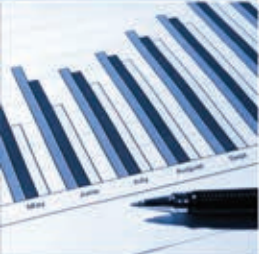




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CSR  
Arabia CSR Network®



# ARABIA CSR NETWORK

## Annual Report 2010



# Foreword

*“The time is always right to do what is right” famously said Martin Luther King, Jr. While the world economy continues to grapple with uncertainty and challenges, those in the driving seat should look beyond today at the opportunities inherent now for tomorrow. Corporate Social Responsibility is that vehicle that can help businesses to ride out the storm. With clear benefits arising out of a synergetic commitment to business and society, it helps to define a clear and strategic path to long term success. The Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility Network (ACSRN) aims to facilitate the process through a range of value added products, services and platforms. Formed in 2004, it continues to challenge forward thrusting businesses to go beyond the bottom line approach and embed social, environmental and governance principles into their core operations. The network has grown reasonably fast into a regional forum for exchange of values and ideas, sharing of knowledge and best practice. We are deeply indebted to all individuals and entities that have played a role in this progression. This brief report includes an outline of the activities of the ACSRN in 2010 and hopes to cast light on the efforts of organizations that have demonstrated commitment to inclusive stakeholders and the desire to lead from the front.*

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Habiba Sultan Al Mar'ashi  
President & CEO

# Driving and Nurturing Sustainable Development in *the Arab World*

## Introduction

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the framework that enables Mission-driven companies to deliver immense value to the society and to the environment. With the goal of capacitating companies to optimize the potential of their CSR initiatives and grow CSR Leaders in the Arab World, the Arabia CSR Network (ACSRN) is implementing programmes that drives enterprises to identify specific issues and enable them to spearhead cost-effective solutions that leverages their core competencies. Through ACSRN's capacity building programmes, companies are able to draw environmental and community development strategies that are targeted to the change needed by the society and the environment – enabling companies to focus on CSR investments such that it can deliver the desired economic, social and environmental returns.*

*Since its inception in 2004, ACSRN is working to keep companies cognizant about their power to make significant contributions in solving social and environmental problems while they internally create economic value. Cross-sector partnerships were forged so that strengths can be combined to come up with the most effective solutions that empower stakeholders to innovate and take part in addressing the most important issues they face.*

*To promote exceptional performance and drive continuous improvement among companies in the Arab World, the Arabia CSR Awards is the platform that commends local and international organizations that demonstrate outstanding leadership on corporate sustainability. The Arabia CSR Network honors and highlights the best practices of companies across the Region that integrate stakeholder engagement, environmental stewardship, good governance and transparency into their core strategies which enables them to stay ahead of competition.*

*In 2011, ACSRN will focus on driving innovations by providing value added services on social business performance measurement as well as platforms for discussions to further strengthen the social development and environmental programmes of companies. In line with the goal of continuous improvement and to enable companies to stand out from the crowd in communicating their progress, ACSRN will introduce performance measurement methodologies so that companies in the Arab World can evaluate and share the tangible outcomes of their social and environmental investments.*

## CSR in the Arab World

*Among companies in the Arab World, the notion of altruism is about taking responsibility to the welfare of their employees, ensuring the integrity of their products, contributing to the development of the society and managing the health of the environment.*

*As an Islamic Region, the economic development of most countries of the Arab World is driven by the positive action that Companies instill in their business strategy. The great prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) incites that the underpinning reason for the economic success of a business are the righteous values and norms as business operators are reminded to "... give full measure when you measure, and weigh in a balance that is true..." (Qur'an, Sura Al Israa – 17:35). Charity is one of the most important and basic way in Islam to help and support the society, where earning Allah's blessing is the utmost motivation of charity work.*

*The Arabia CSR Network believes that CSR may be transformed into a leverage intervention - or an action that can create positive change to a critical mass of stakeholders in a single stroke – by providing holistic value added services that can catalyze measureable, long-term and sustainable social change. ACSRN has kept companies abreast about the most pressing challenges confronting the world – such as global warming, over population, extreme poverty, illiteracy, and many more. In line with this goal, ACSRN facilitates knowledge and capacity building by providing companies with insights about how allocations for social and environmental policies and projects could be deemed as investments that can generate tangible value on a sustained basis.*



## Arabia CSR Network 2010

### *Workshops*

*The Arabia CSR Network is a multi-stakeholder platform that engages small and large businesses and corporations in the UAE and the Arab region. Through tangible workshops, seminars and networking opportunities members of the Arabia CSR Network are exposed to a unique platform where they can share CSR experiences and seek sustainable solutions in a rapidly changing world. In order to survive the challenges of today's world, businesses must apply the triple bottom line at the center of their business strategy. The workshops in 2010 took a look at some of the most burning issues of the day, offering perspectives from a range of experts and practitioners.*

## Workshop 1: Carbon Emissions Offsetting & Trading

The first workshop of 2010 convened on 18th February under the theme “Carbon Emissions Offsetting and Trading” and was attended by 66 members from 46 organizations. The focus was ‘Failure or Future?’ and particularly, the feasibility of Carbon Trading and Offsetting schemes in the Gulf. Local speakers presented case studies that demonstrated success in carbon emissions management in the Region. Participants were urged to be proactive and think broadly to overcome preconceptions about the pros and cons of carbon emissions offsettings and trade.

Speakers gave insights on the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen 2009, carbon trading schemes on the global scene, and presented case studies on how multinational companies assist regional companies to reduce carbon emissions. Also included were, an outline of Deutsche Bank’s efforts to radically reduce carbon emissions in their local and regional offices, and a highlight of current major players and strategies in the carbon emissions and trading world.

Mr. Nick Main, Global Managing Partner, Climate Change & Sustainability Services, Deloitte, was the first speaker of the day and began his presentation with a focus on the run up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in 2009. He believed that the expectations for COP 15 had been previously set in Bali and that its results were highly disappointing. According to him, the most positive outcome of the summit was that a total of 120 Prime Ministers and Premiers were able to gather together under one roof to form a consensus on the issue of climate change, proving that they were ready to take action. Another positive, as outlined by Mr. Main, was the increased involvement of the US and China, who were finally ready to take some kind of responsibility for their actions that usually had devastating effects on the environment.

He also explained that there were two methods used by the United Nations to help companies go green. These were environmental additionality and economic additionality.

Mrs. Maha Abdul Majeed, CDM & Environmental Products Originator, Shell Middle East, She also began by briefly explaining the functions of Shell in the Middle East under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). She explained how this works: for example, a company with high levels of carbon emissions can employ Shell to install the right technology to reduce the same. Once it is able to considerably reduce its carbon footprint, the company can register itself with the UN, after which it receives credit.





Mrs. Majeed believes that the CDM is highly important in the Middle East as it is responsible for large amounts of carbon emissions. Currently in the region, there are about 245 active CDM projects. However, only 21 of these are registered with the UN.

Mr. Philips Moss, Origination Manager, Masdar, began by briefly outlining the main functions of Masdar Carbon in the MENA region, which included helping in the formation of power groups (solar, wind), involvement in the Masdar Institute and the like.

He explained that Masdar functioned by visiting existing projects, realizing the potential of the projects and installing technological components that would reduce emissions. According to him, the largest focus of CDM in the GCC countries was on oil, gas and power sectors.

Mr. Kirk Miller, Deutsche Bank, Head Operations, MENA region, underlined the major steps taken by the Deutsche Bank to promote environmental sustainability that include installation of a range of devices such as passive infrared detectors and energy meters, software to determine energy consumption in individual rooms, floors and sections, urging employees to participate in Earth Week and many more.

Mr. Hans Bolscher, Director, Special Advisor for Climate and Energy Issues, Ministry of the Environment, The Netherlands, was of the opinion that the climate problem is an overwhelming one as it affects all of humankind. Before the COP 15, there was an international conference attended by the top scientists of the world. It was established during the time that this was the worst case scenario in terms of climate and the environment.

The scientists believed that even a 2 degree Celsius rise in temperatures would affect low lying countries such as the Maldives. They concluded by saying that there should be no more delays in initiating effective mitigation processes to provide an appropriate solution to the climate issue. However, the leaders who met during the COP 15 disappointed everyone as they could not come up with a binding decision or action to improve the situation.

Mr. Svend Soyland, International Advisor, Bellona Foundation, Norway, was the only speaker who believed that the COP 15 had ended on a positive note. He believed that just the realization that change and commitment was required by such a large international body such as the COP 15 was a very big step towards sustainability. He also provided a brief overview of the Sahara Forest Project that utilized an innovative seawater greenhouse system.

Finally, Mr. Bert Kleinveld, Director “Special Projects” Dubai Electricity & Water Authority, reiterating the conscious effort made by DEWA in all its endeavors. According to him, DEWA’s aim is to turn Dubai into one of the greenest and cleanest economies in the UAE. However, this is possible only with a drastic reduction of GHG emissions. The Dubai Center of Carbon Excellence, established by DEWA, focuses on its Clean Tech Fund, which solely concentrates on clean transport, water treatment and power.

The panels and Q&A sessions provided a valuable platform for interaction and exchange, with active delegate participation. It was concluded with the customary presentation of tokens to lead speakers and event supporters, Deloitte and Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC).

In summation, the workshop was successful in opening the debate on an important theme related to Climate Change, which is itself an issue at the heart of much of the ongoing discussions on the future of the world and the sustainability of the global economy. It underpinned the need to explore tough yet innovative solutions at different levels of engagement, as well as a set of complex strategies and action points. The participants were urged to be proactive and think broadly in order to overcome preconceptions about carbon trading and consider its efficacy in managing the impact of businesses on the planet.

## **Workshop 2: Transparency and Good Governance**



On June 7th 2010, the second ACSRN Workshop was held in partnership with Hawkamah, Institute for Corporate Governance. The joint venture was a product of a Memorandum Of Understanding signed by the two in the month of March. .

Disclosure, Governance and Sustainability were the underlying themes within the overall issue, ‘Transparency & Good Governance’. These are difficult but critical aspects of corporate responsibility, and calls for better understanding and execution by the companies operating in the Arab region. An effective CSR structure in a company precludes open and ethical practices, and the imperative for disclosures and corporate governance has grown in the light of recent developments and a slew of corporate malpractices within the Region. To address these complex issues a motley group of experts were roped in, belonging to companies in the UAE and Oman, and academic and professional organizations, namely, General Electric, Abraaj Capital, UAE University, Hawkamah, Oman Economists Society (OES), Community Development Authority and Sustainability Advisory Group.

A total of 41 participants and 2 speakers from different organisations attended the workshop.

The ACSRN President, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi, in her welcome note, emphasised the importance of transparency and governance in a business plan, particularly in adverse economic climates. Speakers discussed the 12 core standards for sound financial systems and recent local studies. They focussed on the progress in the Region, the introduction of Corporate Governance codes in most of the Gulf States, the imperative for greater transparency and disclosure given the Arab world’s poor track record in statistical disclosures.



Dr. Nasser Saidi, Executive Director Hawkamah, who provided the key note speech gave attendees an overview of the status of Disclosure in the region and made a case for greater transparency among both the private and public sectors. He lobbied for new institutions that would safeguard the transparency, based on the examples of the US and Lebanon.

Dr. Ibtissam Al Kitbi, Lecturer, UAE University, who set the mood for the day, provided a very critical look at the current state of disclosure in the region and made an impassioned plea for greater responsibility on the part of the regions leaders. The region's paternalist government system of ruling elites was named amongst the main problems for the opaque and ad hoc nature of disclosure in this part of the world.

Ms. Mariam Farag, CSR & Partnership Manager, Community Development Authority provided the case for a greater role of CSR. She particularly called on the private sector to invest in Corporate Social Responsibility, as a tool to overcome the current financial situation. The Community Development Authority also made a case for the empowerment of NGOs as they can and should function as partners for the government in setting policy and reaching out to the wider public.

Other speakers provided best practices from their respective countries such as Oman. From the presentation shown, it was clear that Omani companies have taken the lead in the region in matters of disclosure and transparency. This positive trend is reinforced by a government that has put these issues high on the agenda and has actively enforced their disclosure regulations.

Mr Nick Nadal, Director, Hawkamah started his workshop on: "Developing Strategies to improve corporate Governance in organizations." By asking participants what they regarded as Corporate Governance.

After some discussion on the answers, - which varied from general CSR initiatives to the development of depth compliance strategies – he offered participants tools to implement corporate governance strategies in their organizations.

He was followed by Ms. Maria Sillanpaa, Managing Director Sustainability Advisory Group. In another practical workshop, she focused on: "Developing strategies for Environmental and Social Sustainability." She shared with participants examples of how sustainability strategies can benefit an organization and lead to increased revenues. She imprinted on the attendees the importance of sustainability strategies that are a core part of an organization's business principles, rather than initiatives on the sidelines.

Other highlights were a very dynamic panel discussion with representatives of General Electric, Abraaj Capital, Hawkamah and the Oman Economists Society (OES), and practical workshops on Corporate Governance and Sustainability Reporting.

Like its predecessor, the second workshop in 2010 provided a glimpse of the diverse challenges and solutions in Corporate Social Responsibility; inviting companies to take the lead in driving corporate good conduct through better access to information, greater accountability to stakeholders, and commitment to ethical standards. By bringing into the discussion often sidelined and lesser understood issues, the Arabia CSR Network continued to add value to the CSR movement in the Arab world throughout the year.



## 3rd Cycle of the Arabic CSR *Awards*

### Press Conference for Launch of the Arabia CSR Awards

*The third cycle of the Arabia CSR Awards was launched with a press conference on the 14th of May as assembled Media listened to a panel of speakers consisting of Arabia CSR Network President and representatives of 2009 Award winners.*

*The Media was briefed on the previous Awards cycle, in which 60 companies with operations in the GCC, the Levant and Northern Africa took part and submitted their best practices. After thorough review and discussion by the international judging panel, winners in three categories were honoured with the Arabia CSR Award 2009.*

*The Arabia CSR Awards was also set out to practice what they preach by “greening” the third cycle. Whereas previous cycles called for hard copies of submitted materials, participants were now able to complete the entire submission process online and in soft copy. In addition, it was announced that the judging process for the Awards would take place entirely online, in an effort to minimize the Carbon Footprint of the Arabia CSR Awards 2010.*

## Awards Clinic

The Arabia CSR Network hosted a special 'Arabia CSR Awards 2010 Clinic', on Tuesday, 15th June 2010, at the Movenpick Hotel, Dubai. The main aim of the workshop was to provide potential candidates a complete overview of the Awards procedure, giving an in-depth understanding of the questions asked and what is expected in terms of supporting documents. The 2009 Awards finalists, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA) and Dubai Customs came on board to share their Awards experience with the Clinic participants. They explained the challenges they faced, the benefits gained of winning the Awards and practical tips on how they submitted a winning application. They also emphasized the importance of initiating the application process early on and on providing factual information backed by strong evidence.

Dr Ugut, the Associate Dean of the Asian Institute of Management and an instrumental jury member of the Awards since its inception, walked the potential applicants through the 2010 Awards questionnaire briefly explaining each question and the rationale behind it.

The presentations were followed by an interactive question and answer session which consisted of the President of the Arabia CSR Network, Dr Gracia Ugut, Member of Jury and finalists of the previous cycle.



## **The Awards Ceremony - Sustainability of the Minds and the Hearts**

The Third Annual Arabia CSR Awards was concluded on the 28th of October 2010 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 Awards are a highlight event of the Arabia CSR Network, aiming to bring to focus best practices among organizations across the Arab world that have successfully embedded social, environmental and governance principles into core business strategies.

The Arabia CSR Awards can be considered as the most significant award scheme of its kind in the region that is officially supported by the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). The Global Compact is an international initiative of the United Nations that convenes UN agencies, businesses, labour and civil society to further ten broad principles based on human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

Apart from the UNGC, the Awards were also sponsored by local and regional bodies such as The Kanoo Group, TechniData and SAP Company, and supported by Asian Institute of Management, UNGC Local Network Sudan, CSR Middle East and the Emirates Environmental Group. The Awards earned the support of 7 Days, Khaleej Times and Gulf News.



In the 3rd cycle, a total of 62 companies from 12 Arab countries from the GCC, Levant and North Africa including Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Yemen and Sudan, competed closely to earn the distinction of the best CSR practitioners in the region. The number of participants exceeded the two previous cycles (recording a 32 per cent increase), with new entrants from the Levant and North Africa competing for the second year running, alongside those from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States (recording a 71.4 per cent increase in geographical coverage). Likewise there was a marked growth in each of the categories of participation, with the highest in the small business category. Overall, more than two hundred companies have taken part across the three cycles of the awards.

To add more value to all participants, applicants and observers alike; the format and key components of the awards underwent substantial modification in 2010. The award questionnaire was more aligned to global standards of good practice including the ten Global Compact principles and others. Two new categories were introduced in 2010, - Best Project and Best Emerging Company, in recognition of outstanding initiatives. An Arabic speaking member was added to the distinguished judging panel to facilitate better understanding of the local business and social environments. In a bid to reduce the carbon footprint of the awards, the questionnaire was enabled to become entirely on-line.

For the first time, the awarding ceremony was designed as a full day cohesive event combining plenary and working sessions, key note talks, luncheon and felicitation ceremony. This helped to bring to the table the experiences and expertise of a range of players including leading CSR practitioners, consultants and academicians, as well as global and local experts. The keynote speaker of the morning session, Sir Mark Moody Stuart, Chairman, the UN. Global Compact Foundation, provided insights on two key issues of the initiative. First, the high-level corporate commitment of the Global Compact and secondly, the commitment of signatory companies to reporting publicly on policies and strategies to embed the Ten Principles of the Global Compact within their operations. It was followed by an address by Dr. Elissar Sarrouh, UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Representative that showcased successful UNDP case studies from Egypt, Morocco and Turkey and a talk by Mr. Ralph Thurm, Director, Sustainability Strategies, Deloitte Netherlands; and Head of Jury of the Awards.

The morning plenary, consisting of Sir Mark and Mr. Thurm, addressed pressing issues of the 21st Century that offer clear and succinct opportunities for CSR to play a pivotal role.

The plenary was followed by three simultaneous Working Sessions led by regional and international speakers, focusing on important sustainability issues.

## “Sustainability Equals Success in Today’s Tough Times”

The session was moderated by Ralph Thurm and participated by Prof. Dr. Martin Hill, EVP TechniData, GmbH; Hussain Mohammed Al Mahmoudi, Director General, Sharjah Chamber of Commerce; Mathias Stausberg, United Nations Global Compact Spokesperson and Dr. Ashraf Gamal, Executive Director, Egyptian Institute of Directors.

The delegates focused on the need to go beyond regulatory compliance and look for innovative solutions for business to remain economically viable. CSR offers clear benefits such as cost saving, innovation, reputation building and economic success in the 21st century, when embedded in an organization’s long term strategy. The inherent linkages between Economy and Ecology featured prominently in the discourses, bringing into focus the wider issue of sustainable development which combines economy, environment and society as key pillars of development.

## “Leading with Environmental Excellence”

The session was moderated by Shawqi Sajwani, CEO, SS.com and included Abdul Aziz Al Midfa, Former President, Environment & Protected Areas Authority, Sharjah; Farid Mohammed Ahmed, Secretary General, Dubai World; Ali Al Hashar, Corporate Affairs Manager, Oman LNG and Dr. Sadek Owainati, Managing Director, Edama Consulting

The underlying theme of the session was the unique leadership opportunities that existed in solving critical environmental challenges facing the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region due to its geography, through technology, innovation and best practices. Mr. Farid Mohammed Ahmed spoke specifically about ways and means to conserve water in the region. Others in the groups spoke about the basic theories of ecology and why it was important to respect these.

Speakers of this working session discussed how firms in the Middle East and North Africa are faced with unique environmental challenges posed by their extraordinary geographical settings. Thus, these unique challenges also bring unique opportunities as they require the most advanced technologies and innovation. By being the first to develop and implement these new advances, firms in the region can become global leaders.

## “Stakeholder Engagement”

The third working session, was moderated by Dr. Gracia Ugut, Associate Dean, Asian Institute of Management, The Philippines. The participants were Mohamed Al Sarhan, Vice President, Al Faisaliah Group, Saudi Arabia and Kalyan Krishnan, Citizenship & Diversity, KPMG Global..

The focus of this session was on the imperative for effective stakeholder engagement to attain synergies, avoid potential conflict and gain reputational advantage. It is a benchmark of CSR good practice and demonstrates commitment as well as strategic thinking. Both Mr. Al Sarhan and Mr. Krishnan provided unique examples from their particular organizations that highlighted how important the organization-stakeholder relationship is.

This session focused mainly on the integration of stakeholder interest in the business model. CSR means respecting the needs of all who are touched by an organization’s activities in some way. By making a conscious effort to engage in effective stakeholder dialogue, firms not only demonstrate their commitment, but also gain a distinct reputational advantage. Furthermore, by integrating stakeholder viewpoints into corporate strategy, synergies can be realized and potential conflicts avoided.

## The Awards Luncheon:

The afternoon session of the Arabia CSR Awards 2010 began with a strong sense of excitement in the air. Representatives of companies in the finals, who had been notified in advance, poured in as the beautiful Raffles ballroom was decorated in shades of rich gold.

Mr. Ligteringen, Chief Executive-GRI drew focus on global developments indicating the need for a more sustainable global economy. He went on to highlight key CSR trends globally and the role of Reporting in addressing economic and social challenges, with case reference to the Arab Region.

He sought to highlight global developments that point towards the need of creating a more sustainable global economy and addressed key trends in the development of Corporate Social Responsibility and the role of reporting in helping to meet the challenges businesses and societies face in this transition, with special reverence to the region. In this context, he also discussed what the GRI Sustainability Reporting Framework offers report preparers and users, sharing with the audience how GRI will seek to further develop the framework and its other activities and how they can become involved.

Following the key note address, the Awards were given away by Sir Mark Moody, Ernst Ligteringen, the Judging Panel and Habiba Al Marashi to the finalists of the 3rd cycle.

Winners of the Arabia CSR Awards 2010 were:

- Dubai Customs in the Large category,
- RSA Insurance in the medium category and
- First Select in the small category

1st Runners up for the three categories were:

- SEKEM - Egypt ( Large)
- Coca Cola Icecek - Jordan (Medium)
- Tawasul - Oman (Small)

2nd Runners up for the three categories were:

- Paltel - Palestine (Large)
- Economic Zones World - Dubai (Medium)
- Tiger Profiles (Small)



This year, the Arabia CSR Network introduced two new categories due to the large number of participants as well as the quality of the applications and their excellence in CSR strategies.

Winners of these two new categories were:

- Best Newcome: Aldar Properties – Abu Dhabi
- Best Project: Sayga - Sudan

The event concluded on a high note of celebration and a strong sense of achievement on the part of winners, applicants, jury and organizers. The Arabia CSR Network looks forward to another fulfilling cycle of the award in 2011, hoping to bring to light the efforts of many more companies implementing CSR in the Arab Region.

## **Arabia CSR Network 2010**

### **CSR *Outreach***

*The Arabia CSR Network continued to engage a variety of organizations and individuals to advance Corporate Social Responsibility in the Arab region. The Network used these opportunities to raise awareness and educate people on the benefits of adopting CSR in their organizations. ACSRN's outreach helps to promote the voluntary adoption of CSR policies and practices among businesses in the region.*

## **Deutsche Bank**

As part of the Earth Week celebrations, Deutsche Bank stepped up their CSR initiatives and organised a medley of events from the 22nd to 27th of March. The Arabia CSR Network was invited to become their Environmental Partner for the week, with the pledge to reduce water, paper and energy use. The week focused on employee awareness and education along with community competitions and giveaways. The Arabia CSR Network exhibited a stand at the bank's branch and educated staff and customers about the environment, CSR and sustainability.

The ACSRN staff also regularly interacted with the employees of Deutsche Bank as they asked questions pertaining to CSR, sustainability, waste management and the like.

## **Annual IIR CSR Conference**

The Arabia CSR Network participated in the annual IIR CSR Conference, held on 30-31 May 2010 in the Shangri-La hotel in Dubai.

As key note speaker, Habiba Al Marashi presented "The business case for Sustainability" at this conference, aimed at CSR and Sustainability professionals in the Arab region. The presentation started with an outline of the links between the most pressing environmental threats and their resulting effects on global and regional business.

The presentation then continued with an overview of CSR and Sustainability in the Arab world, noting that for many companies CSR is still of marginal interest as an add-on PR or marketing exercise. Mrs. Al Marashi stated that this will have to change dramatically in the near future if companies want to retain their competitive advantage, and highlighted three examples of global companies that have made sustainability part of their core business practices, and have as such vastly increased their yearly revenue.

## **Sustainable Business Conference**

The 12th and 13th October 2010 saw an initiative from Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry support the vision of H.H Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE and Ruler of Sharjah, who advocated the widespread adoption of sustainable business practices. A conference and Workshop called 'Sustainable Business Made in Sharjah' took place at Al Majarah Hall, Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Arabia CSR Network was invited to participate. Arabia CSR Network President, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi, participated in the conference by giving a presentation titled 'From Add on to Value Creation – The Future of Sustainability in the Arab World'.

The presentation highlighted that with continued climate change and population growth businesses can not continue on the path of 'business as usual' because sustainable practices are no longer an optional 'add on', they are a necessity to ensure the healthy survival of the planet. Environment, economy and society all go hand in hand with one another; they must be addressed together in order to overcome the challenges we face today.

This significant event brought together prominent companies who agreed to collaborate closely on the adoption of sustainability principals in their corporate systems. Sharjah Chamber of commerce and Industry through this initiative aimed to motivate the wider private sector to identify and implement sustainable polices alongside Sharjah's key economic sectors.

## **Swedish Entities Meet**

On the 1st of November, 2010, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi was invited to talk about the Arabia CSR Network and its activities during a get together of the Swedish entities. Her speech gave an overview of the Network and how it aimed to focus on bringing the local and regional efforts that are undertaken at the corporate level to further CSR in the Arab World.



As the only multi-stakeholder forum in the region, the Arabia CSR Network has been dedicated to promoting the principals of Corporate Responsibility, sharing best practices, exchanging ideas and forging lasting partnerships across sectors.

Mrs. Al Marashi also provided a brief of the 3rd cycle of Arabia CSR Awards, which saw the participation of 62 organizations from 12 Arab countries.

### **Beverage Middle East**

ACSRN was invited to speak at the Fourth Beverages Middle East Congress Organized by Zenith International at the One & Only Royal Mirage, Dubai on the 23rd and 24th of November 2010. ACSRN President, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi gave a presentation on the topic “Latest Thinking on Corporate Social Responsibility”, which was perfect as the Arabia CSR Awards 2010 had just commenced the month before.

The presentation focused on the key issues addressed under CSR including globalization, sustainable production and consumption patterns, human resources management, energy and natural resource management, climate change and environmental degradation and the like. She also explained the importance of social development performance measurement and value communications quoting, “We cannot manage what we do not measure.”

### **Tawasul’s Pioneers of Civil Society Awards**

President of the Arabia CSR Awards, Mrs. Habiba Al Marashi, was honoured to be a part of the judging panel for the second annual Pioneers of Civil Society Awards, organized by Tawasul in Oman. The Award aims to raise awareness and identify the institutions and personalities that have succeeded in the implementation of initiatives and programs which urges and stimulates the principles of community service. It also aims to encourage non-profit organizations, as well as individuals on the initiative to serve the community in different areas, and recognize them by rewarding initiatives and programs that serve the largest segment of society.



# Conclusion

*2010 marked another successful year for the Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility Network (ACSRN). The highlight of the year would undoubtedly be the 3rd cycle of the Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility Awards, which underwent a reformatting well in line with the growing scope and the popularity of the initiative. All aspects of the Awards was critically reviewed in the run up to the awards last year, refining and modulating wherever necessary, and bringing in a marked change in the overall standard. The advisors and jury are of special mention, as are the guest speakers, all of whom provided valuable support on an array of subjects related to the awards and the award forum.*

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