



Global Headquarters  
331 South Patrick Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314 USA  
1-703-647-4900  
Fax: 1-703-647-4901  
www.sla.org

**TO:** SLA Board of Directors

**FROM:** Janice Lachance, CEO, SLA

**DATE:** 26 November 2008

**RE:** Proposed Adoption of The Global Principles for Socially Responsible Associations & Nonprofits

**Recommendation:** That the Board of Directors adopt The Global Principles for Socially Responsible Associations & Nonprofits.

The groundbreaking Global Summit for Social Responsibility, supported in part by an educational grant from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, convened April 30-May 2, 2008, by ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership and engaging 800-plus attendees worldwide, moved us to “discover, dream, design, and define” our destiny as a professional sector with a unique role to play in the global problem-solving arena.

A key goal emerging from the summit was to generate a voluntary set of “Global Principles for Associations in Social Responsibility.” A project team of stakeholders who represent a diverse range of professional, trade, and cause-related organizations and business partners outlined the foundation for these principles which is now ready for adopting by the wider association community—namely, you!

The principles align with universally accepted principles contained in the United Nation’s Global Compact (<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>) regarding positive progress and specifically defined expectations in areas such as human rights, labor, education, poverty, health, the environment, and anti-corruption.

As United Nations Global Compact executive director, Georg Kell said at the online global summit Associations and Social Responsibility: Carrying the Movement Forward, *“The principles are not a code of conduct. They are meant to inspire activities and actions and as such constitute an ethical platform against which positive organizational change can and should occur. I am extremely delighted because the principles for responsible associations are a critical missing piece in our increasingly global puzzle. Associations are uniquely positioned to support and drive responsible organizational management change in organizations. Associations have the platforms, tools, means and reach to provide for positive change.”*

## Global Principles

### 1: Preamble

**1.1** The association community as defined throughout these Global Principles includes individual trade associations, professional societies, philanthropic organizations, other not-for-profit entities, business partners and affiliates who provide services to the association community.

**1.2** For purposes outlined in these Global Principles, the term “social responsibility” is defined as a commitment to leveraging the power of the association community to create business practices that make a positive social, economic, and environmental impact while creating healthier organizations.

**1.3** The members of the association community enrolled upon this document commit to embrace, advocate, support and enact, within their individual spheres of influence, the following set of core values that promote socially responsible action as portrayed in global initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact (<http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>).

**1.4** In adopting these Global Principles, the association community recognizes the diversity of organizations, organizational interests and capacities represented, and respects the independence of each organization to pursue these principles in the manner best suited to their organizational missions and constituencies.

## **2: Responsible Advocacy**

**2.1:** The association community will represent and advocate these principles, on behalf of their particular constituencies, in a manner consistent with the general public good.

**2.2:** The association community and its members will work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## **3: Environmental and Economic Sustainability**

**3.1:** The association community and its members will encourage the development and implementation of environmentally responsible technologies and practices.

**3.1.1** The Implementation of environmentally responsible technologies and practice will include the environmentally responsible conduct of association meetings and conventions.

**3.2:** The association community will work within the trades and professions it represents to promote environmentally and economically sustainable conduct of business and industry.

**3.3:** The association community will engage and interact with leaders of industry in their fields to extend our knowledge of the challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

**3.4:** The association community will contribute to economic sustainability, including the economic success of the employees, customers, communities and other stakeholders within the trades or professions represented.

**3.4.1:** This will include pursuing equitable global partnerships for development.

## **4: Public Protection**

### **4.1: Ethics**

**4.1.1:** Associations will conduct themselves in accordance with ethical standards and practices and encourage the development and implementation of the ethical standards within the industries and professions they represent.

### **4.2: Self Regulation**

**4.2.1:** The association community will protect the safety, health and other interests of those who rely upon the products and services provided by their members through responsible, transparent and effective programs of certification and/or standards setting.

### **4.3: Human Rights**

**4.3.1:** The association community and its members will support, advocate and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

**4.3.2:** The association community, in particular, will support and advocate the values of freedom of association, collective activity, and freedom of speech.

### **5: Diversity**

**5.1:** The association community, in principle and in practice, will value and seek diverse and inclusive participation within their organizations and within the trades and professions represented.

**5.2:** The association community will promote involvement and expanded access to opportunity, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, political affiliation, marital/partnership status, appearance, socio-economic status, geographic location or professional level.

### **6: Philanthropy/Community Service**

**6.1:** The association community will foster an open relationship with the communities in which they operate, in a manner that is sensitive to the community's culture and needs;

**6.2:** The association community will develop new knowledge and/or track trends to inform their communities and those they serve about issues related to social responsibility practices.

**6.3:** The association community will seek opportunities to give back to the community in whatever manner best suits their particular circumstances and desires of said community.

### **7: Leadership**

**7.1:** The association community will promote and develop socially responsible leaders within their organizations and within the trades and professions they represent.

**7.2:** The association community understands that its own organizational practices should serve as an example of the values and attitudes aspired to in this statement of principles.

**7.2.1:** The association community will incorporate social responsibility principles within planning, policy and other decision-making processes.

**7.2.2:** The association community will promote the acceptance and implementation of social responsibility principles within the industries and professions they represent.

**7.2.3:** The association community will work cooperatively with its members to enhance the effective actualization of these principles.

**7.2.4:** Members of the association community will report on their individual activities and progress toward implementing these principles.

*The Global Principles for Socially Responsible Associations & Nonprofits are supported in part by an educational grant from the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation and the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau.*