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# UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS AUGUST 2010



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Henning Larsen Architects is an international architecture company. Our goal is to create vibrant, sustainable projects that reach beyond themselves and become of durable value to the user and to the society and culture that they are built into. The company was founded by Henning Larsen in 1959 and today has offices in Denmark, Iceland, Saudi-Arabia and Syria. Henning Larsen Architects employs 140 people.

The projects of Henning Larsen are characterised by a high degree of social responsibility – not only in relation to materials and production but also as regards good, social spaces encouraging intimacy and community. We shape, challenge and change the physical surroundings – from masterplans, urban spaces and buildings to interior design, components and strategic design – with the overall objective of providing the user with a strong, visionary and thoroughly framed design adapted to the specific context.

Henning Larsen Architects attaches great importance to designing environmentally friendly and integrated, energy-efficient solutions. Our ideas are developed in close collaboration with the client, users and partners in order to achieve long-lasting buildings and a beneficial life-cycle economy.

This value-based approach is the key to our designs of numerous building projects around the world - from complex masterplans to successful architectural landmarks.

**Equal opportunities  
and cultural encounters**

*Henning Larsen Architects attaches great importance to a diverse staff of employees and provides equal employment opportunities for all applicants. As of 1 September 2010 the staff represents 19 different nationalities of which 44 percent are women.*

*To promote a better understanding across cultures Henning Larsen Architects seek to attract interns and employees from different countries. A diverse staff brings inspiration, innovation and local knowledge into the projects. Interns are encouraged to work in our offices in the Middle East, Syria and Saudi Arabia, and interns from these countries are recruited to work outside the Middle East*

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Henning Larsen Architects supports the United Nations Global Compact. We wish to promote a more sustainable building sector and projects that support better living conditions.

At a global scale, cities account for 80 percent of CO2 emissions and the building sector is responsible for 40 percent. As architects, we have an obligation to take action. Architecture provides an important setting for people's lives and thus plays a significant role in relation to promoting sustainability.

Since we joined the Global Compact, our main focus has been on the environmental aspects of building. We design our projects from scratch, which gives us the opportunity to incorporate environmentally friendly solutions right from the beginning.

Access to state-of-the-art knowledge and developments are decisive factors in architecture. We are involved in a number of research and development projects to achieve new knowledge of energy-efficient building in all scales.

Although environmental issues have been our main focus, we believe that the objective of sustainability is to create value all over – from social value to contextual, infrastructural, demographic and climatic value. This holistic approach increases the value of sustainability.

For an architectural company with a significant international profile it is essential to base projects on an international set of values. We are open to all projects that allow us to take a holistic approach. We seek dialogue with partners and clients at an international scale to exchange knowledge, experience and ideas and thus support the development of better living conditions for everyone.

When the values and knowledge on which we build our projects are brought into play across borders – from Georgia to China and from Norway to Saudi Arabia – we work to support United Nations Millennium Development Goals.



Mette Kynne Frandsen  
CEO and Partner,  
Henning Larsen Architects



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Henning Larsen Architects joined United Nations Global Compact 29. May 2008.  
This is our first CoP (Communication on Progress).

We have addressed all four areas of Global Compact – Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption – and we commit ourselves to continue working with the ten principles.

Our CoP will be uploaded to the website of United Nations Global Compact and will also be available on our website and intranet.

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In May 2008, Henning Larsen Architects joined the UN Global Compact and kick-started the process by an internal meeting on the company's social responsibility. All employees participated in the meeting and spent a day discussing the subject. The meeting was arranged in collaboration with the Danish Institute for Human Rights and Mads Øvlisen from Global Compact's international board was among the guest speakers.

For an architecture company, an obvious first step is to look at the principles concerning environmental responsibility. This is where architects have the greatest influence. The employees agreed that Henning Larsen Architects could really make a difference in this area. The company's projects reflect this consensus; they are based on a holistic approach to sustainability and – to a high degree – on the knowledge built by Henning Larsen Architects and its collaboration partners.

Knowledge of and access to state-of-the-art knowledge and developments are decisive factors in relation to architecture. Therefore, the company takes part in building, collecting and sharing new knowledge about sustainability.

In collaboration with the Technical University of Denmark, Henning Larsen Architects has employed three industrial PhD students who conduct research on sustainability and interdisciplinary collaboration. The PhD students are Masters of Engineering (Energy) and develop sketching tools for designing energy-efficient buildings and quarters.

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The cheapest and most efficient way to create sustainable buildings is by designing buildings that apply passive properties to achieve a low energy consumption and healthy indoor climate.

Henning Larsen Architects has established an internal centre of excellence in which the PhD research is one of the cornerstones. This means that the company's projects have direct access to state-of-the-art research, which is adapted to the different climatic conditions and legal framework in all parts of the world – from Iceland to Saudi Arabia.

The knowledge that we already possess and the new knowledge built should be communicated to a broad audience. Therefore, it is essential that the different players in the building industry engage in a close and interdisciplinary collaboration in the early project phases. The energy consumption of a building can be reduced by up to 80 % if the geometry, spaces and facades are optimised.

Henning Larsen Architects emphasise the importance of communicating its experience and research results by offering all employees and partners further training in sustainable design. In addition, a number of company employees are members of think tanks and take part in the public debate. In 2009 and 2010, the company hosted a number of debates on sustainability with the participation of key persons from the building industry. The themes included "Sustainability and Value Creation" and "Sustainability and Urban Planning".

Henning Larsen Architects is a global company with projects in around 20 countries. When communicating with people all over the world and working in countries with different histories and cultures, you are enlightened and challenged. Therefore, it has been important to incorporate the Global Compact in the company values and define a number of focus areas.

The company is dedicated to supporting the UN Millennium Development Goals, education for all and equal rights. The company initiates and actively applies for projects that could contribute to reach the goals. This applies to Massar Children's Discovery Centre and a school project for refugees in Syria, among others.



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**CONCITO**

Concito is Denmark's first green think tank working on making the climate problems and their solutions known. Henning Larsen Architects aligns itself with the aims of the think tank and collaborates in the work. The think tank has gathered a number of players across professions and industries and in this way brings new knowledge into play.

**Plan C**

Plan C is part of Gate 21, which is a partnership between the City of Copenhagen, seven municipalities west of Copenhagen, and a number of companies and research institutions. The partnership provides the participating companies with the opportunity to develop, test, demonstrate and eventually commercialise new technologies, concepts and processes in the areas of climate, energy and environment. The participating municipalities function as very large laboratories and provide the necessary space for demonstration projects. Henning Larsen Architects is a partner in Gate 21 and manages the Plan C project, which is one of the largest sub-projects with focus on renovation concepts and elements.

**EnergyFlexHouse**

In collaboration with the Danish Technological Institute and the engineering company Buro Happold, Henning Larsen Architects has designed a multi-flexible development and demonstration building providing the opportunity to test a number of energy-optimising constructional solutions and components.

The project comprises two buildings, EnergyFlexLab and EnergyFlexFamily. EnergyFlexLab is an unoccupied development facility where different kinds of climate screens, energy installations and control systems are developed and optimised. EnergyFlexFamily is based on the same constructional principle but is furnished and inhabited by different test families who will be making their individual energy consumption patterns available for research.

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**Climate Cup Strategy Award 2009**

As the first architectural company, Henning Larsen Architects won the Strategy Award at the Danish Climate Cup in 2009. The award was presented at the Nordic Climate Solutions and is awarded to companies taking into account the issues of climate change in the business strategy.

Motivation of the jury: “Henning Larsen Architects has been selected as the winner because the company demonstrates leadership in its field with a strategy and an effort to implement climate-friendly and sustainable initiatives in their architecture with the objective of influencing clients and partners to take climate change into account - from design to construction.”





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## MASSAR CHILDRENS DISCOVERY CENTRE



The Massar Children's Discovery Centre in Damascus will open in 2013 and become the heart of a Syrian educational programme - Massar. Through science-based, hands-on experiences the centre will offer activities to empower young Syrians to contribute actively in building their future.

The 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> Discovery Centre has a unique location in the heart of Damascus. The building comprises exhibition, library, education and administration space. The centre will be an integrated main attraction placed within the new 170,000 m<sup>2</sup> public realm on the site.

The form is inspired by the unique Damask rose. The proposal suggests a shell structure allowing a playful and dazzling scenography of light in the interior spaces - like light filtering between rose petals. Exhibition and administrative areas are laid out between the rose petals creating interior labyrinth journeys inspired by walks in the old city of Damascus formed by walls with the sky as the window.

The centre of the rose forms a large communal orientation space. This is where people meet, share knowledge and develop new ideas - a cross pollination of knowledge. From here series of journeys rise upwards in form of a web of ramps and steps interweaving the public plateau with the upstairs shell structure. The central vertical movement under the open sky challenges the traditional horizontal movement in the Arab city.

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**Sustainable by design**

The Massar Children's Discovery Centre is a low energy building using local materials, skills and resources. Energy loads are reduced passively by shaping the building to keep the sun out.

The building's form and fabric is optimised to reduce requirements for active or operational heating and cooling. The use and control of solar gain will help significantly reduce the energy consumption. By harnessing and storing solar gain in the winter the amount of heating can be reduced. By shading in summer, cooling loads can be reduced.

The project recycles all water in the house, the pump system and the heating of water are driven by solar energy and a geothermal heat system produces the heating for the house. Together with optimum daylight and sun screening the building has a very high environmental level.

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**Summer school in Damascus**

The basis for Henning Larsen Architects' winning project was 'capacity building'. The idea was to develop the project across cultures with a mutual learning process and understanding involving users, the organisation and the team. By involving local users, project staff and collaborative partners learning was fully incorporated in the phases of design and detailed design. Young Syrian architects were hired to work on the project and during the detailed design period a close relationship to the schools of architecture in Syria was developed.

In 2008, Henning Larsen Architects organised a summer school in Damascus with the participation of 26 architectural students from Aalborg University, Technische Universität Berlin and Damascus University.. The summer school was made possible due to support from The Hapold Trust, Aalborg University, Technische Universität Berlin, Damascus University, Auswärtiges Amt, Martha Schwartz Partners, GT Z, DAAD, Massar, The Danish Institute in Damascus as well as The Royal Danish Embassy in Damascus.

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The UN Global Compact's ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption enjoy universal consensus and are derived from:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- The United Nations Convention Against Corruption

MORE INFORMATION

[www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

[www.gcnordic.net](http://www.gcnordic.net)

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**Principle 1**

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

**Principle 2**

Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

**Actions taken**

We comply with Danish National Legislation, which meets the international conventions.

Our projects are characterised by a high degree of social responsibility – not only in relation to materials and production but also as regards good, social spaces encouraging equality and community.

We actively seek and develop projects that can help fulfil United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

**Future actions**

We will continue to develop new projects to support human rights and help fulfil United Nations Millennium Development Goals with projects. We will continue to work with the IMAGINATION project (see next page).

**MORE INFORMATION**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights:  
[www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/](http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/)

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IMAGINATION was initiated by Henning Larsen Architects and established in 2008 with a summer school in Damascus, Syria. The vision is to create an open, in-formal forum for architects from different cultures, traditions and disciplines. Through open dialogue and collaborative processes the participants will exchange experiences and create projects together that actively challenge current site-specific architectural issues.

One initiative has been the development of a prototype school project which focuses on the non-formal learning opportunities offered outside the classroom. In the first phase of the project a debate on today's educational environment in the Middle East was organised and in October 2009 the first workshop was carried out. Subsequently, a sketch proposal for an innovative, sustainable, low cost prototype school in Syria has been developed.

In the future the aim is to establish partnerships with public and private investors or NGO's for implementation of the school.

The IMAGINATION Prototype School team consisted of Henning Larsen Architects and a group of independent thinkers and practitioners, who embrace innovative and sustainable designs built into a local context.

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**Principle 3**

Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

**Principle 4**

The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.

**Principle 5**

The effective abolition of child labour.

**Principle 6**

The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

**Actions taken**

The employees of Henning Larsen Architects are free to enter into associations and to enter into collective bargaining with the management.

All employees have individual contracts, and the employment conditions are in accordance with the national legislation and requirements. All employees have individual contracts stating terms and conditions of service and stating notice of leave.

Henning Larsen Architects has established an occupational health and safety system, comprising health, psychological working environment and physical working environment. The system includes satisfaction surveys, regular inspections of the workstations as well as meetings with representatives of the employees in order to keep up a high standard and to continuously improve the performance.

Henning Larsen Architects does not employ children under age.



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**Future actions**

Henning Larsen Architects aims to promote a creative, non-hierarchical workplace, which fosters supportive environments and the freedom to assert and test new ideas and visions. This work culture, coupled with our commitment to new learning opportunities, stimulates our employees' individual and collective creativity and skills in design and service.

Henning Larsen Architects is a meritocracy: we hire and promote talent. We are an equal opportunity employer and require the same of our consultants and collaborators.

**MORE INFORMATION**

The International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>



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**Principle 7**

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

**Principle 8**

Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

**Principle 9**

Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

**Actions taken**

The goal of Henning Larsen Architects is to create vibrant, sustainable projects that reach beyond themselves and become of durable value to the user and to the society and culture that they are built into.

Henning Larsen Architects is committed to reducing the distance between researchers' knowledge and the use of this in the building industry. Knowledge of and access to state-of-the-art knowledge and developments are decisive factors in relation to architecture. Therefore, the company takes part in creating, collecting and sharing new knowledge.

In collaboration with the Technical University of Denmark, Henning Larsen Architects has employed three industrial PhD students conducting research on sustainability and interdisciplinary co-operation. The PhD students are Masters of Engineering (energy) and develop sketching tools for designing energy-optimising buildings and urban areas.

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## ENVIRONMENT

Henning Larsen Architects has established an internal Centre of Excellence in which the PhD research constitutes one of the cornerstones. This means that the company's projects have direct access to state-of-the-art research that is adapted to the very different local climate and legal conditions in all parts of the world – from Iceland to Saudi Arabia.

Our projects are characterised by a high degree of consideration for the individual location and opportunities. All projects as well as their programmatic, infrastructural, demographic and climatic conditions vary a great deal. By keeping an open mind to challenges during the process, innovative solutions are achieved.

The management, partners, associates and expert employees of Henning Larsen Architects give lectures and participate actively in debates and think tanks on sustainability. The environmental issues are also addressed on a daily basis in the projects.

**Future actions**

Incorporating sustainability into building processes has never been more important. Almost 40 % of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from the building industry. Energy-efficiency should be incorporated into building designs, which means that knowledge of energy optimisation is an essential design parameter. The design should be energy-efficient from conception.

Henning Larsen Architects applies Integrated Energy Design, which is a ground-breaking method for reducing energy consumption in a building or an urban development plan. In an integrated design process the energy consumption of the design is dynamically simulated. In this way, the very early phases of the design process are focused on a high degree of energy efficiency and comfort at the lowest possible cost.

**MORE INFORMATION**

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development  
[www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res\\_agenda21\\_00.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_00.shtml)

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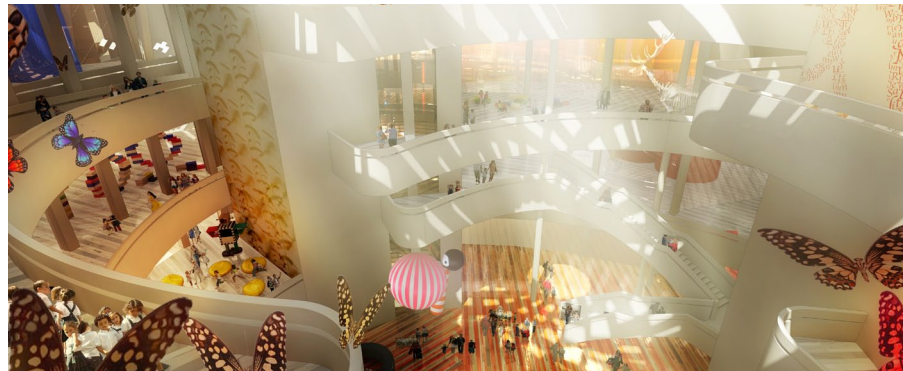
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Henning Larsen Architects has designed the new headquarters for Spiegel Group in Germany. The two-part composition in HafenCity, Hamburg, creates hierarchy and openness on the site and integrates the complex urban spaces surrounding it. The 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> building will open in 2011.

Sustainability and energy efficiency has played a crucial role during the conception of the building. It will meet the high requirements of the HafenCity's "gold medal" for environment-friendly buildings and thereby also comply with the demands of the international label "green building".

The energy consumption will be less than 100 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a, which is much lower than the current standard (243 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>a) for office buildings in Germany.

As energy consumption is only one aspect of the assessment of a building's overall sustainability, further criteria are evaluated such as the use of public resources, the selection of building materials and the creation of a healthy and comfortable working environment. The rules and requirements of the "gold medal" influenced the work of all parties involved in designing and engineering the building. The gold standard could only be guaranteed through a broad mix of different technologies and a careful and extensive process of selecting building materials.

Key technology for the limitation of energy consumption is the extensive use of solar- and geothermal collectors and their combination with a cooling and heating system, which is integrated in the concrete floor slabs.

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**Low-energy office for Energinet.dk**

In 2010 Henning Larsen Architects won the competition for the new office building of Energinet.dk in Ballerup, Denmark, in collaboration with the contracting company Dahl Entreprise A/S. The low-energy building has been achieved exclusively by means of optimising the design and geometry to create an office building in the lowest energy class possible.

The 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> building has an annual energy consumption of only 48,8 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>. Incorporating solar panels, ground water cooling and heat pumps in the project will further reduce the annual energy consumption to only 35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>.

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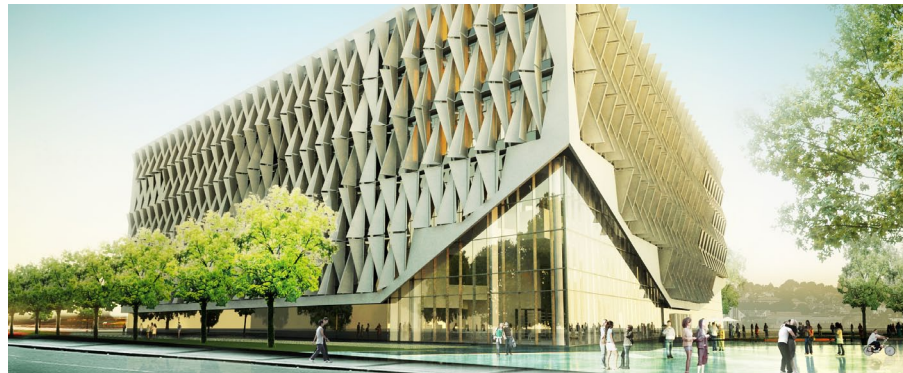
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**The University of Southern Denmark in a class of its own**

In 2013 when the University of Southern Denmark will inaugurate its new building in the town of Kolding, students and employees will be provided with a study and working environment in a class of its own.

The building is characterised by a significant and innovative architecture - not only in terms of its shape and function but also because the building's energy consumption is so low that it is classified as a low-energy class 1 building. This means that the University of Southern Denmark will be the first low-energy university in Denmark with an energy consumption of only 48 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year corresponding to only 20-25 % of the energy consumption of similar buildings.



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**Sustainable urban development**

Henning Larsen Architects masterplan for King Abdullah Financial District in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, unites the Arabian urban traditions with the modern metropolis giving the Saudi capital an open public space and a characteristic skyline with a new outstanding landmark.

In the masterplan, Henning Larsen Architects has devised a set of guidelines for sustainability. Among other things, the district will feature something as unique as a Saudi Arabian monorail connecting the various areas of the district. All buildings and monorail stations are linked together by air-conditioned footbridges above street level enabling walking distance to all meetings in the Financial District – quite extraordinary for Riyadh.

During the building phase Henning Larsen Architects acts as consultants ensuring the proposed scheme a standard that will be seen as a world-class example of sustainable development.

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During 2009 and 2010 Henning Larsen Architects invited opinion formers from the construction business in Denmark to participate and engage in debates on different aspects of sustainability in the sphere of building.

Several hundred people participated and discussed with highly knowledgeable panels of politicians and representatives of the building industry. The debates provided a strong common take-off for the continuous work towards integrating sustainability in the development of buildings, cities and societies.

The following themes have been debated:

February 2009 “Idealism vs. Regulation”

Marts 2009 “Masterplanning vs. Welfare”

April 2009 “How can sustainability be driven by dreams?”

October 2009 “Sustainability and Value Creation”

November 2009 “Sustainable Urban Development”

March 2010 “Sustainability and Aesthetics”

**VIDEO FROM THE DEBATES**

[www.youtube.com/HLArchitects](http://www.youtube.com/HLArchitects)

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FOCUS ON THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

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Henning Larsen Architects' own Energy Task Force has launched a number of initiatives to reduce the company's overall CO<sub>2</sub> emission. The project aims to achieve energy savings by means of two focus areas: 1) a reduction of the company's energy consumption and 2) a reduction of the amount of paper used. Recycling is incorporated into all work processes to the widest extent possible.

One of the central initiatives is to fit a large number of the company spaces with movement sensors just as the ventilation system will be adapted to the work patterns. In addition, all servers have been virtualised to save electricity.



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**Principle 10**

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

**Our commitment**

Henning Larsen Architects supports The United Nations Convention Against Corruption. We fully comply with Danish and international legislation. A respectful and open relation to our clients, employees and the societies where we work is an essential value in all our projects.

**Actions taken**

We have not – directly or indirectly – been involved in any form of corruption.

**Future actions**

A Code of Conduct, a Code of Practice and a Policy on Business Integrity will be implemented.

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**Goal 1**

ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER

**Goal 2**

ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

**Goal 3**

PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

**Goal 4**

REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

**Goal 5**

IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

**Goal 6**

COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

**Goal 7**

ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

**Goal 8**

DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

**MORE INFORMATION**

[www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

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