

PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO ACTION



NETWORKS CONFERENCE London, 4/5 November 2004

Brief Introduction

In June 2003, the first Global Compact Networks Conference was held in Berne, Switzerland. It produced a common understanding of the role and function of Global Compact country and regional networks.

This second Conference invites networks to help the Global Compact take the next important steps in its development. Amongst other aims, the London Conference is targeted to produce a more decentralized and more democratic governance structure in the future. Sufficient momentum should come out of London on this subject to advance the process for a reconfiguration of the Global Compact by June 2005, as called for by Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Network Focal Points should return from this Conference with new ideas, additional guidance, more awareness on how to measure and communicate change, and the motivation to scale up and deepen the Global Compact Initiative in their country or region.

Conference Topics and Objectives

The Global Compact UK Forum and the GC Office have prepared discussion papers covering the topics listed below. They were distributed to allow networks to discuss the issues in advance of the Conference.

1. A Governance System for Global Compact Networks

Objective: To accumulate ideas, discuss, and come to a mutual understanding on how GC networks should be governed internally, how they could democratically participate in Global Compact decisions affecting all participants, how networks can inter-relate best with other networks, how they should be supported by the GC Office, and how network quality can be assured.

2. Tapping the Full Potential of Networks

Objective: To collect ideas, discuss, and come to an understanding on how networks can work with one another to gain maximum value from and contribute greatest value to the Global Compact.

3. Making Progress Tangible

Objective: Through the collection, exchange and discussion of ideas, a mutual understanding should be reached on how best country and regional networks can assist participating companies in measuring and communicating progress made in the implementation of the ten Global Compact principles.

4. Synthesis and Plan of Action

Objective: A synthesis of the results of the three above discussed topics shall be made, and a plan of action put on paper.

Conference Participants

30-40 GC Networks Focal Points. 8 Government Representatives (UK, Germany, France, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland). A number of partner organisations. 7 Global Compact Office (JR, GK, GP, NW, BE), plus AS and EK. 6 UN (UNDP, ILO, UNEP, OHCHR, UNIDO, UN Office of Drugs and Crime UNODC).

Total about 75 Participants

Moderator

Chris Marsden, OBE, will guide the conference through the two days of 4 and 5 November. To work on the topics one, two and three, participants will be divided into four breakout groups for each topic. Facilitators for breakout groups: to be advised.

A Conference steering committee consisting of moderator, the four facilitators, two network focal points to be selected, and one Global Compact Office staff meet at lunch and in the evening of each day, to assess the progress of the conference and to make changes when necessary.

Administration

Meeting facilities, the welcome reception on 3 November, and the dinner invitation of 4 November will be paid by our UK Hosts. The invitation will be signed by the Global Compact Office and the UK Government. Air tickets and hotel costs (on a bed and breakfast basis) for non-UN network representatives from developing countries can be paid for on a limited basis by the organisers upon prior request directed to Nessa Whelan, Global Compact Office, <whelan@un.org>. The inviting UK Government and UK GC Network ask that GC Network Focal Points employed by UNDP and other UN HQ/Field Offices have their air travel and hotel costs paid by their offices. Air travel and hotel costs (bed and breakfast) for 5 Global Compact Office Staff will be paid for by the Conference hosts.

Wednesday, 3 November

Arrival of Participants, Hotel Royal Horseguards/Charing Cross.

1830 – 2000: Evening Reception at Lancaster House with Conference Participants, plus UK-based GC Participating Companies.

Thursday, 4 November

Plenary

0900 Welcome by UK Government (to be confirmed).

0915 Welcome by Professor John Ruggie, Special Adviser to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.

0920 Introduction by Georg Kell (Global Compact Executive Head).

1000 Moderator Chris Marsden, to introduce Conference Participants and to guide into Breakout Session 1:

Conference Topic One **A Governance System for Global Compact Networks**

1015 – 1215 Topic 1: A Governance System for Global Compact Networks – coffee/tea will be served during this period.

Four breakout groups will simultaneously work on this topic. After that, the results will be presented to the plenary, discussed, and synthesised on a flip chart.

Objective:

To accumulate ideas, discuss, and come to a mutual understanding on how GC Networks should be governed internally, how they could democratically participate in Global Compact decisions affecting all participants, how networks can inter-relate best with other networks, how they should be supported by the GC Office, and how network quality can be assured. (Outcome: A representative working group of networks to dialogue further on governance to be set up at the end of the conference)

The McKinsey Impact Assessment Study of early 2004 strongly recommends a more robust governance structure of the Global Compact initiative and more dynamic local networks as part of the governance structure.

- What stakeholders should be part of any network?
- How should decision making within networks be organised?
- Who represents the network with external stakeholders as well as with the GC Office?

The annual Networks Activities Report will take centre stage in future Licensed Local Networks (LNN).

- What basic issues/activities should be included in such a report and what should a Licensed Local Network be obliged to report on?
- How can networks democratically participate in any global board decision?
- How should functions, such as communications, brand management, others, be shared between local networks and the Global Compact Office?
- In support of Licensed Local Networks, what should be introduced? Regional hubs? Annual meetings in a different format? Other measures?

1215-1315 Reporting of results. Network Focal Points bring in their views. Discussion. Synthesis of results on flip charts.

1315-1430 Lunch to include a presentation and discussion of the Results of the Survey on Networks, by Anton Stadler, GC Office.

Conference Topic Two **Tapping the Full Potential of Networks**

1430 Moderator to introduce Conference Topic 2.

1445-1645 Four breakout groups will simultaneously work on this topic. After that, the results will be presented to the plenary, discussed, and synthesised on flip charts. (tea/coffee will be served during this period).

Objective:

To collect ideas, discuss, and come to an understanding on how networks can work with one another to gain maximum value from and contribute greatest value to the Global Compact.

The Global Compact has the potential to be the biggest action-oriented Responsible Corporate Citizenship Initiative, the association of businesses and other stakeholders with the widest and deepest geographical reach. How can networks help the Global Compact to reach and fulfil this potential?

- How can participants benefit from local networks and still be part of a global enterprise?

- How can the opportunity of joining the Global Compact, and to be active in a Global Compact network, be better explained and communicated to companies?
- How can networks become better outreach multipliers?
- How could UN agencies, governments, development agencies, better support networks?
- How could advanced networks assist less advanced networks?
- How should networks team up with other organisations, consumers, stock markets, global clubs, etc, to contribute to a solid expansion

1645-1745 Reporting of results. Network Focal Points present examples from their country. Discussion. Synthesis of results on flip charts.

1900

Evening Dinner Invitation for all Participants at Lancaster House, plus UK-based GC Participating Companies.

Friday, 5 November

Plenary

0900-0930 Moderator to remind participants of agreed action points from Plenary Day 1 and to introduce Topic Three.

Conference Topic Three Making Progress Tangible

0930-1130 Four breakout groups will simultaneously work on this subject. After that, the results will be presented to the plenary, discussed, and synthesised on flip charts.

Objective:

Through the collection, exchange and discussion of ideas, a mutual understanding should be reached on how best country and regional networks can assist participating companies in measuring and communicating progress made in the implementation of the ten Global Compact principles.

Critics of the Global Compact claim that it cannot effectively demonstrate that it makes a difference in terms of improved corporate performance. Networks should in the future play a stronger role in assisting participating companies to

improve their performance with regard to the ten principles.

- How can networks reminding and support companies of their country or region in working out the annual *Communication on Progress*, as required by the Global Compact.
- How can Networks ensure that communication on improved performance is transparent, relevant, comparable and trustworthy?
- How can networks measure and evaluate progress without introducing a massive bureaucratic or audit burden?
- What are the ways in which networks, on their websites and otherwise, can give recognition to companies, e.g. through a point system, for positive changes made?
- How can networks do more active learning, dialogue, partnership projects, and peer reviews to reward the “leaders” and to encourage the “lagers”?

1130 – 1230

Reporting of results. Network Focal Points bring in their views. Discussion. Synthesis of results on flip charts.

1230-1345 Lunch to include a Presentation, The Role of the Barcelona GC Forum in Support of GC Networks. The recently opened Global Compact Barcelona Forum will support Global Compact Networks worldwide. A representative of the Barcelona Forum presents the project to the Conference participants and explains what it can do for GC Networks.

Conference Topic Four **Synthesis and Plan of Action**

Objective of this Conference Block:

A synthesis of the results of the three above discussed topics shall be made, and an agreed action plan produced.

1345 -1545 Plenary session. Moderator and Georg Kell. The results of the discussions and presentations on the above three topics are put together and an Action Plan is drawn up and agreed upon. The action plan will be written by Fanny Calder, Chatham House.

1545 - 1615 Break

1615 - 1645. Thanks to the organisers, by Georg Kell. Closing Remarks, by Professor John Ruggie, Special Adviser to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan.