

Dear GRI Members,

Like many of you I have been enormously impacted by the events that have unfolded over the past few weeks and the ensuing protests that have us reflecting on how we might have contributed to the current state, how we might have been more proactive, and how we might have been more sensitive to the plight of others.

I would hope that we now turn our minds to how as leaders and as influencers we can actually effect real change, that is foundational, permanent and sustainable – we, the membership of GRI, have the power to do so. As humans we are all feeling the pain of what we are witnessing but are we willing to actually step up and effect real change.

We have struggled for years to address gender equality, with limited success. It is fair to say that there has been progress, but if equality was the goal, we are far from being in a position to declare success. And, now we must address the subject of racial diversity.

We do know though that as more women have joined Boards and taken on leadership roles the discussion of gender has become more prominent and more women see what is possible to aspire to. This will be needed for the black community and other disadvantaged communities to advance.

Having said that, we now have an added obstacle and that is a Crisis of Confidence. Boards and CEOs need to rebuild the Trust amongst workers in general and minority groups in particular. The only way to rebuild this Trust is to ensure that voices are heard and real change is made.

Going forward we need government and industry to work together to ensure we have a clear plan to ensure dialogue, consultation and policies to enact change.

Some general observations I would make are as follows. These are the drivers we should make commitments around.

1. Some real reflection on the culture of the organization – some difficult conversations may be required. This is not a time for us to bury our heads in the sand.
2. CEOs and senior executives deliver against what is measured and rewarded – this is ultimately both a performance and a risk issue – we need to adequately reward for success and penalize for underperformance
3. Board and senior executive targets – for all public companies and government agencies, with a reasonable timeframe for companies to comply.
4. Education – partnership with academic institutions to ensure that we have an appropriate pool of diverse candidates in priority skills areas
5. Reinvigorate and elevate diversity and inclusion initiatives

At the Global Risk Institute one of our greatest strengths is our convening ability. Our ability to bring groups together to work towards solutions that mitigate risk to the financial sector and seek out opportunity. I look forward to working with you and would value any feedback and comments on how we can help address these challenges.



Sonia Baxendale  
**President & CEO, GRI**