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CSR ARABIA

Arabia CSR
Network newsletter

September 2011
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Note by the CEO / President Arabia CSR Network

Habiba Al mar' ashi



Eid Mubarak and greetings to everyone from the Arabia CSR Network!

We are delighted to bring to you the first issue of UAE's (and possibly the MENA region's) premier CSR newsletter, titled 'CSR Arabia'. The newsletter is a major step for the Arabia CSR Network, a new but quickly growing organization.

When we set out to brainstorm what the newsletter would look like and what it would contain, we were overwhelmed with the ideas we had. And I take this as a positive sign that there is so much to talk about with respect to corporate social responsibility in the Arab world. We are lucky to have so many businesses, some international some local, that are gradually becoming pioneers in making their businesses responsible entities of society.

What we finally decided was that the first few issues of CSR Arabia will be online and will not be a very lengthy read. Eventually, if we garner enough support, we will make this into a full-fledged publication with more in-depth articles on CSR, sustainability and business ethics related topics. So for now, the articles that you will be reading in this monthly online newsletter will be a quick update on the Arabia CSR Network, the Awards and the various training programs we have lined up; news from our committed members and an update on what is new at the Global Reporting Initiative and the UN Global Compact – two networks that we are proud members of. In addition, an interesting feature that we will have in each newsletter is a focus on a certain company that has been recognized in the past by the Arabia CSR Awards for their innovative and effective CSR strategy and actions.

In this issue, we also focus on the upcoming Arabia CSR Awards Ceremony and Forum, a highlight of our calendar year. This event will honor the winners of the fourth cycle of the prestigious Arabia CSR Awards. Over the years, we have worked hard to give these Awards credibility and respect and the fact that more than 100 companies registered in 2011

is a testament to the Award's worth. We hope to see more applicants in the coming years. There is also the news of the Arabia CSR Network being the first certified trainers for the Global Reporting Initiative in the Arabic speaking countries of the Middle East. With this certification, we hope to build capacity of companies operating in the region in developing their sustainability reports.

For those of you who have worked with us, have been part of our Arabia CSR Awards, or have attended our corporate trainings, we hope you continue to partner with us for sustainability in the Arab world. For those readers who have just gotten to know us, we invite you to read through our newsletter and visit our office to see how we can work together for better CSR implementation.

Enjoy CSR Arabia and please write to us at admin@arabiacsrnetwork.com for feedback and suggestions.





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Arabia CSR Awards update

ACSR AWARDS CEREMONY & FORUM 2011

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President, Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman and CEO, Emirates Group, Chairman, Dubai Airports, the Arabia CSR Network will host the Awards Ceremony and Forum on 26th October 2011 in Dubai, UAE to honor companies across the Arab world that are committed to Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

Supported by the United Nations Global Compact and considered as the most significant award scheme for CSR best practices in the region, the Arabia CSR Awards has witnessed tremendous response from organizations across the entire Arab World. A total of 107 companies, government departments and NGOs across the Arabic speaking countries have registered in the fourth cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards. The first three cycles of the Awards saw more than 215 entries from the Middle East, Levant and North Africa.

This year the Awards Ceremony and Forum will focus on the role of companies amidst the recent public uprisings and political disturbance in the Arab world. The Forum will also facilitate discussion on the significant role of companies in reducing the ecological footprint in the region. With a presence of high-profile CSR experts and sustainability gurus, such as Ms. Irene Khan, former Secretary General of Amnesty International, Mr. Wolfgang Engshuber of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment and others, the Forum is expected to be a very prominent event for the entire region.



Arabia CSR Network training update

GRI TRAINING SESSION IN SEPTEMBER 2011

The Arabia CSR Network, with its strong experience of working with organizations to improve their CSR systems, has been certified by the GRI headquarters in Netherlands to provide trainings to organizations that wish to use the GRI framework for their sustainability reporting requirements. With this certification, the Arabia CSR Network will be the only certified body that will be able to offer its training services to organizations and individuals in all Arabic speaking Middle East countries.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is a large network of thousands of individual representatives from businesses, NGOs, experts, governmental agencies, etc in more than 40 countries. These representatives participate in GRI's working groups and governance bodies, use the GRI Guidelines to report, access information in GRI-based reports, and contribute to the development of the Reporting Framework.

The first GRI training session will be conducted by ACSRN towards the last week of September in Dubai, UAE. For more information on GRI certified training sessions in the Middle East, please call the Arabia CSR Network at +971-4-3448622, e-mail us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com, or visit our website on www.arabiacsnetwork.com/GRI

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Arabia CSR Network
is a GRI Certified Training Partner
in arabic speaking
Middle East countries

Global Reporting Initiative

For the first time in the Middle East, the Arabia CSR Network offers certified training sessions in sustainability reporting using the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)** framework.
Learn how your organization can measure, report, understand and improve its sustainability performance. Learn how to integrate sustainability into your organization's operations through the internationally recognized GRI framework.

Be a part of our journey and join us to help raise the standard of CSR and business ethics in the Arab world.

Who is this training for?
Organizations involved in Environmental Health and Safety, Environmental Compliance, Transportation, Accounting, Supply Chain, Human Resources; Service Sector organizations; relevant Government departments; Non Government Organizations; and many more. Your organization has an impact on the environment and society; therefore, grab this opportunity to see how you can contribute to sustainable development.

What will be covered in this training?
The training will cover the following aspects of sustainability reporting:
Prepare: Plan your GRI sustainability reporting
Connect: Identify, prioritize and dialogue with your company's stakeholders
Define: Focus your efforts by selecting issues for action and reporting
Monitor: Build your report by checking processes and monitoring activities
Report: Launch your report and prepare for the next cycle

How will GRI benefit your organization?
It will provide a clear picture of the main economic, social and environmental impacts of your organization;
It will identify risks and opportunities of your activities and achieve competitive advantage;
It will increase employee engagement;
It will encourage innovation and creation of better solutions;
It will enhance reputation and increase customer loyalty and community respect.

Training date and city:
25th-27th September, 2011 - Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Trainer:
Mr. Ralph Thurn
Director Sustainability Strategies and Innovation at Deloitte
Former Chief Operating Officer at Global Reporting Initiative

Fee per participant:
AED 5,500 for all 3 days (AED 4,900 if you register before 1st September 2011).
This will include the GRI handbook, necessary handouts, certificate, tea and lunch.

To register:
Contact the Arabia CSR Network at
admin@arabiacsnetwork.com
or call us at +971-4-3448622



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Arabia CSR Network research / publication update

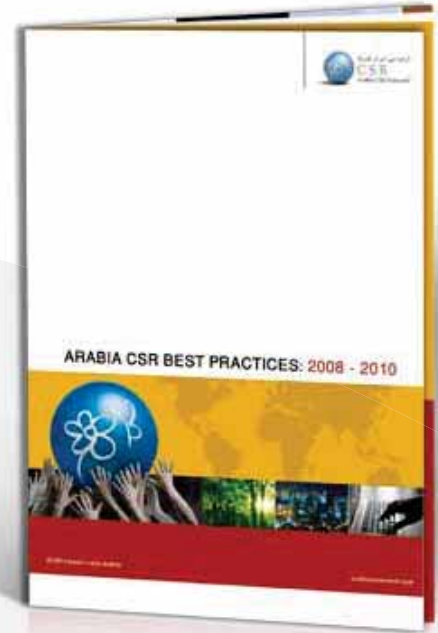
ACSR BEST PRACTICES 2011

As a pioneering CSR step for the region, the Arabia CSR Network will be publishing best practice case studies from companies that were winners of the previous Arabia CSR Awards cycles. The objective of this pioneering publication will be to highlight the innovative and homegrown corporate social responsibility practices that organizations have been taking in the Arab region and to recognize their impact so that readers can be inspired and replicate them in their own way.

Developed in assistance with the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), the 70 page publication will feature the best practice case studies of 14 organizations that have won the Arabia CSR Awards between 2008 and 2010. The case studies will play a definitive role in setting the benchmark for the Middle East, a region that is not prominently known for its sustainability practices. Therefore, this publication, and the editions that will follow will serve as a useful log to showcase and mark the trend of CSR and ethical practices that businesses are adopting in the region.

The companies represent key industries in the region such as the Oil & Gas sector, the Finance industry and the Construction sector. There are also cases from a recruiting agency, a leading government department, a five star hotel, and a major food company that operates at the national level. Cases from these companies combine to draw a nuanced yet broad-based picture of CSR practices by companies in the Arabic speaking countries.

To place your order of this pioneering publication, please write to us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com



Arabia CSR Network members' update

RECYCLING ENERGY AT MCDONALD'S UAE

McDonald's UAE – one of the corporate members of the Arabia CSR Network - is proud to have recently launched a unique environmental initiative to this region. In a first-of-its-kind joint venture, The Neutral Group and McDonald's UAE have partnered to produce environmentally friendly 100% biodiesel from used vegetable oil. McDonald's UAE has long been a supporter of environmental initiatives, working closely with NGOs and private companies to identify best practice solutions for the UAE QSR (Quick Service Restaurant) industry.



The joint venture with The Neutral Group is part of McDonald's UAE ongoing strategy to adopt innovative methods of recycling and re-using waste products which significantly reduce the impact on the environment. Under this new initiative, used vegetable oil will be collected from McDonald's outlets across the UAE under a long term contract with The Neutral Group and converted into 100% biodiesel. McDonald's UAE will use the 100% biodiesel in all its logistics fleet, thus achieving significant reductions in its carbon footprint.



Other general news updates

UAE DONORS AND THE HORN OF AFRICA CRISIS



Almost 12 million people, including 2.3 million children, across the Horn of Africa are in urgent need of humanitarian support as they

struggle from the worst drought in decades, with two regions in southern Somalia in famine. At present there are 760,000 refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia that are severely malnourished and at imminent risk of death.

The UAE Relief Team has sent two missions – comprising staff members from the UAE Red Crescent Authority and Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation – to Africa that will help 20,000 families facing severe starvation. As of the latest update by the UAE Office for the Coordination of Foreign Aid, the UAE Red Crescent Authority, Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum Charity Foundation, and Sharjah Charity Association Aid have carried out aid telethons and have raised a total of AED 120.35 million as of 18th August 2011.

UAE Red Crescent Authority has distributed food aid to 7,000 families which will satisfy their basic needs for a period of one month. The Red Crescent has announced through the media that a further 400 tons of aid will be dispatched in the coming weeks. The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Humanitarian and Charity Establishment has set up feeding centers at camps on the Ethiopian-Somali borders. The Charity has reported to OCFA that it has given AED 6.6 million in aid so far, and pledged a further AED 3.4 million. HH Dr. Sultan Al Qassemi Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, has announced a donation of AED 10 million for Somalia. The Sharjah Charity Association relief delegation at the Kenyan-Somali borders has distributed food to 1,400 famine-hit people.

These organizations and individuals are playing a very positive leadership role in setting the right trend for other companies to follow. The Arabia CSR Network wishes them all the luck to support many more people in Africa and make the Arab region proud of its good work.



Global Reporting Initiative™

GRI NEWS - RAISING THE BAR FOR SUSTAINABILITY RATING AGENCIES

The quality of sustainability analysis by rating agencies has been put under a microscope this year, as the relevance of long-term sustainability impacts to investment decisions increases. Ultimately the aim of these ratings is to steer capital towards more sustainable companies. There are currently 924 signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, representing \$25 trillion in assets under management, and the quality of ratings is considered more important than ever as they serve as key determinants for judging corporate sustainability performance.

Two recent developments illustrate the pressing need for determining the value of ratings: the Global Initiative for Sustainability Ratings (GISR) was launched on 9 June 2011 and the outcomes of SustainAbility's Rate the Raters research was published on 12 July 2011. GRI is involved in both initiatives, with GRI's Deputy Chief Executive Nelmara Arbex taking part in the steering committee of GISR, and GRI's Focal Point USA Director Mike Wallace on the advisory panel of Rate the Raters.

GRI CALLS ON AFRICA AND ASIA FOR G4 REGISTRATIONS

GRI is calling on people and organizations, especially in Africa and Asia, to register to take part in the first Public Comment Period in the development of the next generation of Sustainability Reporting Guidelines –G4. GRI is also calling for more investors and labor representatives to register to provide feedback. So far, 1300 individuals and organizations have registered to participate in the Public Comment Period, indicating higher interest than ever before.

INFORMATIVE CSR WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED BY CSR ASIA



CSR Asia has developed optional half-day, hands-on workshops for participants who want an in-depth immersion and expert advice in the hottest areas of CSR in Asia.

These 3-hour workshops are for CSR practitioners who want to sharpen their knowledge, network with peers, and learn from the best CSR trainers in Asia. For more information on these workshops, please visit <http://www.csr-asia.com>



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Best practices from the archive



OVERVIEW OF SAYGA

Sayga is an industry leader in manufacturing, packing, and distributing basic food supplies in Sudan. It believes that social responsibility is present in the heart of its business model. Operating in a country where poverty is pervasive, focusing on profit alone is not an option. It endeavors to go beyond commercial success to pursue a higher cause which is nation building.

Sayga's CSR program focuses on health and nutrition, environmental stewardship and national capacity building. One of its most noteworthy projects is the Baking Development Center. This program offers training courses

in culinary arts, baking, technical business support and basic management, free of charge. Over the years, this fascinating initiative has created a multiplier effect to alleviate malnutrition at a country-wide scale. Firstly, compared to a simple food dole out, this program focuses on increasing the national food production capacity. Secondly, by reaching out to different societal groups such as professionals and housewives, BDC also widens the distribution channels of food. Finally, BDC contributes to the overall human development, improves the employment market, and stimulates the national economy.

Sayga understands the critical role of partnerships to proliferate a CSR culture in Sudan. One of its major challenges is to redefine a predominant mindset that CSR is just about advertising and promotions.

This abstract has been taken from the ACSR Network publication titled 'Arabia CSR Best Practices: 2008-2010'. For more details on Sayga and other companies that have been recognized for their innovative and effective CSR strategies write to us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com and book your copy now!

Corporate Members of the Arabia CSR Network



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@arabiacsnetwork.com.

For more information on the Arabia CSR Network visit www.arabiacsnetwork.com