



Dipl.-Ing. Frank H. Asbeck
CEO of SolarWorld AG

Letter by the Chairman

Dear Customers, Shareholders, Employees and Friends of SolarWorld AG,

As an international group we have long attached particular importance to sustainable management. Indeed, it is a fundamental SOLARWORLD principle, which is why we have been incorporating the reporting on our sustainability performance into our Group Annual Reports since 2007. It seems only logical, therefore, that we have fully integrated the concept of sustainability into our strategic decision-making.

➔ [*Group management report • p. 031//*](#)

But why is it so important to consider sustainable management in such detail, and what makes it so special? Sustainable development enables present generations to satisfy their own needs without jeopardizing the potential needs of future generations. And yet even among the generations living today, for example between rich and poor countries, equal opportunities and the fair distribution of resources are core issues in the sustainability debate. Sustainability can be structured along three dimensions – economically, ecologically and socially. All three must be seen in conjunction, i.e. in an integrated way, because they are very closely connected.

Only by adopting this comprehensive approach can opportunities and risks be anticipated more effectively. We firmly believe, therefore, that broad-based sustainability management will generate crucial innovative and competitive advantages in the future, not only in industrialized countries but also in developing countries and emerging economies. For us, these regions will also become increasingly important.

In 2009, we have further developed our sustainability management system. Solar energy is our answer to climate change and increasingly scarce resources. It is our core competence, and we have been setting technical standards in this field for years. But even beyond this we want our actions to be guided consistently by the principles of sustainability. You can monitor these developments in our report on sustainable corporate management.

In this field, too, we are standard-setters. Since 2007 we have been using the GRI framework for our reporting, and in 2009, as in the preceding years, we again achieved A+ status, as attested by both GRI and our auditors. Since 2007 SOLARWORLD has been the only solar company in the world to meet the requirements of this reporting level. Since 2008 SOLARWORLD has additionally been applying the sustainability indicators of the German Society of Investment Professionals (DVFA), making us the first company in the world to adopt these criteria in our reporting. These DVFA criteria are subject to continuous further development. We actively participate in these discussions and, in our reports, will take any progress made into consideration. Moreover, on 16 October 2009 SOLARWORLD became the first purely solar company in the world to sign up to the UN Global Compact. We subscribe to the ten principles of the Global Compact in the fields of human rights, labour rights, environment protection and anti-corruption, and we hope to encourage the implementation of those principles in our sphere of influence. We integrate the annual progress report into our Group management report – just as we do with our reporting on our sustainability performance.

Our vision and strategy are extensively spelled out in the Group management report. ➔ [Vision](#) • p. 002// With our sustainability strategy, we are addressing the issues of quality and environmental management, and also social responsibility. ➔ [Interlinking of management tools](#) • p. 044// [Solar2World – not-for-profit commitment stepped up](#) • p. 087// But there is one thing we always remember: the foundation for all this is our commercial success. It gives us a firm footing and the leeway for action we need.

Together with my colleagues on the Executive Board, I invite you to form your own impressions of the accomplishments and challenges that have marked the evolution of the SOLARWORLD Group during the reporting year 2009. We would welcome your comments and suggestions and hope you will enter into a dialogue with us via [\[E\] sustainability@solarworld.de](mailto:sustainability@solarworld.de). We look forward to your feedback!

Please visit our website, too, where you will find detailed information about our commitments to corporate social responsibility. [\[G\] www.solarworld.de/sustainability](http://www.solarworld.de/sustainability)

With sunny regards,



Dipl.-Ing. Frank H. Asbeck
CEO of SolarWorld AG