



# THE BHF NEWSLETTER

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THE BUSINESS HUMANITARIAN FORUM ASSOCIATION

HONORARY CO-CHAIRS: GEORGE F. RUSSELL, JR. AND JOHN C. WHITEHEAD

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*Season Greetings*

*From all of us at the BHF*

## Joint Meeting Provides Solutions for Businesses Working in Countries with Human Rights Challenges

The second in a series of meetings jointly hosted by the BHF and the Conference Board Europe (CBE) was held October 23 and 24, chaired by BHF Director John King and moderated by Robin Aram, Director of the CBE's European Council on Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability. Focusing again on the subject of "Company Responsibilities in Countries with Human Rights Challenges," the meeting followed up an earlier event in February (see BHF Newsletter dated April 2008). The novel format of combining case studies presented by companies and direct responses by NGOs was continued, thus providing a fair, animated and much appreciated discussion forum for the numerous participants, which also included representatives from the UN and other international organizations.



THE CONFERENCE BOARD

The meeting also focused on the June 2008 report by Prof. John Ruggie, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Business and Human Rights. Participants, especially private sector representatives, emphasized the need for more specific company guidelines to avoid being charged with complicity in human rights abuses taking place in developing countries where they operate. The Ruggie report provided a consensus-based framework in which this problem can be dealt with. Participants described important and effective approaches to integrate human rights considerations within their company operations and to use due diligence to avoid complicity problems, to include working in partnership with NGOs familiar with the politics of country-based human rights problems.

The meeting's participants agreed that much progress in finding solutions had been made in the eight months since the previous meeting, although much work needed to be done to spread knowledge about dealing with human rights abuses. The CBE and BHF will consider yet another follow-on meeting after the issuance of the next Ruggie report, probably in early 2010.



A Case Study Presentation

The report of the latest BHF-CBE meeting can be downloaded [here](#).

## Planning Underway to Expand Southern African HIV/AIDS Projects

Following the inauguration of the comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention program at the Mahwalala Clinic in Swaziland at the end of 2007, which was carried out jointly with the Swiss and Swazi Red Cross, the BHF is now in advanced discussions with the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) to expand its joint HIV/AIDS programs to neighboring countries in the southern Africa region. The BHF has already begun searching for additional partners – especially from the business community – to develop more such clinics and programs.



Patient at Mahwalala Clinic

A high-level meeting between the BHF and the SRC to sign a joint operational agreement concerning next programs is planned for the coming weeks.

Readers interested in finding out more about this program can order a special DVD entitled “Together We Can” from the BHF Secretariat at [bhinfo@bhforum.org](mailto:bhinfo@bhforum.org).

## BHF Staff News

Project Manager Rob Dotta was promoted in November to be the BHF's Deputy Director. Working with BHF Director John King, Rob will be responsible for the BHF's project development and meeting arrangements. He most recently was responsible for organizing the joint BHF/CBE meeting described above. We congratulate Rob on the promotion and look forward to even greater success in his work.

## New BHF Website Launched

Our new, updated and modernized BHF website was finally launched in mid-November and can be accessed at the same URL as the previous site ([www.bhforum.org](http://www.bhforum.org)). Visitors will find improved graphics and a much simpler presentation of the BHF's work and mission. The documentation section has also been simplified to improve ease of research.

We encourage our readers to visit the new website and to provide us with feedback concerning ([bhinfo@bhforum.org](mailto:bhinfo@bhforum.org)).



its presentational and substantive aspects

## Support For The BHF

To our BHF Friends,

As our lead item indicates, the BHF continues to fulfill its mission to find ways for the business and humanitarian communities to work more productively together for the common good. Our programs and activities throughout the year have emphasized this goal, and I believe we have found new and more effective ways to achieve our objective to build a greater synergy between these two crucial sectors that are so important for a better life for all mankind.

As this year draws to a close, may I ask your continued support for the BHF and its work through a year-end, tax-deductible donation. You may send a check to the following address: BHF, 7-9 Chemin de Balxert, 1219 Chatelaine (GE), Switzerland. You may also make an electronic donation at the following banking coordinates: Bank: UBS SA; Swift Code (BIC): UBSWCHZH80A; IBAN CH09 0024 0240 2448 3360V; for credit to the Business Humanitarian Forum.

Your generosity is greatly needed and will be gratefully acknowledged.

With all best wishes for the holidays and the New Year,

John Maresca  
President of the BHF Association Council