

**17<sup>th</sup> Annual CSR Conference**  
**Benaki Pireos Museum, Athens**  
**Thursday, November 7, 2019**

Καλημέρα σας. Nikos, Elias, Pakis, thank you for inviting the Embassy to speak at this year's annual Corporate Social Responsibility Conference. This gathering of preeminent corporations in Greece is one of the most important in the field, and I'm glad to see so many business leaders and civil society partners interested in building CSR awareness and developing more meaningful CSR practices.

I think it's fitting that we kicked off the conference with a video about the spirit of Woodstock.

As businesses begin to accept broader social responsibilities, Woodstock's trailblazing vision of countries and generations uniting to address the global challenges of climate change, poverty, and inequality has become more relevant than ever.

To address these challenges, the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals have provided a common language for sustainability which a growing number of companies are incorporating into their business models. The UN's ambitious targets for 2030 require meaningful, substantive cooperation among businesses, governments, and civil society.

We must stay focused on the "big picture," working together to turn our collective challenges into opportunities for growth.

American companies lead the world in terms of sustainable, purpose-driven business practices. In August, Business Roundtable, the influential

thinktank of CEOs from the largest and most influential U.S. companies, issued a new Statement on the Purpose of a Corporation signed by 181 CEOs who committed to lead their companies for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Specifically, these CEOs promised to deliver value to customers, invest in employees, deal fairly and ethically with suppliers, support the communities in which they work, protect the environment, and generate long-term value for shareholders.

And last week, Secretary of State Pompeo celebrated the honorees of the 2019 Secretary's Award for Corporate Excellence as "ambassadors for the American way... represent[ing] our free market values by creating good jobs in the United States and around the world, investing sustainably, operating transparently, and offering the highest quality products and services in the world."

So as Greece exits a painful ten-year period and moves towards a new social and economic reality, the time is ripe for Greek companies to embrace a new, sustainable vision. This globally recognized recipe for success will advance the Greek economy, develop Greek society, and protect Greece's rich natural resources.

This new vision acknowledges that business opportunities and investments are intrinsically linked to efforts to provide training and job prospects for young people. Investments and future profits are linked to improved social conditions and safeguarding the environment for future generations.

There's growing compatibility between a purpose-driven business model and the goals of governments, civil society, and intergovernmental organizations. We are very proud of the American companies in Greece that have showcased their commitment to strong corporate responsibility and civil society programs. These companies demonstrate that the benefits of our bilateral trade and investment relationship go far beyond economic gains.

In the words of Secretary Pompeo, these companies “serve as a powerful example of the character of our nation, for how to do business while doing good.”

Ευχαριστώ πολύ.