

Media Release

SUSTAINABLE SCHOLARS: WORLD'S FIRST RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT ACADEMIC NETWORK LAUNCHED

(Maastricht, 17 September 2008) The first global network of academics dedicated to the advancement of responsible investment was launched today by the UN-backed Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) Initiative.

The PRI Academic Network aims to narrow the divide between academic research around environmental, social and governance issues within investment, and the growing practice of responsible investment within hundreds of financial institutions across the world. The network was launched at a joint conference with the European Centre for Corporate Engagement (ECCE) at Maastricht University, Netherlands.

James Gifford, Executive Director of the PRI said:

"The last few years have seen a rapid increase interest in responsible investment activities among mainstream investors, but there is still a relatively small body of academic research that looks into these modern approaches and beyond the age-old questions of SRI mutual fund outperformance and share price impacts of shareholder proposals. One of the goals of this network is to provide academics and practitioners with a platform to collaborate more closely around areas such as the impacts of ESG integration, effectiveness of shareholder engagement and the role of investors in addressing ESG issues that may be inhibiting economic growth".

"We will also be working to encourage responsible investment courses within business schools".

ECCE Director Rob Bauer said,

"Serving as a first step in building a truly global academic network around responsible investment, today's conference and launch aims to encourage ongoing dialogue between practitioners and scholars. The conference reinforces ECCE's research model of "Content, Dialogue, Engagement" (CDE) as a proactive strategy for developing a greater understanding of how businesses and financial markets can promote

sustainable development. We hope it will also facilitate cutting-edge research projects in the field. An early confirmation of the event's success was the heavy oversubscription within two weeks of its announcement".

Academics and responsible investment practitioners who wish to know more should visit <http://academic.unpri.org>.

Notes to editor

- **For more information contact Elliot Frankal, PRI communications manager on ++ 44 (0)7989 524780 or elliott.frankal@unpri.org**
- **The Principles for Responsible Investment**
The PRI initiative, convened by UNEP FI and the UN Global Compact, was established as a framework to help investors achieve better long-term investment returns and sustainable markets through better analysis of environmental, social and governance issues in investment process and the exercise of responsible ownership practices. More information at www.unpri.org.