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# Editorial

Issue 29 Spring 2008

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EDITING AN INTERNATIONAL PEER-reviewed journal takes time and often much patience, but the outcome is normally the publication of articles that stand up for themselves through their erudition, clarity, intellectual dynamism and appropriateness. This edition is no exception to the lineage we have established at *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* over the last seven years.

The Turning Points for JCC 29 are short, pointed and from two global figures—Sir Nicholas Stern on the economics of climate change and Ban Ki-moon on the science and social effect of climate change.

Nicholas Stern, a former World Bank economist, and his team were commissioned by the UK government to make the link between economics and climate change. They reported in October 2006. One line stands out above all others in the context of the debate over corporate citizenship: ‘Climate change presents a unique challenge for economics: it is the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen.’

For all of us engaged or caught up in the business of business, or the industry of

corporate responsibility, it is us he is talking about. And the conclusions that the report comes to are no less challenging to the theory and practice of corporate citizenship: ‘The economic analysis must therefore be global, deal with long time horizons, have the economics of risk and uncertainty at centre stage, and examine the possibility of major, non-marginal change.’

Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General, launching the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 4th Assessment Report in November 2007, also presented a challenge to humanity: ‘Let us not point fingers or apportion blame. Rather, let us find common ground. Let us recognize that the effects of climate change affect us all. And that they have become so severe and so sweeping that only urgent, global action will do. We are all in this together. We must work together.’

‘The greatest market failure ever seen’ challenges us all ‘to work together’. In particular, there is a need to have an integrated view of global governance that focuses on people, communities and planet. In short, to understand and take

care of people's vulnerabilities whether they be threatened by climate change, by the state or by corporate activity. Stern has done a great service to those who have sought for years to link business and communities, economics with ecology, corporations with human security. Ban Ki-moon's call for us to work together points to the false distinctions that are sometimes made by those who atomise society, dividing one actor from another to set up artificial antagonisms. There are tensions between the state, market actors and civil society but increasingly we are seeing long-standing intellectual models being stood on their head. How do we understand the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) countries' economic development over the last ten years in the tri-sector framework so often advanced by CSR theorists?

*JCC* 29 starts with this categorisation debate and calls for the reader to reach back for *JCC* 27 in which an article by Marc Jones and Matthew Haigh entitled 'The Transnational Corporation and New Corporate Citizenship Theory: A Critical Analysis' discussed Crane and Matten's work on corporate citizenship; that article is answered by Crane and Matten in this issue.

David Birch, a former Editor of *JCC*, calls on us to re-read Aldous Huxley's essays, if not his novels, where he (Huxley) was coruscating about corporations—in 1927. We will shortly be issuing a call for papers on the history of CSR and Birch's paper is a fascinating starting point. Huxley argued then that large multinational corporations can not and do not offer the solace and spiritual comfort offered by religion and yet they now dominate our lives—so no change there 80 years later.

In 'Supply-Side Corruption: Perspectives on a Trillion-Dollar Problem', Cathy Stevulak and Jeffrey Campbell point out that the 'industry of corruption' represents some 2% of world trade which in turn represents 4% per person in terms of income, which, if turned round, would mean something like 3% increased growth per annum for each MNC. So our

current market system has produced climate change and massive corruption which is in turn significantly affecting each and every citizen on the planet, except that, as the authors point out, it affects people in failed states disproportionately, which is partly why they are failed states. Which brings us back to the argument that capital and corporations are often attracted to failed states because it is possible to extract resources and capital more easily than in properly regulated markets.

The business of business on the ground as managed by managers on a day-to-day basis is important for many readers of *JCC*. Two cases from Australia exemplify the complex problems of managing relationships with communities when a stakeholder engagement approach is adopted. Margaret Harley and Jeni Warburton in 'Risks to Business in Social Involvement: An Australian Case Example' argue that there is sometimes not enough understanding of risk in social partnerships; and Robert Rugimbana *et al.* in 'Applying a Consumer Perceptual Measure of CSR: A Regional Australian Perspective' look at banking in rural outback Australia. Both articles point to the relationship between short-term management and longer-term strategic thinking, the former sometimes not relating to or being linked to the latter. How appropriate these articles are in light of the sub-prime banking scandal that is currently gripping the world financial system. What? Link short-term profit with long-term strategy and the public good? Outrageous!

But we are pleased to see that in Bulgaria 'the normative model of CSR has been adopted'—so they'll be OK then. Elena Iankova's article on 'From Corporate Paternalism to CSR in Post-Communist Europe' is fascinating in showing how liberal economic capitalism has been adopted along with the current fashion for add-on CSR. I wonder how Bulgarian and post-Communist corporations are going to adapt to Stern's brave new world.

Finally, what is perhaps the most interesting article in *JCC* 29 comes from

Uwafiokun Idemudia, who writes on 'Conceptualising the CSR and Development Debate: Bridging Existing Analytical Gaps'. His theme is perhaps the core of future work on corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship and concerns the link between CSR and development. Adopting a critical perspective, the author argues that we need to know what it is that we do not know in making a clearer con-

ceptual and practical link between the adoption of CSR practice and the delivery of social and environmental goals. Surely this should now be the heart of the corporate citizenship discourse on a practical level and on a theoretical level? Which leads us back the first article in *JCC* 29 from Crane and Matten on the categorisation of labels within the debate.

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21 November 2007



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