

Background:

**International Workshop on Global Compact Networks and Outreach 26/27 June at Berne**  
Organised in Cooperation between Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SDC/PDIII, PDIV) and  
the United Nations Global Compact Office

Introductory Part:

**The Global Compact Now and in Five Years**

The Berne Workshop is intended to give Global Compact Outreach/Networks motivation, direction and thrust for the upcoming years. The workshop will begin with an introduction to bring the general knowledge of all participants on the Global Compact to a similar level, followed by a brainstorming about how we imagine the Global Compact to look like in five years. To give it a try:

*“The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan first proposed the Global Compact in an address to the World Economic Forum on 31 January 1999. Amid a backdrop of emerging concerns about the effects of globalization the Secretary-General called on business leaders to join an international initiative – the Global Compact – that would bring companies together with governments, UN agencies, labour and civil-society actors to foster action and partnerships in the pursuit of good corporate leadership. The Secretary-General believed that while corporate citizenship was emerging as a business trend, there existed no international framework to assist companies in the development and promotion of global, values-based management. By rooting the Global Compact in nine internationally accepted principles around human rights, labour standards and the environment, participants can feel confident that their actions are being guided by values that are universally supported and endorsed.*

*In 2008, the Global Compact Initiative should have become a major alliance of people and organizations (business and non-business) that agree with the Nine Principles and are working on the implementation and dissemination of those principles. On the UN side, the Global Compact’s principles will be mainstreamed through the core-agencies such as the ILO, UNEP, UNDP, UNIDO and OHCHR, followed by all other UN agencies and departments. The UNGC will have become a management tool for the Secretary-General to unite and strengthen the UN system, in order to make it a focused and competent partner for business and UN member-state governments, and help in the process of achieving the 8 UN Millennium Development Goals. The GC Office will remain a small, but dynamic unit that works closely with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Office will limit its activities to the organization of annual global events, the coordination of Learning and the steering of the **Global Compact Network** in the spirit of the Initiative through the main management tool, an internet-portal linked to **Global Compact Sub-Networks** (exact future term to be defined on workshop) worldwide. The central GC internet-portal will be linked to the websites of all Global Compact networks around the world”.*

As a product of the introductory part, a workshop report to be written should include a broad one-page description of how the Global Compact might look like in 2008. This should include our ideas on how the GC will position itself within the CSR/Global Corporate Citizenship world,

relationships/synergies with WBCSD, IBLF, OECD, WEF, WB, IDBs, EC, GRI, BSR, CSR Europe, Academia at large, and others.

Workshop Part 1:

**Faster Growth and Higher Impact through Systematic Outreach**

Three years after the Secretary-General's speech at Davos and two years after the establishment of the Global Compact Office, the Initiative is growing at an increased pace. Outreach *Launching Events* to make the Global Compact known and to recruit companies have taken place in more than 40 countries. The comparative advantage of the Global Compact as compared with other Global Corporate Citizenship/CSR Initiatives is the engagement of companies in developing countries as well as in developed countries. Launching events in developing countries are usually lead by UNDP, while launching events in developed countries are usually initiated by one or several companies, or by business associations, in cooperation with the GC Office.

There is no uniform strategy in place as to how and through which partners to conduct outreach, nor how each category of the hundreds of thousands of companies worldwide should be approached. At this point, 700 companies, varying in size, based on all continents, have sent a letter to the SG expressing their will to participate. Less than half of them actively engage in Global Compact dialogue, learning, partnership projects, or in decentralized networks. Outreach needs to become more forceful and more systematic in its approach, to reach the critical mass of a much higher number of big multinational and domestic companies while at the same time guaranteeing continuous engagement including access for SMEs.

Workshop Objective 1:

**The participants have contributed with their ideas and have agreed on the essential points in the future Global Compact Outreach Approach.**

As a first product, the Berne Workshop should produce an outline of a general GC Outreach Strategy including promotion and recruitment: Outreach through traditional launching events, other public relations campaigns, advertising, active GC UN core agencies, through all existing UN organizations, the IOE, ICFTU, Universities, NGOs, and who else? Approach outstanding leaders in the corporate world to motivate the Global 500 to sign up? Approach dominating companies of certain sectors? Organize High Level Meetings with business schools? How to systematically recruit SMEs? How to guarantee engagement accessibility to SMEs? On what priorities should outreach concentrate in the upcoming years? Companies in developed countries, developing countries, transition economies, on transnational companies, large domestic companies, SMEs?

Should there be a minimal size of a company participating in the Global Compact? What about geographical priorities and geographical balance? etc. How much guidance should be given to launching events without limiting creativity? The workshop should end with an agreement on all the essential points under Objective One and on new ideas presented at Berne.

Workshop Part 2:

**From Outreach to Coherent and Sustainable Global Compact Sub-Networks**

More vigorous outreach activities resulting in the recruitment of thousands of companies only makes sense if most participating companies are working towards the full implementation of the Nine Principles, i.e. are given the opportunity to engage with the Compact in a meaningful way. Given a growing number of participating companies, it will be impossible in the future to hold

Global Dialogue events without excluding most companies for reasons of space. The Global Learning Data Base (examples, case studies) will soon become too big to be centrally displayed only. A list of more than 1000 companies on the central website, consisting of small and very large firms, might lose value and meaning. Thus, Global Compact Sub-Networks will increasingly serve as the main engagement platforms for participants, be it for Moving Innovative Solutions Upstream to the Central Website for global replication and multiplication, be it for taking Global Dialogue issues down to the level of implementation, be it for Global Compact Learning in a specific local language, geographic or sectoral context, for promoting and displaying partnership projects, and for the recruitment of additional companies.

More than twenty GC country and regional networks have already sprung up without much guidance by the GC Office with the exception of the Eight Points tentatively posted on the GC website under "Outreach/Networks" in October 2002. Networks are usually formed along geographic lines (country, region), but could in the future also be formed along sectoral lines (pharmaceutical sector, extractive sector, engineering sector, etc) or functional lines (academic networks, multi stakeholder networks, business networks). All decentralized Networks are part of the Global Compact Network; their main purpose is to deepen participation, and to speed up change. GC Sub-Networks also play a role in guaranteeing institutional long-term sustainability. While networks should remain a source of innovation and creativity, they have to act in the spirit of the Initiative to protect the Global Compact "brand".

Workshop Objective 2:

**The participants have agreed on the essential points leading to a coherent role of decentralized GC Networks.**

As a second product, the Berne Workshop should produce a common agreement on the purpose and a coherent role of GC Networks (basis of discussion is the current draft introduction on the website, click "Outreach/Networks"). First, the workshop should give thought to already existing Global Issue Networks (e.g., Transparency International, others) besides the Global Compact and consider how they are organized and how effective they are. Workshop participants will learn about experiences made in Global Compact Networks around the world by the invitees (selected participants active in existing networks will arrive prepared to present the state of "their" network). Network actors will express their expectations with regard to the GC Office and other UN agencies. Staff of the GC Office, of UN GC Core Agencies, IOE, ICFTU, will convey what their expectations on decentralized Global Compact Networks are. Workshop attendees will agree on how to operationalize those mutual expectations best. The activities of GC networks in developing countries seem to focus more on the local governance structure, on attracting investment, on partnership projects, while GC networks in developed countries seem rather interested in the general dilemmas of globalization: How to reconcile this with the goal to be One Universal Initiative? The issue of Global Compact "brand protection" has to be looked at. In what way to manage, motivate and sustain decentralized networks needs to be discussed (future annual global or regional meetings with key network actors?). Workshop participants will finally agree on the way how Networks communicate with each other and with the GC Office, will determine the nature of support and the degree of guidance to be given, plus the role the GC Office, GC UN Core Agencies, and other actors are to play in this. The workshop should end with a written agreement on the essential points under Objective Two and new ideas presented at Berne.