

# GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES REPORT 2004

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## **1. Introduction and Executive Summary**

This year saw continued growth for the GRI, both in terms of how many organisations have used the Guidelines to report, and in terms of GRI's outputs. This annual progress report takes stock of what our activities in the past year have produced, and is intended as a complement to our other annual reports – we have both a financial report and our very first sustainability report out this year. This Annual Review contains more information on our key activities and products over the past fiscal year, and reports on how we have progressed since last year's review.

Our key future focuses that we projected last year were:

- 1) Expanding the Use of the Guidelines
- 2) Improving and Expanding GRI tools and services
- 3) Diversification and Consolidation of income streams

A brief comparison of last year's highlights relevant to the above goals, to this year's results, reveals that:

- Uptake of the Guidelines has grown from the 380 organisations to over 600
- The Completion of the Structured Feedback Process, whose results fed into the G3 plans
- Continued expansion of the reporting framework, including work on 6 Sector Supplements, 2 Technical Protocols, and 5 Translations
- Planning of new G3 services and products that will create future diversified income streams, such as Education and Training programs
- Growth in our Organisational Stakeholder members, from sixty-plus to almost 200
- Research in collaboration with other leading global initiatives in the field of sustainability continues to build, resulting in new knowledge and linkage documents
- Progression on the formation of the Technical Advisory Committee, the final piece of GRI's governance structure, and which adds another layer of expertise to final GRI products (first TAC meeting scheduled for early 2005)

More details follow now about how we progressed on our three main future focuses in the following sections: Reporting Framework Development, Reporting Resources, Outreach and Communications, and GRI's future.

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## 2. Reporting Framework Development

- **Guidelines Uptake (600 +)**

In November, the total number of GRI reporters hit 603, pushing GRI past the goal of obtaining 600 reporters by the end of 2005 a full year early. This number means we have added over 200 reporters since our annual review last year, and to the 28 previous countries from which GRI Reporters came from last year, we can now also add another 21. The growing uptake can likely in good part be attributed to improvements and new developments to the reporting framework itself (see following sections), as well as to increasing awareness and support (see Outreach and Communications section, and GRI's Future section).

- **Translations**

The Guidelines were translated into five new languages – Portuguese, Brazilian, Russian, Chinese, and Italian – bringing the total number of languages the Guidelines are available in to ten.

<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Translation director:</b> Dr Lynne Chow, Technical Advisor, ACCA Hong Kong <b>Translator:</b> Dr Catherine Ni Weihong, Hong & Sheng Consulting International Co., Ltd <b>Contributors in the review process:</b> Mr Albert Lai, Chairman, People's, Council for Sustainable Development; Mr Plato K T Yip, Strategy, Development Manager, CK Life Sciences Int'l. Inc.; Ms Sonia Khao, Head of Technical Services, ACCA Hong Kong
<b>Italian</b>	<b>Translation Director:</b> Sergio G. Caredda, Summit-IMM <b>Peer reviewers:</b> Silvia Persi, ISVI; Mario Molteni, Full Professor of Management at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan and Director of ISVI (Institute for Business Values); Prof. Valerio Melandri, Faculty of Economics, University of Bologna-Forlì; Dr. Matteo Borzaga, Faculty of Law, University of Trento
<b>Portuguese (Brazil)</b>	<b>Translation team:</b> Fabio Feldman, Christopher Wells, Carmen Weingrill, Ehtos Foundation. This translation involved many contributions. For full credits, please see the inside cover of the PDF document.
<b>Portuguese (Portugal)</b>	<b>Translation team:</b> Translation team: Sofia Santos and Rita Almeida Dias (Sustentare), Constança Peneda, Elsa Ferreira  <b>Peer reviewers:</b> António Neves de Carvalho - EDP; Charles Buchanan –Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento; Franco Caruso – BRISA; João José Fernandes – OIKOS; José Muralha – Ordem dos Revisores Oficiais de Contas; Luís Rochatre – BCSD-Portugal; Manuel Caseirão – Ordem dos Revisores Oficiais de Contas; Manuel Vieira da Cruz - Millennium bcp; João Freire – Millennium bcp; João Pinheiro – Millennium bcp
<b>Russian</b>	<b>Translation director:</b> Sergey Dayman, <a href="#">Ecoline</a> <b>Peer-reviewers:</b> Vitaliy Serdyukov (Ryazan GRES), Boris Itkin (IT Russia Services), Ivan Maslov (Saratov Metallurgical Works), Tatiana Sokornova (North-West Timber Industry Company)

- **Structured Feedback Process**

The Structured Feedback Process began in 2003, with feedback in the form of a questionnaire being submitted from over 110 organisations and individuals. This feedback was compiled and presented to participants at a series of regional roundtables, which were held on every continent from December 2003 to March 2004. From each roundtable another report was produced, which captured the discussion and feedback. The results of the SFP are feeding into the plans for the G3 revision process, and are being documented in a book that will be published in 2005. (see section on Reporting Resources)

- **Technical Advisory Committee**

The process of forming the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) took place over the course of the past year, with an international search and nomination process that resulted in a proposed list of 10 candidates which was approved by the Board in December. In early 2005, it will be confirmed whether these 10 will accept their positions, and the TAC will become operational. The first meeting is scheduled for February, and the TAC will play a key role in G3 development and in moving all pilots towards final versions. Check web.

- **Technical Protocols: A) Boundary Protocol  
B) Health and Safety Protocol**

#### **A) Boundary Protocol**

In October 2003, with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Spatial Planning, Housing and the Environment (VROM), GRI began a project to develop guidance on setting reporting boundaries for sustainability reporting.

In 2004, a GRI working group (BWG) researched and drafted a protocol designed to help provide guidance for reporting organisations on this subject, through a series of four face-to-face meetings. The BWG consisted of 17 individuals drawn from a range of constituencies and geographic regions, incorporating individuals with expertise in areas such as lifecycle assessment, labour/human rights, corporate performance measurement, financial accounting, assurance, and supply chain management.

A period of public comment was held from 24 September until 22 November, where more than 60 public comments were received. The final Boundaries Working Group meeting took place in December, hosted by KPMG in New York, where the comments were appraised and then reflected in the final draft. The anticipated release of the new Boundary Protocol looks set for February.

Timeline of the Project:

- November 2003: Project approval and authorisation to begin
- 3-4 March 2004: 1st working group meeting (Amsterdam)
- 17-18 May 2004: 2nd working group meeting (Amsterdam)
- 8-9 July 2004: 3rd working group meeting (Santa Ana, California)
- 24 September - 22 November 2004: Public comment period

- 14-15 December 2004: 4th working group meeting and final discussion of the Protocol
- January 2005: Submission of the final draft to GRI governing body

## **B) Health and Safety Protocol**

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and in consultation with the H&S Advisory Group and Practitioners Network, GRI developed a technical protocol for each of the six health and safety indicators in the 2002 Guidelines. Through a series of teleconferences and over email, a draft Health and Safety Protocol was created, which then underwent a public comment period from 10 May to 9 August. The last teleconference was then held on September 24, and a version ready for pilot-testing will be released, pending TAC approval.

- **Sector Supplements**

- 1) Mining and Metals – This Sector Supplement process was launched late last year, when the first meeting of the working group was held in October. With the support of the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) as a partner, the working group produced a draft which was launched for public comment between June and August 2004. The final working group meeting was held in November to review and incorporate the public comments that were received, and a final draft was produced, which was approved in December by ICMM members. It is awaiting approval from the TAC, and will be rolled out in several additional languages in the upcoming year.
- 2) Financial Services: Environment – In order to build on the *Financial Services Sector Supplement: Social Performance*, which was piloted in November 2002, GRI partnered with UNEP-Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) to develop environmental performance indicators for this sector. A multi-stakeholder working group created a draft that was open for public comment from June to September, and the final working group meeting was held in December. A pilot version and project will be released in 2005.
- 3) Public Agency – The Public Agency Sector Supplement process was launched in late 2003, and the first meeting of its working group was held in January. A draft was produced for public comment between August and October 2004, with the final working group meeting held in November. A pilot will be released in 2005.
- 4) Logistics and Transportation – Work on this Sector Supplement is currently underway, with the World Economic Forum as a partner. Working group meetings were held on the 31st of August and the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2004. Work will continue in 2005.
- 5) Energy Utilities – Recruitment for participants for this Sector Supplement working group is still underway. A number of companies have agreed already, but a few more are needed.

- 6) Apparel and Footwear - Recruitment for participants for this Sector Supplement working group is almost complete. A number of companies have agreed already, and GRI is searching for one more commitment.

**Overview Sector Supplements:**

**Pending Approval as Pilot Version:**

Name	Partner	Status
Mining and Metals	ICMM	Completed 4Q 2004 and will be submitted to TAC for review. Piloting unlikely to be feasible this reporting cycle.
Public Sector	Multiple	Completed 4Q 2004 and will be submitted to TAC for review. Requires structured feedback process.
Financial Services (Environment)	UNEP-FI	Completed 4Q 2004 and will be submitted to TAC for review. Requires joint structured feedback process with social indicators.

**Currently Underway:**

Name	Partner	Status
Logistics and Transportation	World Economic Forum	Completed two meetings and will produce draft pilot version mid-2005

### 3. Reporting Resources

- **“Communicating Business Contributions to the Millennium Development Goals”**

This new linkage document was developed by GRI to help businesses assess and report how their activities are contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight MDGs focus on the greatest challenges of our time, such as the elimination of hunger and poverty, and represent a broad consensus on clear, measurable and time-bound goals.

UNDP and IBLF took on the first challenge of articulating specific actions that could be taken by businesses towards the MDGs, and this resulted in a resource document titled "Business and the Millennium Development Goals: A Framework for Action", that paired business activities with the MDGs. Now, GRI's new linkage tool builds on this by suggesting indicators from the GRI Guidelines that can help businesses to measure and communicate their contributions.

This project was supported by the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, and was completed in November 2004.

- **Sustainable Development Tools Intersection**

Late in 2004 GRI also completed the preparations to launch a new master linkage research document on its website, aimed at helping to clarify the intersections between different Sustainable Development and CSR tools and initiatives. Incorporating the results from several separate linkages papers that GRI recently produced, the "Sustainable Development Tools Intersection" database presents an overarching analysis of the synergies between key global tools. Drawing on the documents, the UN Global Compact Principles and Selected GRI Performance Indicators, the GRI-OECD Users Guide, and Communicating Business Contributions to the Millennium Development Goals with GRI Guidelines, this tool can be used to see where and how these four large initiatives connect, the different roles they play, and where they reinforce one another.

The hope is that this will be a useful tool to various actors who are trying to define which actions will be most effective for them to take, and who are looking for guidance on how to measure, assess and steer their sustainability efforts. This tool can be used according to subject matter (environment, human rights), or according to the specific initiative (UNGC, OECD MNEs, MDG, GRI Guidelines), in order to investigate and compare the contents of the four major initiatives that together represent a balanced international consensus on working towards sustainable development.

- **Global Compact (GC) Linkage Document**

A new principle on anti-corruption was added to the GC, so GRI updated the linkage document that aligns GC principles with GRI indicators.

- **High 5! Handbook**

The High 5! Handbook, GRI's new publication for SMEs on reporting, was launched at the European Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility in Maastricht (Netherlands). Sponsored by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, the handbook

is aimed at helping SMEs enter the world of sustainability reporting, and was created by GRI in response to the many requests received for a "beginner's guide". It offers a step-by-step guide and practical "how-to" advice on using the GRI Guidelines, so that SMEs can easily and effectively create valuable sustainability reports.

High 5! Draws from the experiences of organisations that have used the Guidelines to report, sharing case studies of SMEs who tell their stories about their the process, the costs, and the benefits of reporting. GRI hopes that this guide will inspire more SMEs to implement sustainability reporting in their businesses.

Workshops on using High 5! are in the works - the first one was held in Maastricht, and included presentations from three SME representatives who contributed to its development. GRI has also received strong signals from two new CSR networks - the Inter-American Corporate Social Responsibility Network and the Africa Corporate Sustainability Forum - that there is interest in rolling the handbook out for use through those networks.

"High 5!" is available for sale on the GRI website in both PDF and hard copy.

- **Structure Feedback Process Book (*Shaping the Future of Reporting: A Global Discussion*)**

10 companies that participated in the SFP sponsored this publication, which is currently in the works. Research and drafting began in the fall of 2004, and the book will be completed in the new year. It will show what dialogue of the SFP was, and how it has helped to build the G3 plans.

- **The Global Compact's Guide to Communication on Progress**

GRI has partnered with a consortium of others to produce a handbook that helps GC participants produce a Communication on Progress following the GC requirements. GRI contributed to the background research and took a lead role in writing the handbook. Work on this will continue in 2005.

#### 4. Outreach and Communications

- Media Coverage and GRI authored articles
- Conference attendance
- Website and Electronic Media

##### Media coverage

By the end of the year, GRI had enjoyed some of its best media coverage since the launch of the Guidelines in 2002.

- Numerous articles appeared in Japan, including in **Nikkei Industrial** and **Nikkei Ecology**. GRI staff people authored one journal article in Japanese on reporting by public agencies.
- Coverage in Chinese, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Italian and Spanish occurred in journals and newspapers associated with GRI events and translation launches in those languages.
- GRI was mentioned in the **Financial Times** ten times, including in two letters to the editor by Roger Adams, one by Paul Hohnen and in several articles on accounting, reporting and corporate responsibility in the financial sector. An engaging Op-Ed piece written by Board Member Mark Moody Stuart on the OFR was published in late November.
- Two mentions of the GRI occurred in **The Economist** – marking the first time GRI has been noted in this key publication. (November 6-12, 2004) The following issue ran some letters to the editors around the issue of sustainability reporting.
- After a live panel debate in July featuring Ernst and hosted by an Australian journalist from the local **ABC** station in Sydney, the transcript was posted on ABC's website. We can tell from our web statistics that nearly 400 visitors have come to GRI's website after reading the transcript and following a hotlink to our site.
- Two very timely articles appeared in The Netherlands key financial daily newspaper **Het Financieele Dagblad**, one authored by Bart Jan Krouwel of Rabobank, and one featuring a photograph and interview of Mark Moody-Stuart. These articles appeared the day before and the day after GRI had an audience with the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs in search of sponsorship.
- A **statement issued by 18 North American investment companies** controlling US\$230 billion in assets calling for companies to report using the GRI Guidelines made an impact in October 2004. More than a dozen articles followed the release of this statement.

GRI staff authored three articles, two appeared in Sustainable Development International, and the other in Environmental Quality Management. Judy Henderson's article in the May issue of Sustainable Development International presented the results of the SFP and the first glimpses of the G3, Alyson Slater's article in the following issue highlighted GRI's work on sector supplements.

## **Events attendance**

GRI staff accepted invitations to address attendees of over 100 external conferences in 20 countries this year. Events where GRI staff delivered keynote addresses included:

- BSR Annual Conference (New York)
- A series of Ethical Corporation conferences including themes on Europe and Sustainability Reporting (London)
- ISBEE World Congress (Melbourne)
- Ethos Annual Conference (Sao Paolo)
- Global Compact Leaders Summit (New York)
- European Foundation Centre Conference (Athens)
- Russia International Industries Dialogues (Moscow)
- SRI in the Rockies (Colorado)
- UNEP Consultative Meeting with Industry Associations (Paris)
- Forum Barcelona (Barcelona)
- ASrIA 2004 Conference (Singapore)
- AccountAbility's What Assures? (London)
- TBLI Annual Conference (Amsterdam)
- EU Ministerial Conference on CSR (Maastricht)
- Business Leaders Forum on Human Rights (London)

At the May board meeting it was determined that GRI needed to focus on rebuilding its presence in the USA. As a result GRI staff prioritised key events such as the BSR conference, SRI in the Rockies, Global Compact Summit and others. Ernst Ligteringen and James Murphy embarked on a month-long fundraising mission to 12 American cities where public appearances and bilateral meetings drastically increased awareness of GRI.

## **Website and electronic media**

The communications team spent the summer of 2004 making systematic upgrades to our website based on user feedback. This has resulted in a sustained 20% increase in our weekly visitation rates between August and December 2004. Up from 6000 visitors per week, GRI now logs 8000 visitors per week.

GRI's monthly update has been issued on a regular basis since 1999 and now has almost 7,000 subscribers, up from the 5000 subscribers of last year.

## **Publications and translations – see the above section on Reporting Resources**

## **5. GRI's Future: Planning a Dual Transition**

At the end of the Board of Directors meeting in December 2004, the Board approved an ambitious new work plan for the GRI called the G3. Standing in part as a

representation of the Third Generation (G3) of Guidelines<sup>1</sup> that will be released in 2006, the G3 also encompasses a change in GRI's business plan.

This will mean a transition away from philanthropic grant-based funding towards financial self-sufficiency, and plans to do so were developed in part using external research that explored existing models of financial sustainability. The new projected revenue streams will come from sources such as education and training courses and report registration services. GRI's new business plan has thus been built to best meet the needs of its stakeholders while also generating revenue from its activities, and will continue to allow GRI to innovate and promote the Guidelines as a free public good.

The G3 plan was conceived of following an intense period of consultation and discussion with various stakeholders in 2003-2004. This included a major assessment of user satisfaction through a Structured Feedback Process (see Reporting Framework Development section) which engaged 450 people worldwide, as well as follow-up interviews and user intelligence surveys.

The G3 workplan is broken into three components that draw on the feedback received, and has also been designed to ensure a degree of self-sufficiency and financial security for GRI so future iterations of the Guidelines can be supported.

G3 components include:

- Guidelines innovation: an innovative and ambitious workplan focusing on updating and improving indicators, the application of the Guidelines, and linkages with other CSR tools and financial markets. This process is already underway and described in more detail below.
- Digital solutions: The development of a technology platform for reporting will be interlinked with the innovation of the Guidelines. The digital solution will play a key role in enhancing the ease of use of the GRI Guidelines and resulting sustainability reports. The digital solution will include an enhanced GRI website, and the development of XML/XBRL taxonomies. This will result in a more efficient delivery system for the Guidelines, and the ability to sort indicators and link with existing information management systems. The development of digital solutions for the delivery of the G3 Guidelines will begin in mid-2005.
- Products and services: A key component of the G3 process is the development of educational support, such as tutorials and seminars, around the context and application of principles and indicators. Courses would be aimed at practitioners in organisations looking for help as they get started with reporting or to improve their current reporting processes. Courses for key information seeker communities, such as SRI analysts and civil society, would help build capacity for the use of sustainability information. The development of an education programme is scheduled to begin in mid-2005 with the development of materials and course planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Previous versions of the Guidelines were released in 2000 and 2002. G3 is expected for release in 2006.

Technical advancements in the Guidelines Innovations component are being conducted by three work streams, all simultaneously working on different key areas<sup>1</sup>:

- **Clarity and Purpose of Indicators.**  
This work stream consists of an Indicators Working Group (IWG), supported by a number of smaller issue-specific expert advisory groups. Their mandate is to review the performance indicators and improve their quality, clarity, and assurability. The result will be indicators with greater comparability and that effectively communicate organisational performance. This group will also develop supporting protocols.
- **Reporting as a Process.**  
This work stream will focus on the process of applying the Guidelines, including the use of stakeholder engagement. A working group will propose guidance on how to use and interpret the GRI principles. In addition, this work stream will identify other business management processes and systems which sustainability reporting feeds into, and will propose methods for how the G3 can better reinforce and mesh with these.
- **Relationships and Harmonisation.**  
This work stream addresses issues relating to the broad architecture of the Guidelines and their fit in the world of standards with a focus on financial markets and assurance. This will include the establishment of a consultation with financial institutions to assess how reports are used by analysts, what makes them valuable, and how an improved GRI reporting standard could be of use for the financial world. Separately, there will also a process to assess the overall compatibility of GRI with existing assurance standards for reporting.

These three workstreams are now underway, with members of working groups being finalized and meetings being planned. The transition of the business model will unfold over the coming year as well, including the formation of the Consortium (G3C), a group of leading companies that will support the G3 through a minimum € 100,000 investment, and who will provide strategic guidance and leadership throughout the G3 process. The Products and Service component will be developed during the later stages of G3.

This dual transition will occupy a good part of GRI's activities for the next two years, and it is expected that at the end of this period the GRI will be a healthier more mature institution, and that its core products, namely the Guidelines, will be more rigorous, easier to use, and result in higher quality sustainability reports. These goals are in line with GRI's main mission of developing and disseminating sustainability reporting guidelines, in order to promote sustainable development, and at the end of the next year (2005), we will again come back to these three overarching goals by which to measure our progress:

- 1) Expanding the Use of the Guidelines
- 2) Improving and Expanding GRI tools and services
- 3) Diversification and Consolidation of income streams

The past year was spent making progress on these goals, but as has just been outlined, the G3 plan will continue to increase our efforts to these ends.

## **ANNEX 1**

### **GRI Secretariat Staff**

The past year of changes also included staff changes – four staff members are now working as more flexible associates, four new staff were added to the Communications and Resource Development team, three new interns were added to the Technical Development team, and there was one departure and three additions to the Operations side.

- **Ernst Ligteringen , Chief Executive**
- Ralph Thurm, Deputy Chief Executive

### **Technical Development**

- Sean Gilbert, Associate Director Technical Development
- Naoko Kubo, Project Manager, Sector Supplements
- Damir Dragicevic, Researcher, Technical Development
- Sandra Vijn, Researcher, Technical Development
- Leontien Plugge, Intern, Technical Development
- Dora Tordjman, Intern, Report Analysis
- Martha Ordonez, Intern, Report Analysis

### **Communications and Resource Development**

- Teresa Fogelberg, Associate Director, Business Development
- James Murphy, Associate Director, Resource Development
- Margaret Tench, Coordinator, Resource Development
- Uschi Ruckes, Coordinator, Resource Development
  
- Alyson Slater, Associate Director, Communications
- Careesa Gee, Coordinator, Communications
- Fanny Langella, Webmaster

### **Operations**

- Monique Hutten, Human Resources & Operations Manager
- Wouter Huizinga, Junior Accountant
- Henriette Hettinga, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive
- Annemieke Wadey, Secretary
- Liesbeth Timmermans, Intern, Governance Coordination

### **GRI Associates**

- Nancy Bennet
- Mark Brownlie
- Paul Hohnen
- Teodorina Lessidrenska
- Tomoo Machiba

## ANNEX 2

### **Board of Directors**

There were two rotations on the Board this year, as John Evans came in to replace Anita Normark for Labour, and Ricardo Young steps in for Fabio Feldmann for Brazil.

Judy Henderson (Australia)  
immediate-past Chair, Australian Ethical Investment Ltd; former Commissioner,  
World Commission on Dams  
Chair of GRI Board of Directors

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Roger Adams (United Kingdom)  
Executive Director-Technical, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

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John Evans, (International)  
Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD

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Jacqueline Aloisi de Lardere (International)  
Assistant Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, Division of  
Technology, Industry, and Economics

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Toshihiko Goto (Japan)  
Chair, Environmental Auditing Research Group

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Hanns Michael Hölz (Germany)  
Global Head of Sustainable Development and Public Relations, Deutsche Bank Group

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Jamshed J. Irani (India)  
Director, Tata Sons Limited

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Ernst Ligteringen (International)  
GRI Chief Executive

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[Robert Kinloch Massie](#) (United States)  
Executive Director, Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies

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[Lindiwe Mokate](#) (South Africa)  
Chief Executive Officer, South African Human Rights Commission.

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[Mark Moody-Stuart](#) (United Kingdom)  
Chairman, Anglo American plc; former Chair, Royal Dutch/Shell

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[Barbara Shailor](#) (United States)  
Director of International Affairs, American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations

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[Bjorn Stigson](#) (International)  
President, World Business Council for Sustainable Development

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[Peter H.Y. Wong](#) (China)  
Senior Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Hong Kong; and Board Member,  
International Federation of Accountants

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[Ricardo Young](#) (Brazil)  
President, Board of Directors of Ethos Institute

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