

**UN Global Compact Conference**

**“Corporate Water Stewardship, Collective Action, and the UN Post-2015 Agenda”**

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**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good morning, buenos dias a todos, and welcome to Lima, Peru, for the kick-off of the 13<sup>th</sup> international conference of the United Nations Global Compact’s CEO Water Mandate initiative.**

**Over the course of the next three days we will explore how emerging corporate water stewardship practices and a possible water and sanitation-related Post-2015 sustainable development goal may be relevant in addressing water challenges in Peru as well in other regions of the world. As part of this, we hope to also gain a better understanding of some of the priority water issues facing Peru and how these intersect with national strategies and planning.**

**One of the exciting and important aspect of the CEO Water Mandate is how the initiative connects – or should connect – with other key focus areas of the broader Global Compact initiative, and vice versa. And this, of course, reflects the profoundly cross-cutting nature of water and sanitation – intersecting with human rights, women’s and girls’ empowerment, food security, and anti-corruption and good governance, to name just several areas. We will touch on some of these intersections this week, as well.**

**To help anchor and ground our discussion let us consider the overall backdrop to the Mandate and indeed this conference: namely, what we see as an intensifying convergence space between the interests and aims of the public sector and international institutions, civil society, and the global business community. While core missions clearly differ, we find increasing overlap – shared interests, shared risks, if you will – with respect to a range of**

critical sustainability issues. These relate – but are not confined to – the four broad areas of the UN Global Compact – human rights, labour conditions, environment, and anti-corruption – as well as issues in the development realm.

To be sure, the multi-stakeholder audience in this very room reflects this convergence of interests, and the CEO Water Mandate is one practical expression – a high-level policy platform that while focused on business also involves other key societal actors in order to bring about positive change in relation to two critical and related global challenges: water and sanitation.

As some of you may know, the CEO Water Mandate was launched as a public-private initiative by the UN Secretary-General in 2007, and is overseen and run by the UN Global Compact Office in partnership with the Pacific Institute, which serves as co-secretariat and technical advisor.

At its core, the CEO Water Mandate is a strategic policy framework for the development, implementation, and disclosure of corporate water policies and practices that we refer to broadly as “corporate water stewardship”. This concept entails a holistic approach to water management, and in the case of the Mandate encompasses six elements: Direct Operations; Supply Chain/Watershed; Community Engagement; Collective Action; Responsible Public Policy Engagement; and Transparency.

Participation in the CEO Water Mandate requires the special endorsement of a company’s Chief Executive Officer in order to elevate the commitment to the highest level within the corporate organization. CEOs commit to undertake actions in relation to the six elements, and to report annually on progress – or risk of expulsion. In addition, the Mandate represents a call-to-action by endorsing CEOs to business leaders everywhere to make water and sanitation business priority issues. So, there is an important advocacy aspect.

**The Mandate is thoroughly multi-stakeholder, bringing endorsing companies together with governments, UN agencies, civil society, and other key interests to advance water and sanitation solutions.**

**From an initial base of just five endorsing companies, the Mandate has grown to include more than 100 companies, representing all major geographic regions and a range of industrial sectors – including agriculture, apparel, beverage, food, mining, metals, pharmaceutical, and water services. It is important to note that while the Mandate includes several water utility companies, the vast majority of the endorsers – intentionally – are large corporate water users, rather than providers.**

**Over the years, the Mandate has pursued a very active program of activities, including the convening of major international working conferences, and the development of a range of resources, guidance documents, tools, and thought-leadership pieces. The Mandate has also assisted with humanitarian crises, including catalyzing corporate support in relation to last year's typhoon in the Philippines.**

**In addition to the six core elements of the CEO Water Mandate, the initiative has also advanced a number of priority workstreams, and three in particular: water, sanitation and human rights; corporate water disclosure; and responsible public policy engagement which has evolved into a collective action workstreams. In relation to the first two, we will later this year launch two major deliverables: a business guide to water, sanitation, and human rights; and global guidance on corporate water disclosure. During this conference you will have the opportunity to provide important inputs and comments to help inform the final development of these deliverables.**

**In relation to the collective action workstream, the most significant milestone was the 2012 launch of the Mandate's Global Water Action Hub – an on-line platform to match-make companies and other stakeholders on partnership projects in key river basins and watersheds around the world. There are now almost 300 project locations posted on the Hub, and we are excited to announce here today the inclusion of Peru's Rimac River Basin. You will learn more about this later today.**

As an initiative, and given the sensitivities and importance in relation to water issues, the Mandate has pursued a policy of what we call “hyper transparency” and this includes two dimensions. The first relates to the initiative itself, including convening multi-stakeholder conferences, and publishing all key documents and discussions, including governance deliberations and strategic plans, on the Mandate’s public website. The second aspect relates to the endorsers themselves – and I mentioned, all endorsers are required to report annually on their progress or list being expelled. Thus far, we have publicly expelled six companies for failure to demonstrate progress. So, we are serious about this accountability policy, which closely mirrors the broader disclosure policy of the UN Global Compact.

Finally, I think it’s important to mention that this conference takes place amid the broader context of the UN Post-2015 Development Process which seeks to create a new global sustainable development framework across the triple pillars of the economy, environment, and society, and social and possibly a set of Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire in 2015. Of course, we must remember that there is still essential work to be done with respect to the MDGs, and some of the goals, notably sanitation, are seriously lagging.

The UN Global Compact and the CEO Water Mandate have been actively involved in the overall UN process, and we will use the outputs of this conference to again help inform our work in this area. One major contribution of the UN Global Compact and the CEO Water Mandate was the development of a proposed pyramid of possible SDGs for Governments and policy makers to consider – including a stand-alone goal and suggested targets for water and sanitation. This was submitted into the political process, and already we are seeing nice alignment in terms of initial outputs by the UN Open Working Group.

In addition, it is important to also consider not only the possible scope and nature of goals, but also implementation efforts in relation to any Post-2015 objectives, and here we believe that platforms such as the Water Action Hub can offer compelling opportunities in terms of multi-stakeholder action modalities.

With these words of introduction let us begin this week’s water stewardship journey.

**Thank you for your attention, and I wish us all a fascinating and productive conference.**

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