

# NEWS RELEASE

30 September 2011

## **Reinsurance chief takes charge of industry drive to combat climate change**

Mr John R. Coomber, member of the Board of Directors of global reinsurer Swiss Re, will become the new Chairman of ClimateWise, the global insurance industry's leadership group to reduce the risks of climate change, on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr Coomber succeeds Andrew Torrance, CEO of Allianz Insurance, who has completed his three-year term as Chairman.

As Group Chief Executive Officer of Swiss Re from 2003 to 2005, Mr Coomber consistently identified climate change as one of the most significant strategic issues facing the insurance industry globally. Today, Swiss Re is a leading force in addressing, researching, and developing solutions to mitigate and adapt to the risks of climate change which are impacting countries, businesses and people around the world.

Commenting on his new role, Mr Coomber said, "Recent events have shown how vulnerable the world's inter-dependent economies are to risks that at first appear to only affect one part of the system. Climate change, too, cuts across all walks of life, affecting people and property, global food production and the smooth-running of supply chains. Reducing these risks to an acceptable level is therefore in all of our interests and we cannot do that without strong partnerships between businesses, governments and wider society. This is why I am so excited about ClimateWise, which, under Andrew Torrance's

guidance, has grown to become the insurance industry's leadership group for collaborative learning and action on climate change”

Andrew Torrance said “I have very much enjoyed chairing ClimateWise over the past three years, during which insurance leaders from four different continents have joined our ranks to build a range of action-orientated partnerships to fight climate risk. I have no doubt that this vital initiative will go from strength to strength under John's leadership.”

ClimateWise is facilitated by the University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL). Commenting on Mr Coomber's appointment, Polly Courtice LVO, Director of CPSL, said, “CPSL has been helping business leaders forge solutions to the world's sustainability challenges for over 20 years and it is clear that the insurance industry can play a truly catalytic role. John's personal leadership on climate change over the years has been formidable and I can think of nobody better qualified to take charge of the industry's response through the activities of ClimateWise.”

**- ENDS -**

### **Notes for Editors**

1. Enquiries to:

**ClimateWise Secretariat, Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership**

Andrew Voysey +44 20 7216 7530 (mobile +44 7595 106458)

[andrew.voysey@cpsl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.voysey@cpsl.cam.ac.uk)

2. A photo of John Coomber is available for download [here](#) and more information about ClimateWise is available from our website [here](#).

3. ClimateWise is the global insurance industry's leadership group on climate change, focused on reducing the risks of climate change. Launched in 2007 by HRH The Prince of Wales, and facilitated by the University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership (CPSL), ClimateWise brings together key players from the global insurance industry from Europe, North America, Asia and Southern Africa. Full details are available at [www.climatewise.org.uk](http://www.climatewise.org.uk)
4. CPSL has worked for over 20 years with business, government and civil society to build the capacity of leaders to meet both the needs of society and address critical global sustainability challenges. HRH The Prince of Wales is the Patron of CPSL. More information can be found at [www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk)
5. ClimateWise is an industry-led initiative. The ClimateWise Chairman is Mr John R. Coomber, member of the Board of Directors of the Swiss Re Group. John retired as the Group Chief Executive Officer of Swiss Re in December 2005, following 33 years at one of the world's leading reinsurance companies. Today John serves as a Board member of the Swiss Re Group, Director and Chief Executive Officer of Pension Insurance Corporation, Chairman of Mactavish, is a Trustee of The Climate Group and a member of the Deutsche Bank Climate Advisory Panel. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Actuaries and an Honorary Fellow of The Chartered Insurance Institute.
6. The ClimateWise members are Ace, Allianz, Amlin, Aon Benfield, Argo International, the Association of British Insurers, Aviva, Beazley, Brunel PI, Catlin, the Chartered Insurance Institute, Chartis, Chaucer, the Co-operative Insurance, Ecclesiastical, Equity Group, Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, Friends Life, Hardy, Hiscox, If P&C, Legal & General, Lloyd's of London, Lloyds Banking Group, Navigators, NFU Mutual, Prudential, QBE European Operations, RBS Insurance, Renaissance Re, RMS, RJ Kiln, RSA, Santam, Swiss Re, Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Company, Tryg, Willis and Zurich.
7. The third year review of member activities against the ClimateWise Principles, produced by PwC, is available on: <http://www.climatewise.org.uk/review/>

**Copies of all ClimateWise news releases, together with other information, can be seen on [www.climatewise.org.uk](http://www.climatewise.org.uk)**