the efforts of civil society institutions. The initiative is divided into two parts: support for institutions for computer labs to provide training programs and awareness for the local community in the field of computers and the Internet, and support organizations to get the computers to improve administrative efficiency.

Dubai Aluminium (DUBAL), Dar Al Ber prepare women for gainful employment



A group of 15 women from different nationalities, all living in the UAE and registered at Dar Al Ber Society, were chosen to participate in a project by DUBAL and Dubai-based Dar Al Ber Society to educate women in various business skills to help them be competitive within the market and give them an opportunity to start a career.

The project entailed the women attending courses during week-days. By doing so, the women were trained in business communication, electronic archiving, computer skills and typing (Arabic as well as English), thus giving all participants the chance to widen their background and enter the professional arena. "This project clearly demonstrated the strength of DUBAL's partnership approach to all aspects of our business," says Mohammed Yahya, Manager: Corporate Relations & International Affairs.

DUBAL fully sponsored the women and assigned two Arabic teachers to assist the women. Dar Al Ber Society now plans to roll-out the concept on a larger scale by involving other corporate organisations as sponsors.

HSBC Bank organizes Kids Read



HSBC Bank Middle East sponsored Kids Read, a free event for the community where workshops are offered to parents to teach them how to inspire their children to read and to help parents and children bond through books. In honor of World Environment Day, Kid Read highlighted the importance of the Green Economy through books about the preservation of nature.



Marcus Hurry, Deputy CEO HSBC Bank Middle East, said: "By partnering with British Council and supporting the Kids Read programme, our aim is to educate children living in the UAE on the importance of a sustainable environment and make it fun through reading and activities related to environmental issues."

HSBC Bank Middle East also sponsored a baseline vegetation study to help conserve Wadi Wurayah National Park's natural biodiversity.

The study will be undertaken by Emirates Wildlife Society in association with WWF (EWS-WWF), Fujairah Municipality. Wadi Wurayah National Park, in the emirate of Fujairah, is the UAE's first mountain protected area and is of considerable ecological significance providing a habitat for more than 500 species.

Ammar Shams, Regional Head of Corporate Sustainability in UAE for HSBC Bank Middle East commented: "Preserving biodiversity is a fundamental cornerstone of HSBC's Sustainability agenda globally, and we are very committed to supporting EWS-WWF in working towards a better understanding of the UAE's natural biodiversity."

General News

GRI releases new sustainability reporting guidance for public consultation

GRI is working on the next generation of its Sustainability Reporting Guidelines – G4. As part of the development process, the second Public Comment Period is now open for organizations and individuals to share their views and help shape the structure and content of G4. The G4 development is focused on five main areas – Boundary, Application Levels, Governance and Remuneration, Supply Chain, and Disclosures on Management Approach – and Working Groups have produced new and updated content. This content is now available for public comment. Individuals and organizations can provide feedback by answering questions about the new content and providing editorial suggestions and comments in the text of the exposure draft.

GRI invites all interested people and organizations to participate in the second G4 Public Comment Period. Feedback on the draft documents will guide the GRI Secretariat, Working Groups, and governance bodies to finalize the development of G4. The content is available online from 25 June to 25 September 2012. It is available in English, and respondents can log in and out of the system as many times as they like. Read the exposure draft of G4 and provide feedback [here](#).

Leading business sustainability groups make case for greater scale and collaboration

Two of the world's most prominent business-oriented sustainability organizations – the UN Global Compact and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) – recently issued a joint statement highlighting the urgent need to take pioneering corporate sustainability practices to greater scale, and calling on governments

to work more fully with the international business community in the years and decades to come. The statement was issued just two weeks before government leaders met in Rio de Janeiro for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) to try and forge consensus on a global sustainable development strategy.

"Taking pioneering sustainability innovations of leading companies to scale, business will be the key driver for green economic growth," the statement reads. "Together with responsible investors, business organizations – working independently and in partnership with a range of other committed and passionate stakeholders – will help our world achieve the goal of true sustainable development."

The statement – titled Sustainable Business: Helping to Foster the Future We Want – cites the growth of corporate sustainability implementation (based on initiatives such as the Global Compact) as well as sustainability reporting (based on frameworks such as that of GRI) as evidence that the sustainable business movement has taken firm root globally and "is reaching a point where it could become common norm for the business practices we need" to achieve "a sustainable future".

GRI re-launches program to enable organizations build sustainability reporting capacity amongst suppliers

GRI is re-launching the Business Transparency Program, an initiative that helps groups of companies produce their first sustainability report, from introducing them to sustainability and transparency through to publication. By enabling member companies to report their sustainability performance with training from GRI's Partners, chambers of commerce, associations and



multinationals can help their members and suppliers to identify areas where they can improve, save, and profit. One of the first multinational companies to join the project was sportswear company PUMA. “What distinguishes this program from many other supply chain programs is that it helps our suppliers to develop their own views, programs and targets related to sustainability, rather than just buying into something initiated by us as a brand,” said the Deputy Head PUMA. For more information, visit www.globalreporting.org/network/the-Business-transparency-program/Pages/default.aspx

Final Business Forum Text Packed with Commitments and Innovations Presented to UN Secretary-General at Rio+20

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently accepted the full set of outcomes from the Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum, including a listing of more than 200 business commitments. The Forum, organized by the UN Global Compact, in cooperation with the Rio+20 Secretariat, the UN System and the Global Compact Network Brazil, brought together 2,700 business leaders, investors, academics, Government officials, environmentalists and grassroots activists earlier this week.

“The Corporate Sustainability Forum outcome document shows the solid commitment to sustainable development among the business community, and the creativity of their new approaches to low-carbon solutions, reducing poverty, empowering women and restoring fresh water resources,” said Georg Kell, Executive Director of the UN Global Compact. To read the complete text of the outcome document, please visit www.unglobalcompact.org/docs/news_events/upcoming/RioCSF/RioCorpSustForum_Outcome_21June12.pdf

A core group of five stock exchanges - NASDAQ OMX, BM&FBOVESPA, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange

(JSE), the Istanbul Stock Exchange (ISE) and The Egyptian Exchange (EGX) – recently announced a commitment to promote long-term, sustainable investment in their markets. The announcement comes amid high-profile discussions among governments on the role of the private sector – including finance – in building a green economy and the importance of corporate sustainability reporting.

“Going forward we would like to publicly recognize those exchanges that are committed to promoting sustainability,” said UNCTAD’s Secretary-General, who announced the commitment in the presence of senior regulators, investors, and representatives from stock exchanges. “This is the first step of a larger global call to stock exchanges to publicly commit to promoting sustainability” explained Georg Kell, Executive Director of the Global Compact.

“We take this opportunity to call on all stock exchanges around the world to join these leading exchanges in making this potentially transformative commitment.”

The announcement follows a recent report by the SSE, 2012 Sustainable Stock Exchanges: A Report on Progress that underscores that the majority of exchange entities are interested in promoting greater corporate transparency and responsibility on sustainability issues.

New Web-Based Platform Highlights Gender Equality and Business

A new web-based platform was recently launched to advance business efforts to empower women and integrate gender equality into the corporate sustainability agenda. The website will provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ for business and other stakeholders to access information related to the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), a joint initiative of UN Women and the UN Global Compact which provides a roadmap for business to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community.

The website (www.WEPrinciples.org) features key tools, resources and guidance materials, engagement opportunities for business and other stakeholders, and information about WEPs-related events taking place around the world. Further, the portal will increase visibility of business efforts to implement the Principles, including policies, practices and initiatives developed by the more than 420 companies whose top leadership has signed the CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs.

UN Alliance of Civilizations Partners Forum Draws to a Close

70 countries, 15 international organizations, and a significant number of corporations, foundations, and NGOs took part in a forum to affirm the UN Alliance of Civilizations’ (UNAOC) position as a global platform for cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation at a time of growing global interdependence.

More than half of those present pledged new support for the Alliance’s work—both financial and in-kind, thereby enabling the Alliance to better plan its future activities and consolidate existing projects. Additionally, participants discussed a wide range of topics relevant to the mandate of the Alliance, including commonly shared values essential for co-existence, cities and diversifying local governance, and the role of the private sector in supporting cross-cultural activities.

For more information, please visit www.unaoc.org/events/partners-forum/istanbul-2012-partners-forum/



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Best practices from the archive



An overview of Environmental Center for Arab Towns

The Environmental Center for Arab Towns (ECAT) is a scientific research institute which deals with environmental issues concerning Arab city's natural resources, economic progress and sustainable development. ECAT is affiliated with the Arab Town Organization (ATO) and operates under the umbrella of the Director General of Dubai Municipality and nine representatives from ATO member cities. The center specializes in offering Awareness and research services in different environmental fields to all the cities which are members in the ATO.

ECAT plays a critical role in connecting sustainable development challenges, stakeholders, research and discussion on potential solutions, and implementation of sustainable projects. By creating venues for stakeholders to exchange ideas, give feedback on scientific proposals, and find common ground, ECAT bridges communication gaps and facilitated synergies among participants. One of its programs focuses on creating youth awareness on the region's environmental challenges. It has also put the spotlight on the issue of water resources through a water management workshop.

"CSR is not something that can pay off immediately. It is something which takes time," noted the Director of ECAT. He also

stressed the importance of viewing CSR and sustainability from a holistic perspective. He observed the prominence of international companies in CSR, and he attributed this to a better understanding of the aggregate effects of such programs. He further explained that if companies could trace the benefits of CSR from its internal systems to global social and environmental systems, they would be able to arrive at a higher valuation for corporate responsibility programs.

One of the first programs launched by ECAT was the Environmental Ambassadors United (EAU), which targets elementary school children. These children represent a stakeholder group that is often overlooked; i.e. the future residents and decision makers of Arab communities built today. The EAU is a joint project between ECAT and IRISADES, an environmental consultancy group. This is an awareness program to introduce environmental consciousness among the youth. The EAU program seeks to establish a network of environmental ambassadors from different cities, regions and countries who will interact and exchange ideas.

ECAT has experienced tremendous success through collaborative effort with many highly respected organizations. It has joined the United Nations Global Compact, a framework that advocates the alignment of the private sector with international values such as labor and human rights, environmental stewardship and anti-corruption. ECAT's association with the Global Compact has established its intent to uphold such international principles.

In a region bent on proving that sustainable solutions are within reach, an organization such as ECAT has been quite instrumental in achieving success. ECAT helps bridge the gap between intent, enthusiasm and action. ECAT has showed competence and creativity through its youth-centered awareness programs. By identifying and addressing such a potent audience, it exposes the reality that sustainability is an issue that stretches out across generations.

ECAT functions as a hub for information exchange and discussions on CSR and sustainability, through specific, solutions-directed workshops. As a catalyst for change towards a sustainable future, its journey has just begun.

Arabia CSR Best Practices: 2008-2010



This abstract has been taken from the ACSRN publication titled 'Arabia CSR Practices: 2008-2010'. For more details on Environmental Center for Arab Towns (ECAT) and other companies that have been recognized for their innovative and effective CSR strategies write to us at admin@arabiacsrn.com and book your copy now! Please mention "Arabia CSR Best Practices" in the subject.

The Arabia CSR Network welcomes new members to be a part of its CSR journey. To learn how you can be a member, and how your organization will benefit from it, call us at +971-4-3448622 or write to us at admin@arabiacsrn.com
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