

## Bertrand Collomb

**B**ertrand Collomb is Chair and CEO of Lafarge as well as Chair of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

A graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique and the Ecole des Mines in Paris, he also holds a French law degree and a PhD in Management (University of Texas).

From 1966 to 1975, he worked with the French government in various positions. He also founded the Center for Management Research at the Ecole Polytechnique.

He joined Lafarge in 1975. After several positions in various areas of the group, including CEO of Lafarge Corporation, the North American arm of the group (1985-1988), he was appointed chair and CEO of Lafarge in August 1989.

Bertrand Collomb is chair of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), vice-chair of the Global Business Coalition against HIV/AIDS, and Chair of IFRI (French Institute of International Relations). He is on the Board of Total, ATCO and Vivendi Universal. He is member of the Supervisory Board of Allianz and of the Unilever Advisory Board, and a trustee of the International Accounting Standards Foundation (IASB). Bertrand Collomb is a member of the European Round Table of Industrialists, as well as chair of Association Française des Entreprises Privées (AFEP). He is a member of the "Institut de France" (Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques).



**“ISO standards not only help to manage quality but also to manage reputation.”**

*ISO Focus:* How would you summarize the mission of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development?

**Bertrand Collomb:** The WBCSD has come to exemplify the business case for sustainable development. We are a unique organization in terms of the issues we address and the broad cross-section of our members. Being solution-driven and strong on imple-

mentation, we focus on issues where business can truly make a difference. In short, I feel the WBCSD goes beyond rhetoric, providing what I call a “reality test case”.

*ISO Focus:* What set of goals would you like to accomplish in your term as Chair of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development?

**Bertrand Collomb:** The WBCSD has been instrumental in showing that business is part of the solution, so we need to continue to argue the case by demonstrating tangible results. I hope more companies will realize there is a business case for sustainable development, and join us in our efforts.

I also hope that as a result of our contribution, policy-makers will be quicker to invite business to the table, that the financial community will be less skeptical of our endeavours toward sustainability and the media will understand this is not “green-wash”.

Overall, I want us to be more visible, and recognized as a progressive, yet forceful, organization making a difference.

*ISO Focus:* An increasing share of a company’s market capitalization is no longer based on fixed assets, but on non-tangibles such as reputation, brand management, ability to act and respond to stakeholder concerns. What role are ISO standards playing in helping businesses deal with this transition?

**Bertrand Collomb:** Clearly the nature of business assets has changed dra-

## About the WBCSD

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) is a coalition of 170 international companies united by a shared commitment to sustainable development via the **three pillars** of *economic growth, ecological balance and social progress*.

Our members are drawn from more than 35 countries and 20 major industrial sectors. We also benefit from a global network of 50 national and regional business councils and partner organizations involving some 1000 business leaders.

### *Our mission*

To provide business leadership as a catalyst for change toward sustainable development, and to promote the role of eco-efficiency, innovation and corporate social responsibility.

### *Our aims*

Our objectives and strategic directions, based on this dedication, include:

#### **Business leadership**

to be the leading business advocate on issues connected with sustainable development;

#### **Policy development**

to participate in policy development in order to create a framework that allows business to contribute effectively to sustainable development;

#### **Best practice**

to demonstrate business progress in environmental and resource management and corporate social responsibility and to share leading-edge practices among our members;

#### **Global outreach**

to contribute to a sustainable future for developing nations and nations in transition.



matically in the past 25 years, shifting the focus of the corporate sustainability debate from environmental issues typically industrial production impacts to social and development issues. ISO has kept pace with this shift, expanding beyond the product and process standards set forth in the ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 series to begin considering social responsibility management.

ISO standards not only help to manage quality but also to manage reputation, for instance by providing tools to scrutinize supply chains. This is key in our globalized and transparent world where reputation has become a central element in managing a corporation.



**ISO Focus:** *Corporate social responsibility has moved from the fringe to become a mainstream business issue. How do you think acting responsibly positively affects the bottom line of companies?*

**Bertrand Collomb:** As CEO of Lafarge, we agree that CSR has moved into the mainstream – beyond a simple equation of profitability plus compliance plus philanthropy towards better understanding the communities in which our company operates. Increasingly, we find ourselves dealing with a wide spectrum of issues, including greater accountability, human rights, corporate governance codes, workplace ethics, stakeholder consultation, and sustainability strategies. More specifically, acting responsibly affects our bottom line in three ways.

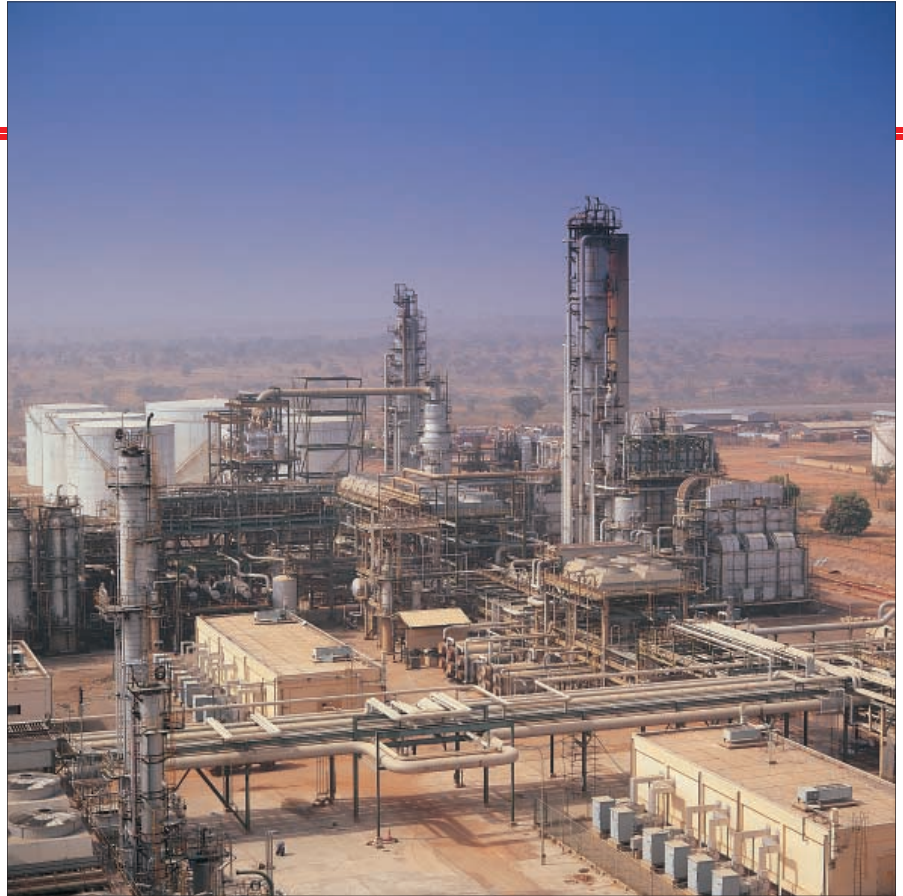


## Guest View

**First**, it impacts our brand value and reputation – by making us the supplier and customer of choice in a highly competitive business. **Second**, it supports our efforts to build our human capital – by enabling us to develop competence and better manage our knowledge and innovation. **Third**, it helps us to generate revenues in large and as yet undeveloped markets – thus maintaining our competitive advantage.

**ISO Focus:** *What would you like to see coming out of ISO's Conference on (Corporate) Social Responsibility?*

ISO's June conference is one step along the way to what will be an important contribution to the field of social responsibility performance. More significant however is the work of the ISO SR advisory group and the



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competence of those involved in the decision-making process to ensure that there is an alignment between skills and what it will take to get the job done.

Finally, it is essential that ISO builds on the numerous quality tools that already exist for managing social responsibility, and does not create new ones. Then, we will be able to see how they can be improved whilst ensuring integration and complementarity. If these principles are maintained, the chances for up-take and success within the private sector will be greater. ■

subsequent recommendations that will largely be the focus of discussion in Stockholm. I'd like to take this opportunity to elaborate on a few of these recommendations and share what we would like to see coming out of the overall process.

First, the process will only be credible if the participation and consultation is transparent and inclusive.

In particular, ISO needs to ensure that developing country perspectives as well as the voice of the practitioner, i.e. business and industry, are thoroughly included.

Second, the issues included in the social responsibility agenda are unique and distinct from those addressed by ISO in the past. As such, there is a need to assess the