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## **CEOs PUSH AHEAD WITH GLOBAL STANDARDS**

BANGKOK, Thailand, October 30, 2001 – Chief executives of four of the world's leading consumer goods companies announced today a succession plan for the accelerated management of the Global Commerce Initiative ("GCI"), the world's largest advisory group for the development of voluntary electronic transaction standards for business.

Celebrating the completion of their two years as founding co-chairmen of GCI, Luc Vandeveld, chairman and CEO of Marks & Spencer plc, and Christian Koffmann, worldwide chairman of Johnson & Johnson, Consumer and Personal Care Group, announced at a worldwide board meeting in Bangkok the appointment of two of industry's most influential CEOs to succeed them.

Effective today, Cees van der Hoeven, CEO of Royal Ahold, and Antony Burgmans, chairman of Unilever, will take over as co-chairmen of an increasingly influential initiative representing the interests of some 850,000 companies large and small, and spanning the entire supply chain for consumer goods.

Commenting on the first two years of GCI's existence, Luc Vandevelde pointed to the accelerated pace of change in the conduct of business transactions across continents: "When we first came together in Paris in 1999 we had an instinctive notion of the need for global standards in the way we conduct our business. Today, with the rapid emergence of Internet Exchanges and improved information technology, the pressure on all of us to develop a common language of business is more intense and more immediate than we could ever have imagined."

Christian Koffmann looked back on the beginnings of GCI as a defining period for the consumer goods business with far-reaching consequences for industry: "GCI has demonstrated that a committed commercial user group can work effectively with existing standards bodies to help all companies, irrespective of size, with an extraordinary fund of expertise in the modelling of business processes. We are emerging with a usable set of powerful strategic tools accessible to industry across the world. Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past: we hope the days of designing different electrical plugs for different countries are over."

The new co-chairmen acknowledged the foundations laid by hundreds of managers working collaboratively across functions and continents to develop practical recommendations for consolidation and implementation by the standards bodies. "We've seen GCI work with EAN International and UCC to build infrastructure to facilitate better business transactions," said Cees van der Hoeven. "What we are now doing is translating those foundations into commercial and consumer realities. We are almost at a point where we can begin to implement real business processes for the worldwide traceability of products and the eventual elimination of out-of-stocks and system inefficiencies. This should benefit all consumers around the world."

Antony Burgmans sees the work of GCI as a broad-based basket of practices capable of serving the consumer better at lower cost: “Through the implementation of global standards we can integrate retailer and manufacturer processes and systems to ensure consumers optimal availability of our products, when they want them, where they want them and how they want them delivered. Standards and underlying business processes are matters of core strategy and deserve the attention of chief executives everywhere.”

Founded in October 1999, the Global Commerce Initiative is the result of joint industry efforts in North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia where, since the early-nineties, working collaborations have been developing between stakeholders of all sizes across the complex supply chain for consumer goods. Made possible by some of the world’s best-known companies, they include the Efficient Consumer Response (ECR) movements in Europe, North and South America and Asia, together with the Voluntary Interindustry Commerce Standards Association (VICS) in North America, EAN International and UCC, CIES – The Food Business Forum, the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), AIM – the European Brands Association, and the Grocery Manufacturers of America (GMA).

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## ***Background***

### **ASSOCIATIONS SUPPORTING THE GLOBAL COMMERCE INITIATIVE**

#### **Global Standards Organisations:**

- EAN International is the worldwide leader in identification and e-commerce. It manages and provides standards for the unique and non-ambiguous identification and communication of products, transport units, assets and locations. The EAN•UCC system offers multi-sector solutions to improve business efficiency and productivity. EAN International has representatives in 95 countries.
- UCC, Uniform Code Council, Inc., a non-profit standards organisation, administers the Universal Product Code (U.P.C.) and other integrated business tools to optimise supply chain management for over 251,000 member companies doing business in 23 major industries. The UCC functions as a primary resource for business and industry, developing multi-industry worldwide standards for identification codes data carriers, and electronic commerce.

EAN and UCC co-manage the EAN•UCC system – the global language of business. The EAN•UCC System is used by one million user companies world-wide.

#### **Industry and Trade organisations:**

- AIM, the European brands association, represents the vast majority of European manufacturers of branded fast-moving consumer goods through its network of 19 national associations and 50 corporate members, representing 1,600 companies of all sizes.
- CIES -- The Food Business Forum -- is a unique, global food business network strategically placed at the interface between retailers and suppliers. Membership consists of 250 major food retailing companies from 48 countries and an equal number of their suppliers worldwide.
- ECR is an international collaborative supply chain movement devoted to “fulfilling consumer wishes better, faster and at less cost”. Beginning in North America in 1992 and in Europe the following year, ECR practices now extend across the world.
- FMI, the Food Marketing Institute, is a non-profit association conducting programs in research, education, industry relations and public affairs on behalf of food retailers, wholesalers and their customers in the United States and around the world.

- GMA, Grocery Manufacturers of America, is the world's largest association of food, beverage and consumer product companies. GMA applies legal, scientific, and political expertise from its member companies to vital food, nutrition and public policy issues affecting the industry. The association also leads efforts to increase productivity, efficiency and growth in the CPG industry.
- VICS, Voluntary Interindustry Commerce Standards, is a global organisation focused on the improvement of the flow of product and information throughout the entire supply chain in the retail industry.

## **Background**

### **CORPORATE MEMBERS OF THE GLOBAL COMMERCE INITIATIVE BOARD**

#### **Retailers**

AUCHAN  
CARREFOUR  
CASINO  
D & S  
DELHAIZE GROUP  
FEDERATED MERCHANDISING GROUP  
THE HOME DEPOT  
KINGFISHER  
MARKS & SPENCER  
METRO  
NTUC FAIRPRICE  
PICK'N PAY  
ROYAL AHOLD  
SEARS ROEBUCK  
TARGET CORPORATION/ AMC  
TESCO  
WAL\*MART  
WEGMAN FOOD MARKETS

#### **Manufacturers**

ALPINA  
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO  
THE COCA-COLA COMPANY  
DANONE GROUP  
GEORGIA-PACIFIC CORPORATION  
GILLETTE  
HENKEL  
JOHNSON & JOHNSON  
KAO CORPORATION  
KODAK  
KRAFT FOODS  
L'OREAL  
MARS  
NESTLE S.A.  
PHILIPS  
PROCTER & GAMBLE  
RALPH LAUREN  
SARA LEE/DE  
UNILEVER