



Global Compact Network Netherlands

Annual Report 2011

0. Structure and Strategy

Our network is a network consisting of 85 participants (signatories who signed either in The Netherlands or have a subsidiary here). There is a Steering Committee which gathered four times over the course of 2011. In 2011 we decided to form a legal entity (an association).

Concrete goals of our network were/are:

1. stimulate private companies in the Netherlands to become signatories to the Global Compact;
2. provide Dutch business signatories with a vehicle for inspirational learning and benchmarking through:
 - more general exchange of experience, also with public authorities, civil society and academic institutions that show an active interest in sustainability, with regard to the fulfilment of the GC NL goal;
 - peer feed-back on the periodic COP (Communication of Progress) reporting to which signatory companies are committed;
3. establish a platform for joint projects between signatories on a voluntary basis.

Please find below a report on how we performed on these three goals in 2011.

1. New signatories in 2011

In 2011 we grew with 10 new companies business and 2 NGO's. One company was 'delisted'.

Our network now has 86 participants:

- 50 companies with more than 250 employees (including 7 members which signed abroad)
- 24 companies with less than 249 employees
- 3 companies with less than 10 employees
- 9 other organisations: 7 NGO's/CSO's, 1 municipality, 1 business association.

We were as yet cautious in acquiring new members, but have the ambition to grow in the next years, in alignment with the ambition of UN Global Compact to double its participants to 20.000 in 2020.

2. Learning activities

2.1 Annual Conference January 17th 2011

The subject of our annual conference was: MDG 1 How to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.

KPMG organized this conference in cooperation with a range of eminent speakers: Lord Michael Hastings (conference-chairman, from KPMG), Yvo de Boer (KPMG, former head of the climate office UN), Samir Chaudhuri (Child in Need Institute, Indian NGO), Gerhard van den Top (CEO Vitens-Evides), Christiaan Rebergen (MDG ambassador Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Peter Bakker (CEO TNT), Paulus Verschuren (ex Unilever), Mary Ellen Iskenderian (Women's World Banking) and Farah Karimi (director Oxfam Novib).

The central question in the lectures, the good practices that were shared and the discussions was: How do we meet the big challenge to make more progress on the achievement of MDG1 aims for 2015?

The conference has a close link with our project Partnering for Prosperity (see 3.2).

2.2 COP Peer Review Feedback: new policy

September 30th 2010 ABN AMRO bank organized and hosted our annual COP Peer Review Feedback meeting. The number of participants in this meeting was rather low.

COP reporting is an important issue for Global Compact, because COP's are the most important instrument for safeguarding the integrity of the initiative.

The Steering Committee decided to introduce a methodology for a new peer review review in which COPs are judged in small groups of peers (as is already done in the UK).

This will be started at the beginning of 2012.

On May 23 we organized a workshop with GRI on reporting and Communication on Progress (hosted by Rabobank, Utrecht).

We discussed the relation between the new differentiation program of UNGC and the GRI guidelines on social reporting, and so give input to an updated version of the linkage document 'Making the Connection - The GRI Guidelines and the UNGC Communication on Progress'.

This can be seen as a concrete local follow up of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) UNGC and GRI signed in May 2010, joining forces to build a universal framework for reporting on corporate sustainability performance and disclosure.

2.3 Round Table on Global Issues

Our network organized a Round Table on global issues at which companies can share and discuss their dilemmas with each other and also with two representatives of NGOs, in a confidential manner.

In 2010 this Round Table met once (in 2009 three times).

We decided to continue the Round Table meetings on a demand-based basis. Should a member bring forward the desire to discuss a dilemma, a meeting will be organized.

In 2011 no Round Table meeting took place.

2.4 Workshop on Human Rights

September 6th we organised a follow up workshop for participants in our project Business & Human Rights (see 3.1) and other interested companies. Good practices were presented by Shell, Philips, Rabobank and Randstad.

3. Our projects

3.1. The publication and follow up of our Business & Human Rights Initiative¹

In June 2010 we finalized our book “How to Do Business with Respect for Human Rights: A Guidance Tool for Companies”² and presented it at the Global Compact Leaders Summit, to Mrs. Mary Robinson (former UN High Commissioner on Human Rights), Mr. George Kell (administrator Global Compact) and Mr. Paul Polman (CEO Unilever).

The book has been distributed widely to interested companies and networks, in the Netherlands and abroad. We also discussed it with a number of NGOs.

Our network was involved in several meetings and conferences where we presented and discussed the results of this project: the World Legal Forum in The Hague December 6th and 7th of 2010 ‘Business and Community in Dialogue; a conference of MVO Nederland on human rights and the role of branche-associations February 8; a meeting of Cordaid February 16; a session at the UNGC conference in Copenhagen in May; a meeting of BSCI on June 28; and a conference with the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs on December 12. Our project consultant David advised companies in the Initiative (and other companies) about their human rights policy.

This publication gained much attention worldwide and is broadly used by organisations as a helpful guide for developing a human rights policy – which will be of growing importance since the Human Rights Council of the United Nations endorsed the Ruggie principles June 2011.

September 6th we organised a follow up workshop (see 2.4).

3.2 Developing our initiative Partnering for Prosperity

In 2010 Global Compact together with BoP Innovation Center started an initiative ‘Partnering for Prosperity’ which aims to give a significant impulse to reaching MDG1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger) by sharing knowledge, engaging companies and creating synergetic combinations between the Dutch private sector, public institutions and NGOs.³

¹ This project started in November 2008 with a dual purpose. First, to assist member companies in considering the framework for their individual efforts to integrate human rights into their business. Second, to make a contribution to the ongoing work of Special Representative Mr. John Ruggie. Ten Dutch multinational companies - AkzoNobel, Essent, Fortis Bank, KLM, Philips, Rabobank, Randstad, TNT, Shell and Unilever - took up this challenge with us.

All participants got an individual assessment and many workshops were organized, a.o. with NGOs.

The general findings of these assessments have been reported in the book mentioned above.

² The book can also be found through the following link: http://www.gcneltherlands.nl/report_business_human_rights.htm

³ The project started in the fall of 2009 with a strong appeal of three leading CEO’s of participant companies Paul Polman of Unilever, Feike Sybesma of DSM, and Peter Bakker of TNT, upon the private sector,

In 2010 a broad inventory has been made of initiatives and projects. In 2011 a concrete pilot project was started in Ethiopia for which the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave financial support in 2011.

Six companies (besides the three above Friesland Campina, Rabobank Foundation, and Rijk Zwaan) signed a letter of intent to cooperate with IFDC (the International Fertilizer Development Center), a NGO that helps clusters of farmers in Africa to improve products and services and getting access to markets and value chains.

Global Compact signed a strategic partnership with BoP.

3.3 Forming an international network against Child Labour

In 2010 the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment took the initiative to launch an international businessnetwork against child labour (which it presented on the international ILO-conference in The Hague, May 2010), and discussed with our network how to organize this network.

A steering group has been formed which is chaired by the chairman of our network, Mr. André van Heemstra. The concrete activities started on the 1st of October 2010 at IDH (Initiative for Sustainable Trade) that hosts this project. The project aims at setting up a network of 10 companies for each of five risk sectors, adding up to a total of 50 companies and to hand it over by early 2012 to the Global Compact in New York. Good practices are gathered and will be made available on a website.

4. Other activities

Many institutions in the Netherlands⁴ are interested in our Global Compact Network, so we get many requests for co-organizing meetings, consultations or informing our participants about relevant activities.

Concrete activities in 2011 were:

- January 18th: Meeting with António Guterres UN High Commissioner on Refugees (10 interested companies participated). The UNHCR is constantly in need for the help of business (not only financial).
- March 18th: Meeting with Helen Clark, highest official of the UNDP, who gave an elucidation about the work of the UNDP, especially about the project BctA (Business Call to Action) which aims at involving business with the work of UNDP, and the concept of 'inclusive markets' UNDP (8 representatives of GC member-organisations were present).
- June: Request from the Ministry of Economy, Agriculture and Innovation for participation in a joint working group India-Netherlands on CSR.
- June 20th conference Ministry of Social Affairs 'Freedom of labour association – the role of the ILO'. Dutch GC participants were invited.
- September: meetings with the Dutch Rio+20 Platform for consultation about the Rio + 20 conference in 2012
- September: invitation for Round Table on Integrated Reporting

government, public institutions and NGOs to contribute much more strongly to realizing MDG1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger).

⁴ Notably the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

- October 4th and 5th: consultation about the European Conference Building sustainable long-term investment and corporate growth (organised by the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Amsterdam). Dutch GC participants were invited.
- October 26th: Consultation of the Ministeries of Economy and Foreign Affairs about the new Development Aid policy. Dutch GC participants were invited.
- December 6th: World Legal Forum 'Managing Corporate Conflicts: from threat to opportunity for sustainable business'. Dutch GC participants were invited.
- December 12th 12: conference Ministeries of Foreign Affairs, Economic Affairs and VNO-NCW: 'Responsible Business Conduct in a Global Context'. Dutch GC participants were invited.

5. Agenda for 2012

Priorities for the coming period are:

- informing participants about our new legal entity;
- intensifying the COP feedback process among members (see under 2.2);
- preparing our annual Netherlands Network conference for 2012, which will be prepared by Essent.
- follow up Busines and Human Rights project.

André van Heemstra, chairman Global Compact Netherlands
Huib Klamer, senior advisor Global Compact Netherlands

The Hague, December 2011