



## International Water Experts Convene in India to Address Global Crisis in Water and Sanitation

### Role of Business Highlighted at CEO Water Mandate Conference

(*Mumbai/India, 5 March 2013*) – The UN Global Compact’s CEO Water Mandate today convened an international conference in Mumbai, India, to explore how the global business community can positively contribute to the growing global and regional water and sanitation challenges – especially with respect to the UN’s Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Approximately 160 leaders from business, civil society, UN agencies, and other groups gathered to discuss collaborative approaches to water and sanitation problems. The event – “[Corporate Water Stewardship and the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Drawing from the India Experience](#)” – constituted one of the United Nations’ formal consultations with respect to the post-2015 process, which seeks to identify critical development objectives and possibly formulate new Sustainable Development Goals. The event was live-streamed to the UN’s official website devoted to the formal [UN water consultations](#).

UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, through a special video address, called on participants at the conference to make solving the global sanitation crisis – where approximately 2.5 billion people lack access – a top priority in the coming years and decades.

Gavin Power, Deputy Director of the UN Global Compact and Head of the [CEO Water Mandate](#), opened the conference, noting that the business community has a historic opportunity to contribute positively to a major UN process that will shape the world’s sustainable development trajectory.

“Increasingly, the business community recognizes that issues related to water scarcity, water quality, and sanitation present a range of risks,” Mr. Power said. “Through initiatives such as the CEO Water Mandate, companies can contribute to solutions in collaboration with the broader international community.”

H M Nerurkar, Managing Director of Tata Steel Ltd., one of the endorsers of the CEO Water Mandate, highlighted the need for urgent action in India, where freshwater demand is projected to outstrip supply by 50 percent in 2030. “This crisis, affecting India but also other regions of the world, demands collective action – business working with government, civil society, and others,” said Mr. Nerurkar.

Endorsers of the CEO Water Mandate commit to developing and implementing policies and practices in relation to six core areas: direct operations; supply chain/watershed; community engagement; public policy; and transparency.

During the conference participants highlighted the need for companies to seek water efficiencies in their supply chains, especially in relation to agriculture, the largest user of freshwater. India, for example, is one of the world’s highest per capita water users in farming – underscoring the need for greater efficiencies through systems such as drip irrigation.

At the same time, attendees stressed the need for better national and municipal water governance by public authorities, including integrated national water strategies that focus on the water-energy-food nexus.

Dr. Anjali Parasnis, Associate Director of the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and one of the session speakers, said that trends related to population growth, industrialization, urbanization, and climate change will exacerbate water stress and scarcity in the coming years and decades, and stressed the need for the international community to make water security a priority.

During the second half of the day, participants engaged in discussions on the possible scope and nature of future water goals in three areas – water access, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); water resource management; and wastewater and water quality. These discussions and the related recommendations will be compiled by the UN Global Compact Office and included in its Post-2015 submission to the UN Secretary-General, to be presented in May 2013.

**The conference was organized by the UN Global Compact Office in partnership with the Pacific Institute, Tata Steel, HCC, the Global Compact India Network, and the Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies.**

For more information about the CEO Water Mandate, please visit [www.ceowatermandate.org](http://www.ceowatermandate.org).

#### **About the United Nations Global Compact**

Launched in 2000, the United Nations Global Compact is both a policy platform and a practical framework for companies that are committed to sustainability and responsible business practices. As a multi-stakeholder leadership initiative, it seeks to align business operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption, and to catalyze actions in support of broader UN goals. With over 7,000 corporate signatories in 135 countries, it is the world's largest voluntary corporate sustainability initiative. [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

#### **About the Pacific Institute**

The Pacific Institute, one of the world's leading independent nonprofits conducting research to create a healthier planet and sustainable communities, serves as the operational arm of the CEO Water Mandate. Based in Oakland, California, the Institute conducts interdisciplinary research and partners with stakeholders to produce solutions that advance environmental protection, economic development and social equality. The Pacific Institute works to change policy and find real-world solutions to problems like water shortages, habitat destruction, global warming, and environmental injustice. [www.pacinst.org](http://www.pacinst.org)

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#### **Contacts**

Gavin Power  
UN Global Compact  
[powerg@un.org](mailto:powerg@un.org)

Jason Morrison  
Pacific Institute  
[jmorrison@pacinst.org](mailto:jmorrison@pacinst.org)