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Message to 2009 Annual Summit on China Green Companies

Beijing, April 22-23, 2009

It is with great pleasure that I send greetings to the 2009 Annual Summit on China Green Companies.

Your conference convenes at a critical time. The recent financial crisis reminds us that it is critical for companies to integrate environmental, social and governance issues throughout their operations to restore confidence in markets. Rebuilding trust in markets will be possible when the culture of seeking short-term profit maximization is shifted to the attitude of embracing long-term value creation.

Our globalized marketplace requires a stronger ethical orientation and more comprehensive understanding, assessment and management of risks. Climate change and broader environmental risks addressed in this conference are among the most urgent and significant ones. The UN Global Compact believes that business can play an important role and drive change towards environmental sustainability and social benefits through leadership, innovation and technology. Global cooperation and collective action is crucial.

Deep engagement on corporate responsibility issues, especially in the environmental area, can assist companies in making progress on long-term performance and put them in a stronger position during and after the economic downturn.

I am pleased most of Green award recipients are UN Global Compact participants. This confirms that good performance goes hand in hand with values and responsibility. It also underscores the importance of upholding the fundamental norms of non-discrimination in trade and investment so that business can diffuse clean technology on a global scale.

I look forward to more and more Chinese companies actively participating and deeply engaging in the United Nations Global Compact – helping to demonstrate leadership, foster learning, strengthen cooperation, and enhance the “green” agenda.

I applaud the efforts many Chinese companies are making to advance environmental issues and send my best wishes for a productive meeting.

Georg Kell
Executive Director
United Nations Global Compact