

A critical time

It is beyond reasonable doubt that humanity is facing unprecedented sustainability challenges that will affect us all.

- *In 1950 the world population was 2.5 billion. The number of people on the planet will grow from its current 6.7 billion to 9.2 billion by the year 2050 – **UN 2008***
- *If everyone in the world had the same lifestyle as an average American, the world's population would need 5 planets-worth of bio-productive land in order to feed, clothe and shelter everyone - **WWF 2008***
- *All countries will be affected by climate change, but the poorest countries will suffer earliest and most. Average temperatures could rise by 5C from pre-industrial levels if climate change goes unchecked – **UK Government's Stern Report 2006***
- *Rising demand, soaring oil prices and the ravages of climate change are putting food beyond the reach of the planet's poor - **Time Magazine 2008***
- *Behind the world food crisis is a global freshwater crisis, expected to rapidly worsen as climate change impacts intensify – **WWF 2008***

Measure to manage, manage to change

Financial reporting standards were born of the global financial crisis and Great Depression of the 1930s. The current sustainability crisis requires the same, if not greater, effort to be made in order to build trust through transparency.

- *Sustainability was once derided in the corporate world as an amorphous term coined by the environmentalist movement, but it is gradually gaining acceptance in boardrooms – **Fox News 2006***

Public disclosure on how organizations are responding to the critical issues of the day is essential if we are to begin to address these issues. Transparent disclosure allows for like-for-like comparison to be made between reporting organizations and for opportunities for improvements to be identified within organizations.

The process of disclosing sustainability performance is therefore not only an exercise in accountability - it is a vital management tool, adding value through enabling an organization better understand itself.

- *Sustainability reporting and disclosure of various risks and opportunities which StatoilHydro faces enable greater consistency in our performance – **StatoilHydro 2008***
- *We think these measures help us improve our performance, demonstrate leadership, and build trust essential for our success as a business – **Microsoft Corporation 2008***
- *90 percent of readers said their views of a reporter had been influenced by reading its sustainability report. Of these, 85 percent developed a more positive opinion of the organization – **GRI commissioned research 2008***

GRI's vision is that sustainability reporting on economic, environmental, and social performance by all organizations is as routine and comparable as financial reporting.



A common language

The GRI Reporting Framework - of which the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines are the cornerstone - provides guidance for organizations to disclose their sustainability performance. It is applicable to organizations of any size, type, sector or geographic region and has been used by thousands of organizations worldwide as the basis for their sustainability reporting.

Representing the best current thinking

GRI is a worldwide, multi-stakeholder network. Business, civil society, labor, investors, accountants and others all collaborate through consensus-seeking approaches to create and continuously improve the Reporting Framework.

The multi-stakeholder approach ensures the credibility and trust required of a global disclosure framework.

- *The GRI's 16-member **Board of Directors** is the final decision making authority on GRI Guidelines revisions, organizational strategy, and work plans.*
- *The 50-member **Stakeholder Council** is the GRI's formal stakeholder policy forum, similar to a parliament, that debates and deliberates key strategic and policy issues.*
- *The **Technical Advisory Committee** provides high-level technical advice and expertise to the Board of Directors specifically and to the GRI network as a whole.*
- *Over 500 **Organizational Stakeholders** play a key governance role in sustaining GRI as an open, democratic and global institution, and in ensuring a quality Reporting Framework.*
- *Under leadership of the **Chief Executive**, 30 staff at the **Secretariat** support the operations of the governance bodies.*

Getting involved

As a multi-stakeholder network, GRI has engaged tens of thousands of people globally in developing and applying the Sustainability Reporting Framework and continues to do so.

The Framework is continuously improved and expanded as knowledge of sustainability issues evolves and the needs of report makers and users change

- *Development of the framework: current priorities include **Human Rights, Gender and Climate Change**. GRI is also further developing sector specific supplementary reporting guidelines.*
- *Application of the framework: GRI's Learning and Services department is working to build capacity around the use of the framework through **accredited training partners** and learning **publications**.*
- *Continuous engagement: The **Organizational Stakeholder Program** enables GRI to engage thousands from all regions of the world and various stakeholder groups.*

GRI's mission is to create conditions for the transparent and reliable exchange of sustainability information through the development and continuous improvement of the GRI Sustainability Reporting Framework.