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CSR ARABIA

Arabia CSR
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FORUM & AWARDS
CEREMONY 2012

*Embracing Sustainability
in Times of Instability*

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Arabia CSR Network to organize GRI sustainability reporting training from 23rd to 25th December 2012



Note by the CEO / President Arabia CSR Network

Habiba Al Mar'ashi



As-Salamu Alaykum from the Arabia CSR Network!

A question that I usually ask myself when I witness sustainability organizations and their practices is “Is it enough?” In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, social impact, natural resource conservation, working conditions etc., how far do we have left to go to achieve true sustainability – or is that just a vague concept that we can only move towards but never actually know how far ahead we are. The feature article by Ralph Thurm touches upon these questions in more detail.

We are finally closing in towards the conclusion of yet another Arabia CSR Awards cycle. This year marked the fifth year of the program and we are honored that we have ‘sustained’ it despite the odds. For those who are unaware, the Arabia CSR Awards is a one-of-a-kind program that helps organizations understand their sustainability footprint and report on it in full detail. The Arabia CSR Network, with its panel of judges, then selects those organizations that best address sustainability trends in the Arab region.

The high-profile Arabia CSR Forum and Awards Ceremony will serve as the conclusion for the Awards program and will take place on Wednesday, 24th October in Dubai UAE. It will feature a host of international sustainability experts, offer sharing of award-winning CSR practices, launch the most recent Arabia CSR Network publication on CSR case studies from the Arab world and more. We urge you all to be a part of this event. For more details please visit www.arabiacsnetwork.com Last month has not only kept us busy with the event preparations, we have also taken out time to organize two very useful trainings: one on the GRI sustainability reporting framework, and the other to introduce the ISO 26000 guidance on social responsibility in the UAE, not to mention that we participated in a myriad of programs and events in the country.

I encourage you all to attend the events organized by the Arabia CSR Network. Please get in touch with us on admin@arabiacsnetwork.com for further details. You can also find us online on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for more frequent updates, CSR news and resources.

Upcoming CSR Events

Arabia CSR Forum and Awards Ceremony 2012 on 24th October 2012

The Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, aimed to address a number of issues related to achieving a sustainable future. While the success of the Conference is a debatable issue, one of the few positive outcomes of the Summit was the importance of corporate social responsibility and the need for the private sector “to engage in responsible business practices, such as those promoted by the UN Global Compact”.

The Arabia CSR Forum & Awards Ceremony 2012 is committed to this call for private businesses and public organizations to play a bigger role in society and create a positive alignment between their business objectives and human rights, fair labour practices, environmental protection and good governance. The objective of this Forum is to offer an open platform for the discussion of these issues and to spark new perspectives and actions through dialogue with representatives from government, private businesses and civil society.

الجائزة
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ARABIA
CORPORATE
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RESPONSIBILITY
AWARDS

The two main topics that will be discussed at this Forum by a number of international and regional CSR and sustainability experts are:

1. ***Creating Shared Value through Strategic CSR***
2. ***CSR as a Long-term Approach***

The Forum – which will be graced by speakers such as Mr. Herman Mulder, Chairman of the Board, GRI; Dr. Mark Boutros Ghali of Kreab Gavin Anderson Worldwide; Lord Michael Hastings, Global Head of Citizenship and Diversity, KPMG; Mr. Bengt Johansson, Ambassador for Corporate Social Responsibility at the Swedish Government and more – will be followed by a classy awards luncheon that will honour those companies that have been recipients of the Arabia CSR Awards 2012. We urge you all for your participation and hope that you benefit from the galaxy of sustainability leaders and experts that will be speaking at the Forum. For further details, please visit www.arabiacsnetwork.com/home/media-centre



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Arabia CSR Network to join Swedish Trade Council for CSR event on 23rd October 2012

The Embassy of Sweden, the Swedish Trade Council, the Swedish Business Council, the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and the Arabia CSR Network are organizing a seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility on Tuesday October 23, at 1pm-5 pm, at the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

During this event Emirati and Swedish companies will have an opportunity to share expertise and best practices on CSR – what they have done, how they did it and what the results were. The event will also be attended by the present Sweden's Ambassador for CSR, Mr. Bengt Johansson who will speak about lessons

learned in Sweden and what the government and the business community have done to make Sweden a global forerunner in CSR. The seminar will focus around two topics:

1. ***Advancing Transparency through Good Governance and Anti-Corruption***
2. ***Human Capital Development through Innovative Employee Engagement***

In each panel, there will be speakers from both Swedish companies and Emirati companies who will share their experiences from CSR. The event is free of charge. For further details, please write to admin@arabiacrnetwork.com with "Swedish CSR seminar" in the subject line.

Arabia CSR Network to organize GRI sustainability reporting training from 23rd to 25th December 2012

To register yourself for this training course, please visit <http://www.arabiacrnetwork.com/home/gri>

CSR Research

Arabia CSR Best Practices 2011

Over the past few months, the Arabia CSR Network has been working to develop the Arabia CSR Best Practices 2011, which is an important and pioneering collection of sustainability case studies from the Arab world. This publication - which can be used as an effective resource material by corporate organizations and industry councils as well as an educational tool for academic institutions and individuals involved in CSR and sustainability – features case studies of 10 organizations from Arab countries such as the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar. Each of these organizations, which represent the public, private and civil society sector, were recipients of the Arabia CSR Awards in 2011 and showcase those organizations that best exhibit commitment towards sustainability, CSR and sound business ethics.

In addition to enhancing the respective companies' reputation as an organization that is committed to serving universal corporate principles of environmental stewardship, good labour practices, human rights and ethical business policies, it will also aim to improve CSR implementation in the region by highlighting best practices from companies that are operating under the similar context and sustainability issues. The Arabia CSR Best Practices 2011 can be purchased from the Arabia CSR Network at a cost of AED 250. To book your copy, please send an email to admin@arabiacrnetwork.com with the subject "Arabia CSR Best Practices 2011".



CSR Training & Workshops

GRI Sustainability Reporting Training – September 23rd-25th, 2012

The Arabia CSR Network recently conducted its sixth training on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Framework in Dubai. "As the first body certified by the GRI headquarters in The Netherlands to offer training services to organizations and individuals in

the MENA region, Arabia CSR Network has relied on its long experience of promoting sustainable development through its various programs to design and deliver its training course in such a way as to ensure that participants receive optimal benefit from the course" said Habiba Al Marashi, President of Arabia CSR Network and the UN Global Compact GCC Network.

The training is one of the many programs that the Network offers. Its newly-launched 'CSR Strategy and Leadership' training course will focus on how to incorporate Corporate Social Responsibility principles into the company strategy in an innovative way. The training course will be the first step in the cyclical journey towards



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a sustainable business. The GRI training aims to help companies take the next step of reporting on the results of their CSR strategy.

The training had 15 participants from various organizations and sectors ranging from Transport & Logistics, Accounting, Human Resources, Government department and more. "The GRI Training was very useful and really met my expectations, It is a must do for any person undertaking or helping to build his company's sustainability report" says Ms. Rana Harez, Business Development Manager from BPA Worldwide.

"The GRI Framework is much more than merely writing a sustainability report. Reporting is the end result of a long process of examining, modifying and developing a comprehensive internal system which enables the organization to incorporate sustainability into their core operations," emphasized Mrs. Al Mar'ashi.



The GRI has emerged as the leading reporting framework designed specifically for companies that wish to report on their sustainability strategies and initiatives. It complements the traditional business practice of developing financial reports. The GRI also addresses the non-financial aspects of economic, environmental, and social performance of organizations.

Introduction to ISO 26000 – Arabia CSR Network and DNV 26th Sep 2012



The Arabia CSR Network recently collaborated with DNV – an international risk-management company to introduce the ISO 26000 in the Arab world. The workshop was conducted at the Millennium Plaza Hotel in Dubai.

The ISO 26000, although very recently launched in 2010, is being considered by many as the gold standard for social responsibility. It is intended to assist organizations in contributing to sustainable development. The ISO 26000 is a voluntary guidance standard that is flexible and adaptable to all kinds and sizes of organizations.

"The Arabia CSR Network is very well placed to provide this training to build the capacity of organizations and businesses in the region, mainly because it is a regionally rooted organization that has acquired an in-depth understanding of the benefits and challenges faced by organizations in their efforts to meet their Corporate Social Responsibility within the region's unique corporate culture and opportunities," said President of Arabia CSR Network and the UN Global Compact GCC Network.

The voluntary International Standard, ISO 26000:2010 Guidance for Social Responsibility, has received overwhelming acceptance from more than 90 countries globally. "DNV has been actively involved in the work on ISO 26000 since the very beginning, as one of only a few global certification bodies. DNV helped develop this standard, because we believe it is an important initiative to drive sustainable conduct in organizations worldwide.

The standard is ambitious. It is not perfect. It contains compromises and limitations. But, in the end ISO 26000 stands as a source of inspiration, full of ideas and practical guidance on how to integrate universally accepted principles on social responsibility into your organization's strategy and everyday operations" stated Sherif Mekkawy, Key Customers and Business Development Manager, DNV Business Assurance, Middle East & East Africa and Caspian Countries.

The standard sets out 7 Principles of social responsibility to guide organizations in this quest. The ISO 26000 also covers themes such as Organizational governance, Human rights, Labour practices, Environment, Fair operating practices, Consumer issues and Community involvement and development. The ISO 26000 guidelines have been designed to make it easier for organizations to implement social responsibility via a step by step approach.

Also participating at the event was Etisalat UAE, an organization that is actively enhancing its commitment to sustainability through frameworks such as the ISO 26000 and the Global Reporting Initiative. Mr. Nasser bin Obood, Chief Government Relations and Communications Officer, Etisalat UAE, said that "In 2005 the Etisalat group introduced a new brand and a new strategy to undertake international expansion. This resulted in rapid growth – from having 4 million customers and operations in only one country, to having a footprint across West Africa to the Far East servicing nearly 170 million today. In the last 6 years



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these operations have been very successful and are contributing to the local economy. Now we're looking for ways to leverage synergies between the operations to ensure that our business has a powerful impact as a force for good."

"The Etisalat group is deeply committed to implementing sustainability and corporate responsibility according to international best practice across its footprint and we feel that ISO 26000, GRI and the UNGC provide solid foundation to build upon. We are delighted to be a part of today's forum on ISO 26000 and to share our journey," Mr. Nasser added.



Events & Meetings

ACSRN participates in GRI G4 workshop in Abu Dhabi

The Arabia CSR Network – the first GRI certified training partner for Arabic speaking Middle East countries – recently participated in a feedback workshop for the upcoming G4 edition of the GRI reporting guidelines. The workshop was organized by GRI and the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group (ADSG) at the Family Development Foundation office in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

This was a second stakeholder consultative exercise conducted by GRI on the subject, and the first in the UAE. The workshop was designed to walk delegates through the proposed changes, have roundtable discussions on the most significant changes or aspects of the proposed edition, and the feedback, suggestions and conclusions, gathered during the exercise would be examined by the respective GRI committees working on the GRI G4. ACSRN delegates took part in two roundtables – Disclosure on management approach (DMA) and Application levels. GRI

presents a complex framework to most reporters, and the general appeal at the workshop was for streamlining the guidelines to make it less voluminous, more focused and easier to use. A major challenge for reporters from the Arab Region is to address and reflect upon, within the report, issues and concerns that are different and particular to the geographical context.

Arabia CSR Network and Emirates Environmental Group speak about the UN Global Compact principles at Petrofac UAE

The ACSRN was invited by Petrofac UAE to participate in a conference that sought to build staff capacity and awareness on sustainability and CSR. The presentation covered useful topics such as an introduction about the UNGC, the GCC local network fronted by the EEG, and the initiatives of the UNGC on Climate, Water, Principles of Responsible Investment, Principles of Responsible Management Education and Women's Empowerment.

To continue to engage Petrofac in CSR programs and encourage reporting of their sustainability performance, the Arabia CSR Network also briefly informed them of the commonly used GRI framework, which is an effective method of monitoring and reporting their progress on the UNGC principles.

Feature Article

Measuring less bad is not good enough – towards Zero Impact Growth

Ralph Thurm, Director Collaborative Sustainability & Innovation, Founder & Managing Director A|HEAD|ahead

End of July 2012 Deloitte published the report 'Toward Zero Impact Growth – Strategies of Leading Companies in 10 Industries', summarizing outcomes of the work of Deloitte Innovation and John Elkington (Volans) around describing the need for a new breed of industrialists, called the 'Zeronauts', and a new measurement regime around 'Zero Impact Growth'.

Deloitte's report focused on the measurement of sustainability performance (<http://t.co/Iqo0QePl>) Ralph Thurm, lead author of the report, and judge of the Arabia CSR Awards since 2009, explains why the report is important.

The call for a green and inclusive economy has never been so loud. In the run-up to the Rio +20 conference the UN Global Compact called for a 'quantum leap', and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development was asking their 200+ members to 'change the pace' as necessary precondition on how to get there in a timeframe until 2050, with many crucial decisions to be taken way earlier, many of them in the next couple of years. However, how would we know that we are successful,



quick enough and effective in this transition, ensuring a new economic model that allows growth in the future as well but that this growth balances with the planetary limits and human well-being Honestly, not one industry, not one company on earth is able to tell you that at the moment!

Our current appetite for radical transformation surely isn't the way forward. Looking at the time span between the first and second Rio conference, we have altogether learned how to be 'less bad', without knowing what is actually 'good' overall performance. We are flying blind on many levels while we clap shoulders for marginal efficiency improvements, and even often don't know if our improvements are causing extra burdens for fellow human beings.

The current reporting regime – the GRI G3.1 Guidelines – ask for sustainability context information in order to be able to define report content, but reporters dramatically fail to report on them due to many reasons. If it is the fact that the GRI indicators only ask for 'less bad' while leaving sustainability context to the foreword of the board or CEO (which normally do not deliver on that task), the fact that report boundaries are in most cases limited to the annual report boundaries and not to real impact (the Guidelines still offer a sneak-out 'and/or' option), or simply due to the fact that often stakeholders too do not understand the sustainability context of a reporter's actions and therefore materiality is way too 'negotiable', it is becoming painfully clear that this is not enough.

What we need is a North Star benchmark, a joint paradigm that allows all industries (and companies as part of them) to identify, adapt and perform towards that common vision. The report offers 'Zero Impact Growth' to be that North Star, with the necessary Zeronautics as measurement regime. This is not yet fully developed and needs the involvement of all industries and stakeholder groups. Elkington's book not only shows a set of mental mindsets on how to get there (the 5-step 'pathway to zero' model), it also shows ample examples of organisations and individuals that already work towards Zero Impact Growth. The paradigm embraces ideas like the circular economy, cradle-to-cradle, bottom-of-the-pyramid or shared value creation as practical concepts in the need to speed up, whilst Zero Impact Growth and the Zeronautics help to assess the effectiveness of their partial contributions towards the overall targeted North Star.

Based on the pathway to zero model Deloitte developed a maturity model and has assessed 65 leading companies on how far they are in this mental journey. All of these companies are either part of the GC Lead program, the C4C or Water mandate campaign. The outcome of the assessment in 10 industries is described in Deloitte's report, both as a complete outcome as well

as the single performances of the 65 companies. Figure 1 illustrates the outcome in the 5 categories.



Furthermore the report also reveals 4 major gaps that were visible through the ZIG Monitor: a major comparability gap (that is why all rankings and ratings tell us different stories about best-in-'their'-class performance), major gaps between the overall strategy of organizations towards Zero Impact Growth and furthermore the real capabilities of sub-strategies to deliver on the organization's overall strategy (it simply doesn't add up in many cases), and finally gaps in the balance of sub-strategies and major performance gaps in and between industries. And all of that while the report only assessed companies that see themselves as leading in sustainability.

The Deloitte report gives us a baseline picture of where we really are, but also assesses the brakes, the accelerators and the options for a 'joint flight' towards adapting Zero Impact Growth as the new basic and minimum paradigm that we all together need to agree on, recognizing that there is a whole world to win behind Zero Impact Growth, some call it regenerative or restorative growth. It's a process that can be a door-opener for cross-industry fertilization, for social entrepreneurship, for collaborative action to develop true costing, true pricing and true taxing initiatives as part of the Zeronautics we need to desperately and that can be breakthroughs to real 'integrated reporting' (in which the sustainability context gap is finally closed).

I once sadly noted and called our current way of acting 'Dilbertarian Sustainability', it's now time to have the courage and the willingness to go beyond: 'It's time to be steered by the stars, not by the light of each passing ship', as mentioned by Omar Bradley many centuries ago. It's time we start doing exactly that. Be part of the 'joint flight' and see where you are in the Zero Impact Growth Monitor.



Members Update

ABB to strengthen power products footprint in Saudi Arabia



ABB, the leading power and automation technology group, will construct a new manufacturing plant for high-voltage gas-insulated switchgear (GIS) and a transformer service workshop in Saudi Arabia, to serve the growing power infrastructure needs in the region. The compactness, low-weight and robust design features enable ABB's equipment to be deployed in constrained spaces and harsh conditions to enhance grid reliability and efficiency with minimum maintenance needs. Earlier this year, ABB introduced its latest generation of GIS with a compact design that reduces SF6 (a greenhouse gas) requirement by as much as 40%, making it more environmentally friendly.

Source: www.mena.abb.com

Coca Cola to deliver millions of liters of potable water



The Coca-Cola Company has partnered with Deka Research & Development Corporation to deliver millions of liters of clean drinking water to schools, health clinics and community centers in rural regions. Currently, the projects will focus on Africa and Latin America. Longer term, Coca-Cola and Deka say they will form additional partnerships and install thousands of water purification units in India, the Middle East and Asia.

When fully scaled, the companies expect the partnership to add more than half a billion liters of clean drinking water per year to the global water supply. The two companies will partner with Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group and Africare to bring Deka's Slingshot water purification technology to countries in Latin America and Africa, respectively.

Source: www.thecoca-colacompany.com

DEWA recognizes most distinguished employees in Excellence Awards



In line with its continuous efforts to reinforce a culture of excellence and loyalty at work among employees, fourteen distinguished employees were recently recognized at the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority's (DEWA) Excellence Awards of Q2 2012. The ceremony was attended by HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer and other top management from DEWA at its Headquarters in Zabeel East. "Our ever-growing interest in customer service and satisfaction levels demonstrates the high levels of performance our employees are delivering every day on the job, this recognition comes to encourage them to deliver more on their promise for excellence," said HE Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer, MD & CEO of DEWA.

Source: www.dewa.gov.ae

Dubai Customs launches NEMA



Dubai Customs has announced the launch of an online open contest, called "Nema", to share and promote proposals and contributions in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Nema was specifically designed to encourage online public contributions in CSR programme, enabling all segments of society from different nationalities in the UAE and beyond to exchange new CSR-related concepts and ideas. The best proposals for sustainable and economically-rewarding projects in the fields of environment, community, trade activity, work environment, national identity and customer service, will be chosen. (Proposals can be submitted electronically through Dubai Customs' e-mail: csr.dc@dubaicustoms.ae or its Facebook: Dubai Customs CSR and Twitter: @DubaicustomsCSR till 30th September 2012)

Source: www.dxbcustoms.gov.ae

Dubal is lead sponsor of World Energy Forum 2012



Dubal Aluminium ("DUBAL") is proud to announce that it is a lead sponsor of the World Energy Forum 2012 ("WEF 2012"), which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre from 22 to 24 October this year. The event, held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum (Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai) and hosted by the government of Dubai, marks the first time that this high-level international energy conference will take place outside the headquarters of the United Nations.



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Recognizing that access to sustainable energy is a paramount issue for all countries that are aspiring to economic and social development in order to improve the lives and destinies of their citizens, the United Nations has designated 2012 as the "International Year of Sustainable Energy for All".

DUBAL also recently scooped five awards at the Ideas. America 2012 competition, held in Mesa, Arizona, USA. Focusing on performance innovation, these ideas were suggestions made by Dubal's employees in areas of elimination of material leakage, evaluation of employee's involvement and more. DUBAL has won a total of 22 Ideas. America awards since first entering the contest in 2006.

Sultan Al Sabri (Vice President: Human Resources & Organizational Effectiveness) adds that a culture of innovation is encouraged in the company through the DUBAL Suggestion Scheme, which was established in 1981 and thus celebrated its 30-year anniversary in 2011. "The DUBAL Suggestion Scheme is a great tool as it gives employees on the shop-floor a forum for recommending changes to the way we do things. The scheme is very well received, as evidenced by the number of employees who have contributed thousands of ideas for improvement in all areas of our business."

Source: www.dubal.ae

Emirates NBD extends "Banker for a Day" program to the Northern Emirates



Emirates NBD recently announced today that it would extend its "Banker for a Day" initiative to include students from the Northern Emirates region beyond Sharjah. School students from Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Al Ain can now avail the chance to experience one normal working day at the bank as actual employees, along with their peers from Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. "We are very proud to provide this unique educational experience to our youth, which will give them an insight into the workings of a bank," said Saif Al Mansoori, Deputy Head – Group Marketing and Branding, Emirates NBD.

First launched in April 2011, Emirates NBD's "Banker for a Day" programme demonstrates its ongoing commitment to provide career development programmes for youth. The third phase of the program was organised from February to June 2012 at seven Emirates NBD branches across Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah, and witnessed the participation of 103 students from 18 schools in these emirates.

Source: www.albawaba.com

McDonald's introduces 'offline day' in UAE



McDonald's Arabia is launching its 'A Day Offline' initiative on September 28 and asking patrons to switch off their phones, laptops and tablets in order to enjoy a family meal. Rafic Fakhri, Managing Director, McDonald's UAE, said: "We have launched this initiative to encourage families across the region to spend more quality time together. Nowadays, people have become obsessed with technological devices to the point where many no longer enjoy the simple act of spending quality time with the family- the most important source of support."

Fakhri says their website, mcdonaldsarabia.com, will be offline on the day and their initiative will not impact their logistics. "The initiative is designed to create awareness of the importance of spending quality time together, however, we hope through our activities that we will encourage people to consider this throughout the year, not just for one day," Fakhri informs.

Source: www.emirates247.com

PwC report highlights need for worker protection



Independent auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) recently published a report that underscores the need for companies involved in the UAE's Saadiyat Island project to ensure that their projects comply with international labour standards for migrant workers. Saadiyat Island will be home to branches of the Louvre and Guggenheim Museums and a New York University (NYU) campus, and has been the focus of criticism over migrant workers' rights.

PwC interviewed 1,341 workers between June 2011 and May 2012 to assess the developer's compliance with the Employment Practices Policy (EPP), a code the developer drew up in 2009 that was primarily based on UAE labour law. The report talks about issues concerning recruitment fees and visa & travel costs, which are a significant factor in creating conditions of forced labour in the UAE. The report also highlights worker's living conditions and access to adequate water and sanitation, transport and other facilities. PwC, for their part, noted improvement in areas such as including a strong health and safety record. It also found that 97% of workers interviewed were in possession of their passports, a change from the past in which employers routinely confiscated passports, making it harder for workers to change employment or complain about abuse.

Source: www.hrw.org



General News

GRI invites feedback to improve reporting on greenhouse gas emissions

GRI is inviting the public to help improve the way companies report on greenhouse gas emissions, by providing feedback on draft guidance before 12 November 2012. GRI is now working on the next generation of its Sustainability Reporting Guidelines – G4. An Exposure Draft of G4 including profound changes in five areas is currently available for feedback until 25 September. As a parallel part of the development process, an additional Public Comment Period is now open for organizations and individuals to share their views and help shape reporting on greenhouse gas emissions.

The GHG Emissions Working Group - which includes representation from the Carbon Disclosure Project - has proposed new content for G4 that more closely aligns GRI's guidance with the GHG Protocol set of standards, jointly released by the World Resources Institute and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development; and the ISO 14064 standard produced by the International Organization for Standardization.

A 90-day Public Comment Period is now open, and the public can comment on the GHG and anti-corruption proposals until 12 November 2012. For more information and to download the consultation documents, visit the G4 webpages (<https://www.globalreporting.org/reporting/latest-guidelines/g4-developments>)

Global Compact Champions the Role of Business in Supporting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Global Compact Champions the Role of Business in Supporting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Marking the Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Global Compact recently highlighted actions that companies are taking to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities in the workplace, marketplace and community.

The private sector is highly impactful on the rights of persons with disabilities. Businesses can ensure economic independence through equitable employment. Innovative technologies can also support greater access and engagement of persons with disabilities within their communities.

Many companies already engage in activities that provide greater accessibility to persons with disabilities, such as ensuring widespread availability of products and services in developed and developing markets; participating in initiatives that increase

recruitment and retention of employees with disabilities; establishing in-house disability forums; and ensuring that supplier diversity programmes include firms run by persons with disabilities.

Report Highlights Corporate Solutions Toward Sustainable Development

The UN Global Compact recently released Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum: Overview and Outcomes, which outlines leading corporate practices in key sustainability areas and the wide spectrum of ideas presented at the Forum on innovations, collaborations and public policy recommendations. The final report is based on the Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum's outcome document and identifies the most promising pathways to transform markets in fundamental ways that will contribute to a more sustainable world in areas including energy, climate, agriculture, social development and urbanization.

The Forum summary report is accompanied by an Event Sustainability Report that addresses the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Forum. Download both reports from <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/news/264-09-26-2012>

Conditions worsening for Palestinian people, UNCTAD report warns

UNCTAD's recently released annual report on Assistance to the Palestinian People warned that long-term prospects for economic development in the occupied Palestinian territory have worsened. The report points to the continuing economic blockade of Gaza, and the increase in the number of mobility barriers to Palestinian people and goods in the West Bank, as well as the decline in donor support which will have serious socio-economic ramifications for the population. The report outlines continued severe poverty, and the chronic food insecurity affecting two of every three Palestinians in the occupied territory, but is most severe in Gaza. Also alarming, the report indicates, is the poverty level in East Jerusalem, estimated at 78 per cent, higher than rates in the West Bank and Gaza.

UNCTAD's mandate on work on Palestine was strengthened by member States at the UNCTAD XIII conference in Doha, Qatar in April of this year. The consensus document - the Doha Mandate - asked UNCTAD to: "Continue to assess the economic development prospects of the occupied Palestinian territory and examine obstacles to trade and development, and should strengthen its program of assistance to the Palestinian people with adequate resources and effective operational activities, as part of the international community's commitment to building an independent Palestinian State, and with a view to alleviating the adverse economic and social conditions imposed on the Palestinian people, in line with the Accra Accord." *Source: www.unctad.org*



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Best practices from the archive



An overview of Abraaj Capital

Abraaj Capital is the leading private equity and alternative asset management group in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia region (MENASA). Since its inception in 2002, Abraaj has viewed its role as going beyond that of a leading private equity firm providing its investors and shareholders with risk adjusted returns well above the industry average. The starting point for this belief is rooted in the fact that financial value creation is seen as the hub of a nexus driven by truly sustainable, regionally-rooted, economic value creation. In other words, where shareholder returns are primary, but where the ability to create deep-rooted and sustainable changes in the economic and social landscape within its operating markets, was as critical a benchmark of success as pure financial returns.

As a corporation, Abraaj shares a general sense of responsibility to address pressing global issues as they impact the markets and communities in which Abraaj operates. More significantly, it sees the threats and limitations that environmental changes could impose on business growth, availability of resources, and economic growth. For example, Abraaj well understands the implications that come with a carbon constrained economy. In terms of resources, fuel sources such as coal, petroleum and natural gas would need to be superseded by clean and renewable energy; water would be the next limited resource. As far as climate impact was concerned, extreme weather is going to affect how human and business activities are going to be conducted.

For Abraaj, integrating sustainability within the business is not a luxury but a necessity. It has taken important steps in this regard by committing to improve its business processes and by including ESG considerations within its investment decision making processes.

Consistent with its efficient and systematic methodologies, Abraaj institutionalized a framework that clarified goals and established guidelines for its CSR programs. The Abraaj Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Team (ASSET) is a framework that presents the firm's CSR goals in a holistic manner by showing how its social goals worked in harmony with financial goals. "ASSET is a representation of how the firm expresses its commitment to be actively engaged in communities and with governments. With ASSET, Abraaj identifies issues and challenges in the region that they feel they can make an impact or contribution to,

Propagating the insight that sustainability is a prime market mover has not been easy. The easiest operation to reengineer was its own. Being a private equity firm meant that its environmental impact was confined mainly to its corporate office and business travel. For its partner companies on the other hand, the impact was greater due to the nature of their business, which in some cases was energy intensive.

Nevertheless, Abraaj is optimistic that more companies would embrace its approach to sustainability management and stakeholder engagement. Large international firms, including those operating in the private equity sphere, have aligned corporate sustainability into their business models. As a greater number integrate sustainability into their business, CSR and sustainability would cease to be a hard sell proposition. It is often a question of how fast companies can adopt sustainability into their business.

For companies that manage to adapt early on, there is much to gain. Otherwise, for companies that have to play catch up, market forces will inevitably carry out the change for them. This is why Abraaj is good at what it does. It provides its clients and partner companies with the foresight that allow them to get ahead and capitalize on change- before change arrives.

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 Abraaj Capital 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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