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## **Business Leaders Remain Focused on Sustainability Despite Economic Uncertainty**

### ***Nearly All Plan to Maintain or Increase Spending on CSR***

**NEW YORK—November 3, 2010**—Despite continuing uncertainty about the world's economy, results from the "[BSR/GlobeScan State of Sustainable Business Poll 2010](#)" released today show more than eight in 10 respondents (84 percent) are somewhat or very optimistic that global businesses will embrace CSR/sustainability as part of their core strategies and operations in the next five years. Nearly all (94 percent) of the 377 respondents, drawn from a majority of BSR's global network of more than [250 member companies](#), also said that their companies plan to maintain or increase their budgets for CSR/sustainability programs in the year ahead, and nearly three-quarters expect to increase the amount of internal and external CSR/sustainability communications as well.

"When the recession hit with full force two years ago, we urged our members to stick with sustainability as a key to achieving long-term business success," said BSR President and CEO Aron Cramer. "It's very encouraging to see that, even in a world still marked by instability and change, they're staying the course."

"BSR member companies continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainable business," said Chris Coulter, senior vice president at GlobeScan, which conducted the survey on behalf of BSR. "These findings will reinforce the direction that many leadership companies are headed, and prompt others to join them."

The survey was released today at the start of the [BSR Conference 2010](#), where more than 1,000 senior business executives, entrepreneurs, and leaders from the public sector and civil society are gathered to focus on integrating CSR and sustainability practices into strategy and core business.

### **Top Sustainability Priorities in Year Ahead: Climate Change, Labor/Human Rights**

The business leaders surveyed cite climate change, workers' rights, and human rights as the top priorities for their companies' CSR/sustainability efforts in the year ahead.

Climate change remains an important focus of these efforts, with 63 percent of respondents selecting it more than any other issue as either a "significant" or "very significant" priority. However, the urgency around climate change appears to have decreased from last year, when the Copenhagen climate summit was approaching: The proportion of respondents who considered it a "very significant" priority declined from 41 percent in 2009 to 27 percent this year—a drop from first on the list to third.

Social issues advanced in the rankings this year, with workers' rights taking the most notable jump, moving to the top of the list of "very significant" priorities (selected by 32 percent) for companies' CSR/sustainability efforts in the year ahead, followed by human rights (31 percent),

climate change (27 percent), and water quality/availability (19 percent) on the list of “very significant” priorities. Underscoring the increased attention to social and economic questions, workers’ rights and human rights are the only two issue areas among a list of seven where the proportion of respondents who considered it to be a “very significant priority” has remained stable or increased compared to 2009.

### **Drivers of Public Trust, Business Leadership, and Ongoing Success**

Respondents believe that business continues to experience a lack of trust from the public and identified three important actions companies should take to address this gap: “measuring and demonstrating positive social and environmental impacts” (selected by 54 percent of respondents); “increasing the transparency of business practices” (53 percent); and “responding promptly and effectively to accidents, product quality issues, and other incidents” (43 percent).

Respondents were also asked to pick the three areas where companies are demonstrating the most leadership today, and the three actions that will drive ongoing business success. Both questions yielded the same top three responses: “creating innovative products and business models designed for sustainability” was selected most often (by 40 percent for leadership, and by 66 percent for business success); followed by “measuring and demonstrating positive social and environmental impacts” (selected by 39 percent for both); and “responding promptly and effectively to accidents, product quality issues, and other incidents” (35 percent and 39 percent, respectively).

Cramer and Coulter will hold a private briefing for members of the press on the complete survey results during the BSR Conference (Thursday, November 4, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.). To join in person or by phone, contact Amon Rappaport at [arappaport@bsr.org](mailto:arappaport@bsr.org) or +1 510 435 2292.

### **About the Research**

The “BSR/GlobeScan State of Sustainable Business Poll 2010” was conducted from September 29 to October 11, 2010, among a sample of 377 professionals from around the world drawn from 60 percent of BSR member companies and organizations. View the [full report](#) or [fact sheet](#) for more detailed information on the topics above and others including: return on investment, sustainable consumption, which industries are viewed as most responsible, the most significant developments last year and next year, and more.

### **About BSR**

A leader in corporate responsibility since 1992, BSR works with its global network of more than 250 member companies to develop sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. With offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR uses its expertise in the environment, human rights, economic development, and governance and accountability to guide global companies toward creating a just and sustainable world. Visit [www.bsr.org](http://www.bsr.org) for more information.

### **About GlobeScan**

GlobeScan is an international opinion research consultancy. Companies, multilateral institutions, governments, and NGOs trust GlobeScan for its unique expertise in reputation research, sustainability, and issues management. GlobeScan provides global organizations with evidence-based insight and advice to help them build strong brands, manage relations with key stakeholders, and define their strategic positioning. GlobeScan conducts research in over 90 countries, is certified to the ISO 9001:2008 standard for its quality management system, and is a signatory to the UN Global Compact. Established in 1987, GlobeScan is an independent, management-owned company with offices in London, Toronto, and San Francisco. [www.GlobeScan.com](http://www.GlobeScan.com).