

**Introduction by Mrs. Valerie Cliff, UNDP Resident Representative in Kuwait  
Kuwait's Third Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility  
6 January 2009**

It gives me great pleasure to address the third conference and workshop on Corporate Social Responsibility in Kuwait. On behalf of the UN System in Kuwait, let me start by congratulating "Way Communications" for taking the initiative of organizing this event.

Ending poverty, the aspiration of the Millennium Development Goals, is the overriding development objective of the 21st century agreed upon by the world leaders eight years ago. To reach the MDGs, we need to consider how we can best respond and how we can break with business as usual. A broad and global response is needed in making full use of all the financial, intellectual and organizational resources that we can muster, particularly in these very challenging economic times.

Business, trade and investment are essential pillars of peace and prosperity. As a major component of society, the business community has an opportunity to help address the world's most pressing problems. In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, progress towards the MDGs depends heavily on sustainable economic activity at local, national, regional and international levels. While governments carry primary responsibility, it is increasingly in the interests of business to be part of development solutions. Companies around the world are recognizing that taking greater responsibility and contributing towards sustainable development and poverty reduction is essential.

In the meantime, there are growing international demands for business to be more transparent and more accountable for their economic, social and environmental impacts everywhere they operate.

The development of Corporate Social Responsibility reflects the growing expectations of the community and stakeholders of the evolving role of the private sector in society and the response of businesses to growing environmental, social and economic pressures.

Corporate Social Responsibility is potentially wide in scope, implying an active role for private sector entities as "citizens", having both rights and responsibilities. In addition to adopting the business policies of corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship is geared, in particular to maximizing private sector contributions to social development without undermining business practices.

The Global Compact is an important foundation supporting the Corporate Social Responsibility agenda. The Global Compact has become the world's largest corporate citizenship initiative bringing together companies, government, labour and civil society on the conviction that business practices rooted in universal principles can help bring social and economic gains.



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The Global Compact asks businesses to respect human rights, to ensure safe workplace conditions, environmental standards and to practice good corporate governance. This commitment in itself is a crucial component of how business can support the MDGs. Companies can play a vital role by promoting this set of universally agreed core values, and by minimizing the negative impacts of their own business operations.

At the same time, the Global Compact encourages companies to engage in fostering partnerships with other key actors of the society in order to develop practical solutions for meeting the broader development objectives outlined in the MDGs. Today, more than 3000 companies from more than 100 countries have participated in the Global Compact.

In Kuwait, UNDP will continue to reach out to the private sector in addressing development challenges. We encourage businesses in Kuwait to participate in partnership projects to craft sustainable solutions to national development challenges and the Millennium Development Goals.

Let me thank the organizers for your warm welcome and let us work together to advance corporate social responsibility in Kuwait. Thank you.