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CSR
Arabia CSR Network®

CSR ARABIA

Arabia CSR
Network newsletter

October 2011
Issue 2



Arabia CSR Network – First GRI certified training in the Middle East

ACSR Awards Ceremony & Forum 2011 - Register for this event now! (page 2)

CSR Seminar in collaboration with Embassy of Sweden and Swedish Trade Council (page 3)

Arabia CSR Best Practices 2008 – 2010 (page 4)

Water pollution main concern for Middle Eastern consumers (page 5)

Best practices from the archive - An overview of Abraaj Capital (page 6)



Note by the CEO / President Arabia CSR Network

Habiba Al Mar'ashi



Greetings from the Arabia CSR Network!

Welcome to the second issue of CSR Arabia – a newsletter that focuses on the Arabia CSR Network and other CSR related activities in the Arab world. We are delighted that we have been able to gain good momentum for this newsletter and we hope that we are able to make it gain wider coverage and cover deeper issues with time. During the month of September, we have had time to reflect on all the good work that companies had done in Ramadan. There is good news that companies in the region are gradually increasing their commitments to CSR activities, which is also indicative of the recovery of the regional economy.

Things have also been very busy at the Arabia CSR Network. We recently conducted our first GRI training session and it was met with good success. The trainer of the session, Mr. Ralph Thurm, who is the former COO of the GRI headquarters, was well appreciated by the participants and in turn we were very impressed by the active interest and intellect of the trainees, who represented government

departments, large private institutions, consultancies and even civil society organizations from five countries of the region. We certainly hope to see more companies benefiting from these sessions. Other than that, we are gradually closing towards the winners of this year's Arabia CSR Awards. So many things are different this year with the Awards – the application, the review process and even the way we plan to conduct the Awards Ceremony. I urge you all to attend this event; it will definitely be the CSR event of the region for the year. More details in the sections below. So please enjoy this issue of CSR Arabia and write to us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com for comments and contributions. We look forward to hearing from you all!

Arabia CSR Awards update

الجائزة
العربية
للمسؤولية
الاجتماعية
للمؤسسات



ARABIA
CORPORATE
SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY
AWARDS

ACSR AWARDS CEREMONY & FORUM 2011

We are in the final stages of the Arabia CSR Awards 2011 as our expert panel of judges has almost compiled the applications and will be announcing the names of winners at the Awards Forum towards the end of October. In the past couple of years, businesses in the region have witnessed economically difficult conditions and tight budgetary constraints; investment in CSR and sustainability has, therefore, been severely affected. Nonetheless, the Arabia CSR Awards has seen some very interesting progress in this year's cycle. There is a very good mix of companies from over 15 different sectors, which includes Government departments, Construction, Non-Profit, Telecom, Finance, Hotels, Logistics, Power & Energy and many more. This wide-scale representation is indicative of the fact that CSR and sustainability are growing to play an important role across the entire economy and in all sectors – a very good sign for the Arab world.

This year's cycle has had a total of 107 companies registering from all across the region. Bearing in mind the socio-political turmoil in most Arab countries, this regional coverage is a huge achievement that the Arabia CSR Awards has been able to accomplish. Award applications this year have been received from 12 Arab countries. To honor the winners of this prestigious Award, a high-level forum and seminar will be organized 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. This event, which in the past has been recognized to serve as one of the most important CSR related events in the region, will invite several high profile sustainability experts and CSR ambassadors to speak on various topics that will help businesses learn how to play a more responsible and sustainable role in today's difficult economic conditions. To register yourself for this one-of-a-kind event, please e-mail us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com for details. Please mention "Arabia CSR Awards 2011 – Forum & Ceremony" in the subject.



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Arabia CSR Network training update



First GRI certified training session in the Middle East

During the last week of September, the Arabia CSR Network was honored to host the first Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) certified training in the Middle East region. This training aimed to assist companies on initiating and enhancing their non-financial and sustainability reporting requirements. The Arabia CSR Network is 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 first training session, organized at the ACSRN office premises in Dubai, was conducted by Mr. Ralph Thurm, former COO of GRI.

The participants, who were a mix of HR professionals, CSR consultants, lawyers and senior management, were all left with significant information to ponder upon. Mr. Thurm engaged the participants through a series of individual and group activities, most of which were focused upon asking the right questions to

prepare an honest and complete sustainability report based on GRI's guidelines. The participants were also taken to the Jumeirah Emirates Towers to observe how the luxury hotel brand has been able to successfully create business value through effective CSR strategy and initiatives. GRI's guidelines are the most widely used sustainability reporting guidance in the world. Over the coming years, it will become imperative for all companies to measure and disclose their contributions/impact to sustainable development. As a result, GRI will become an essential component of any integrated strategy to sustainable business.

"The GRI training is no doubt an added value session which helped me clearly understand the sustainability reporting process besides enhancing my knowledge about the many aspects of sustainability. Thanks to ACSRN for organizing this session." Fatma Hussain Nasser, CSR Program Manager, Economic Zones World

For more information on GRI certified training sessions in the Middle East, please e-mail us at admin@arabiacsrn.com. Please mention "GRI training" in the subject.



CSR Seminar in collaboration with Embassy of Sweden and Swedish Trade Council

The Arabia CSR Network, in cooperation with the Swedish Embassy and the Swedish Trade Council is organizing a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) seminar in October in Dubai, UAE to focus on comparative learning within CSR where expertise and business cases will be shared from both

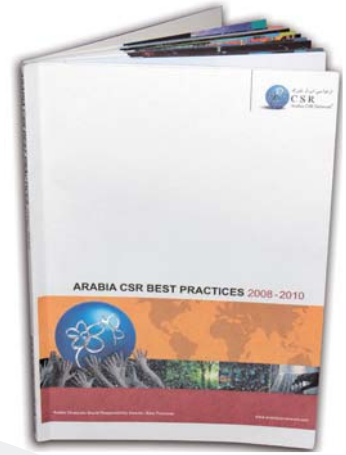
the UAE and Sweden. The event, titled "CSR: Building Bridges for a Sustainable Future", will also have the honor of hosting the Swedish Minister for Trade, Dr. Ewa Björling who will give her views on Sweden's initiatives within this area. Sweden was the first country to demand sustainability reports from state-owned companies and is regularly listed amongst the forerunners within the CSR field.

The event will also have sessions to assist CEOs and senior management on how to take the first steps towards establishing a strong sustainability and CSR agenda in their organizations. These sessions will be led by Dr. Gracia Ugut, Associate Dean at the Asian Institute of Management and a leading expert within corporate social responsibility in the Middle East and Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi, President and Founder of the Arabia CSR Network. The event will also present well-known companies – Sayga, ABB and Jumeirah Emirates Towers - to speak on their CSR agenda and how their initiatives have benefited their respective businesses. This seminar will be an excellent opportunity for all participants to network amongst a good group of CSR professionals, CEOs and government officials. To register yourself for this event, [please e-mail us at admin@arabiacsrn.com](mailto:admin@arabiacsrn.com) for details. Please mention "CSR: Building Bridges for a Sustainable Future" in the subject.



Arabia CSR Network research / publication update

The much awaited publication, Arabia CSR Best Practices 2008 – 2010, is finally ready from print and available for purchase. This book, published by the Arabia CSR Network in association with the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), is an interesting compilation of CSR and sustainability initiatives taken by 14 different companies that were winners of the previous Arabia CSR Awards cycles. This publication is the first of its kind in the Arab world as it seeks to showcase the fascinating work done by businesses in the region towards social development, economic rebuilding, environmental sustainability, transparency and more. The book is also very useful as it provides immense learning and inspiration for private companies, government departments, civil society organizations and academic institutions on what it takes to establish and implement effective CSR policies. *The Arabia CSR Best Practices 2008 and 2010 is now available for sale for a price of AED 250. To place your order, please write to us at admin@arabiacsnetwork.com. Please mention “Arabia CSR Best Practices” in the subject.*



Arabia CSR Network members' update

Chalhoub Group raises awareness of World Heart Day 2011



Chalhoub Group, the luxury retail group, collaborated with the American Hospital Dubai last month (September) to raise awareness on the importance of a healthy heart. The campaign, part of the Chalhoub Group's Wellness Campaign, was organized for World Heart Day 2011 and offered two important tests relating to the risk of heart disease - BMI (body mass index) and BP (blood pressure). The event was open to all UAE based staff of the group, as part of the company's Chalhoub Impact social responsibility program, which aims to ensure a healthy and positive working environment and culture at the organization.

Coca Cola upgrades children's library at the American University in Beirut's Medical Centre



Coca-Cola Middle East, as part of its 'Reaching out to Children in Hospitals' program, has announced the upgrade of the Pediatrics Library at AUB MC. This upgrade includes brand new computers, a PlayStation and a television for the children's play area. The aim is to provide children with fun and relaxation during their stay at the hospital. To date, Coca-Cola has supplied over 3000 books to a total of 18 hospitals across different areas in Lebanon.

DEWA to construct green building



Dubai Electricity and Water Authority is working towards constructing a building in the Al Quoz area that will demonstrate the highest standards of sustainability and comply with requirements and specifications for green buildings. This building, which is intended to increase the number of DEWA's offices, will be completed by April next year according to Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Saeed Mohammed Al Tayer. The building will implement a building management system that will significantly help conserve electricity consumption.

DUBAL's employees contribute to Africa



DUBAL's employees have responded to the humanitarian crisis in Africa by donating AED 200,000 to relief efforts by the UAE Red Crescent. Millions of people in the Horn of Africa region are starving as a result of the worst drought in decades in Somalia; these people are therefore in desperate need of support from governments and businesses all over the world. The donation of funds was preceded by a Ramadan campaign in which DUBAL appealed for donations of non-perishable items for people in the Horn of Africa. More than 18 tons of rice, flour, sugar, powdered milk, canned food and dried beans/pulses, plus hundreds of bottles of water, were collected as part of this campaign.



Other general news updates

Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi elected in GRI Stakeholder Council

Members of the Stakeholder Council at the GRI headquarters were elected last month for 11 seats representing various sectors of society. Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi, President of the Arabia CSR Network, was elected as one of the two representatives for Civil Society Organizations from all across the globe. This is a matter of great honor for the Arabia CSR Network as the GRI's Stakeholder Council allows immense opportunity to debate key strategy and policy issues for GRI and also enhancing GRI's public standing within their constituencies.

GRI Taxonomy Project



A new format for providing sustainability data will help investors, auditors and analysts use information in sustainability reports

more quickly and easily, thanks to a new ambitious program announced by GRI and Deloitte. The new XBRL taxonomy will enable organizations to tag their sustainability data in reports. The taxonomy will help organizations improve the quality and integrity of their sustainability performance data. This will help investors, auditors and other report users to access and compare GRI data more quickly and easily without the need for excessive manual work. For more information, visit the GRI website on www.globalreporting.org

Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry organizes meeting for business groups



The Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry recently organized a meeting for business groups and business councils in Dubai. While the aim of

the event was to business leaders and representatives of the economic outlook of the Emirate, it is expected that such initiatives will also assist companies in the transformation towards an economically sustainable approach towards business.

HE Hamad Buamim spoke at length about the various sectors that are experiencing growth despite the regional political unrest. HE Hamad Buamim added that one of the Dubai

Chamber's key meetings was with Dr. Rashid Bin Fahad, Minister of Environment and Water, where they discussed how to reduce the challenges of food imports. During the event, representatives from various business councils were allowed to raise their issues and concerns. This meeting served as an excellent forum for the Dubai Chamber to engage with its various stakeholders.



Somali President praises UAE President's humanitarian efforts

Somali President Sheriff Shaikh Sheriff has praised the humanitarian efforts of President His Highness

Shaikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan to alleviate the difficult conditions of the drought and famine victims in the horn of Africa. Sheriff was speaking to the UAE delegation chaired by Ahmad Humaid Al Mazroui, Board Chairman of the UAE Red Crescent Authority (RCA), in his office in Mogadishu Sunday.

Water pollution main concern for Middle Eastern and African consumers



In a recent online survey conducted by the Nielsen, concern for climate change took a back seat to other issues such as air and water pollution, water shortages, packaging waste and use of pesticides. This survey

was part of Nielsen's 2011 Global Online Environment & Sustainability Survey of more than 25,000 internet respondents in 51 countries.

Key environmental concerns among Middle Eastern/Africans, Latin Americans, Europeans and North Americans was water pollution, while water shortages and air pollution was the main concern for Asia Pacific consumers.

Furthermore, 83% of the respondents agreed that businesses should pursue sustainability initiatives, although just 22% of people surveyed were prepared to pay more for products from businesses that invest in sustainability. A third of the sample in the Middle East and Africa would meet a premium for such goods, compared against 12% of their counterparts in North America.



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Best practices from the archive



OVERVIEW OF ABRAAJ

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, while shareholder returns are primary, the ability to create deep-rooted and sustainable changes in the economic and social landscape within its operating markets is as critical a benchmark of success as pure financial returns.

Abraaj Capital 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. It realizes that the global urgency to pursue sustainability is arguably the next big step for a global society and understands that the repercussions of these challenges bear long-term implications on the basic assumptions of how the world operates

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@arabiacsnetwork.com and book your copy now! Please mention "Arabia CSR Best Practices" in the subject.

General information

Materiality within reporting

With annual sustainability reports becoming the next big publication achievement for private businesses and government departments, it is useful for report writers to know what is important to report on. Since most organizations are faced with a wide range of topics on which it could report, it is imperative that only those topics which reflect the organization's economic, environmental, and social impacts are mentioned in the sustainability report. This is referred to as 'Materiality', i.e. the threshold at which an issue or Indicator becomes sufficiently important that it should be reported.

According to the Global Reporting Initiative's reporting guidelines, materiality is usually determined by two factors: the organization's purpose and experience, and the expectations and interests of the organization's stakeholders. GRI's guidelines also have a list of tests to determine whether a certain topic of indicator is 'material' or not. These tests take into account external factors such as local laws and regulations, and internal factors such as risks to the organization and more. For more information, visit the GRI website on www.globalreporting.org

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