

IN SEARCH OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL ENTERPRISE

The Center for Sustainable Global Enterprise

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As we enter the twenty-first century, global capitalism finds itself at a crossroads. Following the fall of communism in the late 1980s, a decade of economic globalization, privatization, and free trade has produced mixed results: While the wealthy and developed countries have grown richer, the vast majority of nations and people in the world have been bypassed or damaged by this process. Furthermore, the underlying natural systems supporting human economies—forests, fisheries, soils, ecosystems, and climate—have all experienced continuing decline. Antiglobalization demonstrations have made it apparent that if corporate expansion is seen as coming at the expense of the poor and the environment, it will encounter vigorous resistance. And international terrorism—the ultimate expression of antiglobalization—has made it clear that these problems will not remain geographically isolated.

For global business, therefore, it has become increasingly obvious that the historical separation between competitive strategy and social contribution must be eliminated. Rather than treating social and environmental issues as expensive luxuries, companies must fuse social mission with competitive strategy. Indeed, a form of "new capitalism" is emerging where environmental and social performance is embedded in the competitive strategy of the firm. Sustainable global enterprise thus represents a new private sector-based approach to achieving the goals of sustainable development—by creating profitable enterprises that simultaneously raise the quality of life of the world's four billion poor and conserve the ecological integrity of the planet.

Cornell's Center for Sustainable Global Enterprise, based in the Johnson Graduate School of Management and launched in March 2004 through a \$5 million gift from Cornelian Samuel C. Johnson and the Johnson family, set a high priority at this

critical juncture. With Stuart L. Hart holding the Samuel C. Johnson Chair in Sustainable Global Enterprise, established in 2003, as director, Cornell is at the forefront of this applied research frontier. Cornell envisions the center as the world's hub for the generation and dissemination of critical, leading-edge knowledge in this arena. This knowledge concerns how business can achieve unparalleled financial success through the solution of the world's social and environmental problems.

Current research in the center includes a study of corporate ventures that are designed to incubate inherently clean or "sustainable" technology in the underserved markets at the "base of the pyramid"—the four billion poor who have been adversely affected by globalization to date. The research aims to gain a better understanding of how existing large corporations can successfully pioneer radical new technologies and business models—while simultaneously moving us toward a more sustainable world.

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cornell's center for sustainable global enterprise, launched in the johnson graduate school of management through a gift from samuel c. johnson, has a vision of becoming the world's hub for the generation and dissemination of critical, leading-edge knowledge on how business can achieve unparalleled financial success through the solution of the world's social and environmental problems.



Dede Hatch

Stuart Hart, Samuel C. Johnson Professor of Sustainable Global Enterprise

With connections to the vast research resources throughout Cornell University, the center is in a unique position to bring together leading-edge technologies and thinking from across campus—Cornell's Schools of Engineering and other units such as Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture, Biology, Information Technology, Medicine, and Nutritional Sciences—with the sound analytical and entrepreneurial capabilities at the Johnson Graduate School of Management.

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Future research will therefore look to cross-organizational boundaries and build interdisciplinary collaboration. Such cross-fertilization will be crucial if we are to inform the companies of the future how best to navigate the troubled waters ahead.

Stuart L. Hart
Samuel C. Johnson Professor of Sustainable Global Enterprise

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Stuart Hart discusses sustainability as a strategic business choice.

For more information: 
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