Global Social Responsibility (GSR) Vision Statement

GSR Research Group
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In April 2009 we established the GSR Research Group to study new approaches to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in order to address pressing global issues and help build a better society. This process has confirmed the following points:

1. The world confronts a variety of global challenges, including poverty, hunger, disease, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and human rights violations. These issues have been addressed by international organizations, national governments, nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations, and private citizens, but to date these efforts have not produced satisfactory results. Businesses, therefore, are being called upon to play a bigger role in addressing these challenges by contributing their human resources, technologies, capital, and information, as well as the management capacity to carry out large-scale projects.

2. Global social responsibility (GSR) comprises CSR activities aimed at resolving these global issues. Legal compliance and risk management constitute “defensive CSR,” while donations and philanthropic activities are aspects of “goodwill CSR.” GSR, on the other hand, can be positioned as “proactive CSR.” As responsible members of the global community, companies must show sympathy for and solidarity with society in promoting GSR initiatives that contribute to sustainable development.

3. The social returns from the resolution of global challenges do not always match the economic returns for companies involved in solving them. GSR can be described as an amalgamation of effort and ingenuity that can help to reconcile such differences. Global challenges pose major threats to businesses as well, and in the long run GSR will become essential to the very survival of companies.

4. GSR activities need to be sustained to be effective, so mechanisms will have to be put in place to encourage long-term projects, rather than one-off initiatives. Also, it would be desirable to create multi-stakeholder frameworks in which companies coordinate their activities broadly with other businesses, international organizations, governments, NGOs and NPOs, and private citizens.

5. The content of GSR varies widely depending on industry, company size, and region of operation. Incorporating members of poorer communities into the value chain as workers or consumers under an inclusive business model is one approach to alleviating poverty, but there are many other GSR options. Businesses should learn from the innovative best practices of other companies, formulate their own unique initiatives that make use of their particular corporate resources, and actively disseminate and share the results with others.