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march 24-26
vancouver convention centre - east
canada



Conference Summary

Background on the GLOBE Series

The GLOBE Series of conferences and tradeshow on the business of the environment are North America's largest international gathering of senior representatives from the public, private and NGO sectors involved in the business of the environment.

Over the past 20 years, GLOBE conferences have assembled leaders from business, government, academia and the research community from around the world to discuss how best to meet the sustainability challenges of the day. Leading edge ideas that first surfaced at GLOBE have become the cornerstones of international action plans and programs that are helping to protect the environment and to make the world a better place in which to live.

GLOBE participants engage in high-level dialogues about pressing environmental issues such as corporate sustainability, energy and climate change, finance, and building better cities. The GLOBE series of events have been used to preview innovative ideas and major multilateral processes for corporate and industry leaders from around the world in advance of major international gatherings such as the Rio and Johannesburg World Summits.

Recognized as one of the world's most influential and prestigious international environment industry events, GLOBE brings people together to discuss current trends, to showcase innovative technology solutions and to address some of the world's biggest environmental problems.

Highlights from the GLOBE 2010 Conference

GLOBE 2010, held at the Vancouver Convention Centre (VCC) from March 24th to 26th, 2010, was the eleventh conference in the GLOBE Series since the event's inception in 1990. GLOBE 2010 attracted approximately 10,000 participants from more than 50 countries and a total of nearly 1,900 conference delegates.

Opening Plenary

In the Opening Plenary, moderated by Dr. John Wiebe, President and CEO of the GLOBE Foundation, His Worship Gregor Robertson, Mayor for the City of Vancouver, welcomed a packed ballroom of close to 1,400 GLOBE 2010 delegates to Vancouver. After hearing about Vancouver's goal of becoming the "Greenest City in the World by 2020", delegates were introduced to the CEO of Masdar Power, Frank Wouters, who spoke about the massive opportunities coming out of Abu Dhabi's Masdar Initiative, where millions of dollars are available to some of the North American clean tech companies in attendance at GLOBE 2010. This was followed by a presentation by James Suci, President of Global Sales and Marketing at GE Energy, on the role that clean tech and renewable energy technologies are playing in creating a more sustainable future and in accelerating the transition to a low carbon economy around the world.

Conference Themes and Sessions

The first round of conference sessions began following the Opening Plenary and were based around seven themes: (1) Corporate Sustainability, (2) Climate Change and Carbon Management, (3) Financing the Low Carbon Economy, (4) the Future of Energy, (5) Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Development, (6) Clean Technology, and (7) the Future of Automobiles. These seven themes, which comprised a total of 45 individual sessions and 186 speakers and moderators, are described in detail below.

(1) Corporate Sustainability

This recurring and popular theme comprised eight sessions in 2010, including two that looked at the challenges faced by governments and corporations in the face of an increasingly limited resource around the world – water.

A session, entitled “Wiring Supply Chains for Environmental Value”, looked at current initiatives to green the supply chain and how this shift is affecting the bottom lines for companies around the globe. The session explored how companies are monitoring environmental information, how they are finding ways to evaluate the products and services they procure, and how they are working proactively with their suppliers to increase cost and energy efficiencies.

Another session, developed in cooperation with Tomorrow’s Company from the UK, looked at how companies are developing a business case around employee engagement. Entitled “The Human Factor: Capitalizing on Talent, Achieving Sustainability and Improving the Bottom Line”, this session was made up of a panel of business leaders who work to inspire and engage their employees in order to realize the full potential of their workforce. Human Resource managers also discussed how jobs are being created to fulfill sustainability-related mandates and how companies in turn are building sustainable growth through the engagement and talent of their employees.

Sponsored by the Mining Association of Canada, the session entitled “Sustainability and the Natural Resource Sector: How to Acquire and Maintain Your Social License to Operate” looked at how companies that depend on Canada's natural resources are working to instil sustainability into their operations for the benefits of their companies, employees, communities and the environment upon which they depend.

Panellists in the “Sustainability Payoff” session explored how business executives are measuring the impact of corporate responsibility initiatives on their bottom lines. The session featured speakers from the energy, financial, manufacturing and resource sectors.

Also new to GLOBE 2010 was a “Spotlight on Retail” that examined initiatives in the retail industry toward sustainability. The first session, entitled “CEO Dialogue: The Current Business Case for Retail Sustainability”, included David Cheesewright, President and CEO of Walmart Canada, and Jeffrey Hollender, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman of Seventh Generation,

who discussed how their companies are adopting a wide range of efficiencies in their operations – such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and de-carbonizing processes.

The second retail session, entitled “The Role of Retail in a Sustainable Future”, took a forward-look at the next stage of sustainable retail with panellists examining emerging opportunities that are shaping consumer behaviour and values, changing processes and influencing suppliers. Speakers also discussed how the industry as a whole can affect positive consumption patterns and how retail will need to adapt to increased demands for lower societal consumption.

New to the GLOBE Series in 2010, the two sessions on water were of particular interest. Sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada, delegates that attended the session entitled “Water Efficiency: Managing a Valuable Resource” heard from industry experts in the chemical, environmental engineering and energy sectors on how they have successfully managed their operations for increased efficiency in the use and reuse of water.

A second session on water entitled “Access to Water: Challenges and Opportunities”, sponsored by the Australian Trade Commission, examined how severe drought conditions and contaminated waterways are posing growing environmental and economic risks in many regions of the world. Panellists from both the public and private sectors coming from some of the countries that are the most affected by water shortages – Australia, Israel and the United States – discussed how they are dealing with these challenges and are taking advantage of some of the opportunities that exist for businesses in providing water technology, infrastructure and information-based solutions.

(2) Climate Change and Carbon Management

This theme explored relevant and timely issues with seven sessions on topics that included climate change policy, the regulated and voluntary carbon markets, carbon capture and storage (CCS), low carbon shipping and natural gas transportation.

Following the UN Climate Change Conference in Denmark, the session entitled “Now What? Dialogue on Implications for Business from COP15” explored how business leaders are pushing forward with short- and long-range planning decisions, despite a lack of concrete outcomes from Copenhagen Conference. Discussions by panellists from the resource, manufacturing and energy sectors debated with other sustainability experts on how businesses are assessing the ongoing climate change policy efforts at the international, national and regional levels and factoring these assessments into their planning.

The session entitled “Reducing Carbon Emissions: High-quality Standards for Success”, developed in cooperation with ECO Canada, looked at how businesses worldwide are adopting standards to help them in their efforts to reduce their carbon footprints. The session discussed the roles of governments, accreditation and verification bodies, and registries in the process to ensure that emissions reduction projects deliver real results. A specific focus in this session was on the ISO 14064 standard.

From a regulated carbon market perspective, a session sponsored by the Province of British Columbia entitled “Update on North American Carbon Trading Initiatives” explored current and proposed regional carbon trading regimes in both Canada and the US. Cross-border trading of allowances and offsets were discussed. The mechanics behind how the various schemes might operate in an integrated North American economy were analyzed, as well as the implications and opportunities for businesses that operate in these jurisdictions.

The session “Voluntary Carbon Markets: Opportunities and Risks” looked at the growth of the voluntary offset market due to purchases of offsets by companies and institutions who are working towards “carbon neutrality”. Panellists also discussed the expectations for businesses from the need for increased accountability and standardization in the voluntary market.

Two sessions explored the emerging area of CCS policy and technology development. Sponsored by the British Consulate-General in Vancouver, six Canadian and UK-based speakers in the session entitled “Innovative Policies for Effective Carbon Capture & Storage” discussed the necessary policy and regulatory framework needed to demonstrate CCS on a commercial scale. The second session focused more on the technology side. Entitled “Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) & Clean Coal Technologies: Update on Innovation”, panellists from Australia, Canada and the US discussed their current CCS and clean coal projects and the real world testing of the technologies. A specific focus for speakers was on how these technologies could set the stage for the development of emission-free fossil fuel power plants on a global scale.

The final two sessions took a look at emerging transportation related areas including low carbon shipping and the transition toward lower emission natural gas trucking fleets. Sponsored by ecoFREIGHT Canada, the session entitled “Low Carbon Shipping” examined initiatives and options for shippers to select the best environmentally-friendly transport options for their goods, as well as profiled companies who are on the leading edge in terms of their environmental performance. Westport Innovations sponsored a session entitled “Driving the Clean Transportation Economy: Natural Gas at the Intersection of Emissions, Economics and Energy”. This panel discussed the economic opportunities and emission reduction benefits derived from the construction of fuelling infrastructure and deployment of natural gas-powered, heavy-duty vehicles for transportation.

(3) Financing the Low Carbon Economy

GLOBE’s Finance Theme in 2010 included two sessions. Entitled “Brave New World: Finance and Investment in a Low Carbon Economy”, the first session was made up of a panel of investment sector heavy-hitters and was moderated by Paul Clements-Hunt, the Head of the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI). Speakers discussed how the financial, investment and capital market landscapes would operate if they were truly wired to drive a global low carbon economy. Panellists also explored the emerging financial and investment initiatives that are helping to shape the low carbon economy.

The second session looked at how sustainability is incorporated into the real estate and property development markets. Speakers in “Making Green Pay in the Real World” – who included investors, developers, occupiers and valuers – shared their experiences to date and discussed how their sustainability initiatives are helping to yield a profit and build better value.

(4) The Future of Energy

Covering topics that ranged from renewable energy, to bioenergy, to smart grid transmission, to ocean energy, a featured highlight of the six Future of Energy themed sessions was a Dialogue with four of North America’s biggest energy company Chief Executives.

Sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Partnership, panellists from Canada, Australia and the US in the session “Asia-Pacific Partnership: Promoting the Low Carbon Economy” discussed their plans to expand investment and trade in cleaner technologies and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by adopting transformational energy technologies.

Senior executives of clean energy and utility companies in the “Renewable Power: Key Drivers for Profit” session discussed the current state of the renewable energy industry and identified opportunities and challenges to be met over the coming decade. Specific areas included solar and solar thermal, wind and geothermal.

In the session entitled “Bioenergy: Fueling the Development of a Low Carbon Economy”, sponsored by the BC Bioenergy Network, delegates learned about how BC and other jurisdictions are capitalizing on their bioenergy assets, including hearing from experts in biomass gasification, community district heating and the wood pellet industry from both North America and Europe.

Sponsored by Siemens Canada, speakers in “The Next Spike: Building the Smart Grid” discussed some of the biggest opportunities for smart grid development and discussed how power utilities, transmission companies and infrastructure developers are rapidly increasing the intelligence of their service offerings.

Coordinated by Canada’s Ocean Renewable Energy Group, Dalhousie University, and UK leaders from the University of Plymouth, the “Accelerating of the International Commercialization of Ocean Energy” forum explored international opportunities in the development of renewable ocean energy and helped participants understand the potential of this clean energy opportunity. The roundtable discussion involved leaders in the UK’s WaveHub and Nova Scotia’s Minas Passage tidal development and included BC’s Minister for Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources.

Finally, the “CEO Dialogue: The Future of Energy” session, moderated by Michael Phelps, Chairman of Dornoch Capital Inc. and of The GLOBE Foundation, explored options for the future global energy mix, including the development and deployment of natural gas, alternative fuels, renewable energy solutions and other technological innovations such as carbon capture and storage. Chief Executives included Steve Williams, COO of Suncor Energy; Clarence Cazalot Jr., President and CEO of Marathon Oil; Greg Ebel, President and CEO of Spectra Energy; and Steve Snyder, President and CEO of TransAlta.

(5) Sustainable Urban Infrastructure Development

This theme explored a range of topics related to developing lower carbon cities, and included aspects of city planning, green building and infrastructure development, renewable power implementation, conservation initiatives and technology integration for “smarter” energy consumption. A featured Dialogue session included leaders from municipal government, architecture and planning, and technology who discussed the interconnected responsibilities required for building more sustainable cities.

Panellists in the session entitled “Eco Communities: Designing a Sustainable Future” explored how green building principles, design practices and policies are transforming every aspect of the planning and construction of buildings and communities. Speakers from Canada, the US and the Netherlands discussed sustainable planning practices, integrated developments and the design of resource-efficient, high-performance buildings.

Speakers in the session entitled “Green Infrastructure: Sustainability at Work”, developed in cooperation with ReNew Canada, looked at how municipal infrastructure renewal efforts are being used to accelerate sustainability and at the types of projects that are most effective for long-term asset management and community success.

In “Energizing Our Cities”, municipal leaders and corporate executives discussed the opportunities for using and managing alternative and renewable energy options to power their cities and towns – including how corporate solar roof projects are helping to deliver clean power in Toronto.

The session entitled “Smart Cities: Connections for the Future” explored how cities are becoming “smarter” as new data and energy management systems are being designed, tested and implemented. Speakers from Canada and Germany discussed new types of software and cutting-edge technologies that have been installed in urban centres, as well as the challenges for plug-in vehicles and the regulations that have helped drive the smart grid “revolution”.

Finally, the “Future of Cities Dialogue”, developed with the support of the Vancouver Economic Development Commission, explored the process tools and technologies that are helping cities function better, improve the quality of life for their citizens and reduce their environmental impact – with a focus on what cities may look like in the future. Moderated by Mike Harcourt, Chairman of Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow, the session included Gregor Robertson, Mayor of the City of Vancouver, Peter Busby, Managing Director of Busby Perkins + Will, and Roland Aurich, President and CEO of Siemens Canada.

(6) Clean Technology

As clean technology innovation and investment reach all time highs, GLOBE 2010 developed a special theme to explore some of the most relevant topics. Developed in cooperation with The Cleantech Group, the sessions explored clean tech financing, clean tech job creation, and the corporate integration of clean technologies.

Panellists in “New Approaches for Clean Technology Funding” discussed developing worldwide markets, regulatory structures and buyer profiles, as well as the need for greater collaboration across asset classes. New trends and innovations in clean technology funding were analyzed, with a specific focus on venture capital and private equity.

A second session, entitled “Competitiveness + Jobs: The Role of Clean Technology in Near-Term Stimulus and Long-Term Economic Development” analyzed the pros and cons of different economic development models, including “cleantech clusters”, as well as the metrics to evaluate their individual levels of success. The session also looked at how the recent economic crisis is being used to re-invent business models based on clean tech innovation and how the growing clean tech industry is creating new jobs across the globe.

Conference delegates in the session entitled “Corporate Integration: Clean Technology as a Source of Innovation” learned how leading companies in resource-based industries are using clean technology to innovate across product lifecycles and are developing operations that are both more efficient and sustainable. Panellists discussed the importance of re-inventing business models that can unleash greater value and long-term cost savings for companies.

(7) The Future of Automobiles

The four sessions in this theme focused specifically on the electric vehicle market and related infrastructure.

Panellists in the session entitled “The Green Car Revolution: Electric Cars and Plug-in Hybrids” presented the latest data on current public perception of electric and plug-in hybrid cars, including battery longevity, cost and social acceptance.

The session entitled “How Green Are Plug-in Cars? Moving Emissions Upstream?” discussed the latest research from universities, NGOs and utility companies, debating whether plug-in cars should be considered a true long-term solution to greenhouse gas emissions, or whether the emissions are simply being moved upstream to where the power is produced.

An interesting session entitled “Converting Gas Guzzlers to Fuel Sippers: Plug-in Aftermarket Conversions” looked at the technology and market challenges of converting gas-powered cars to run on electricity.

In terms of infrastructure, speakers in the “Plug-in Car Recharging Infrastructure: Case Studies for Municipalities” session presented case studies to help city and other municipal managers devise action plans for installing recharging infrastructure. They also defined some of the challenges and helped to identify the most effective strategies for building recharging infrastructure into communities.

Closing Town Hall

Entitled “Moving the Green Economy Forward”, the closing Town Hall, attended by approximately 900 delegates, explored some of the biggest opportunities and challenges that lie ahead and the implementation of the necessary changes to achieve success.

Moderated by Christopher Henderson, President of Lumos Energy, panellists discussed how the global transition to a green economy - not only due to the need to manage greenhouse gas emissions, but also to maximize efficient use of key resources such as water and fossil fuels, protect against rising prices for basic commodities, and create new job opportunities.

The Town Hall included David Runnalls, President and CEO for the International Institute for Sustainable Development; Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, Director at Interface; Tony Manwaring, Chief Executive of Tomorrow's Company; Nicholas Parker, Executive Chairman of The Cleantech Group; and the Honourable John Yap, the BC Minister of State for Climate Action.

The overall message was that until the “green economy” cannot be separated from the economy as a whole, there is work to be done. The green economy must be the only economy – an economy that promotes sustainable growth and the efficient use of energy and resources.