



THE GLOBAL
SUMMIT 2010



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London | 23 - 25 June 2010

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 1

Prince calls for collaborative industry action on sustainable fishing

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales today told the CEOs and Chairmen of the world's leading consumer goods retailers and manufacturers to use their collective market power to force urgent and immediate change in the way ocean fisheries are managed.

Delivering the keynote address at the first ever Global Summit of The Consumer Goods Forum, in London, the Prince — a tireless campaigner on environmental issues — told more than one thousand delegates from the consumer goods industry that the world's major ocean fisheries will have collapsed by 2050, posing an "increasing threat to global security".

Retailers such as Walmart, whose insistence that its suppliers be certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council the Prince praised as "courageous", had achieved "remarkable things" individually. But ultimately the industry must work in concert to achieve truly sustainable solutions. "You simply must become stronger advocates of sustainable fishing," the Prince told the Summit.

While it was impossible for many developing countries to monitor and enforce regulations, where they exist, if retailers were to demand full traceability from their suppliers, they could make a considerable difference, the Prince said.

His Royal Highness also saw retailers as playing a stronger role in educating consumers on responsible consumption. "Not everyone reads a paper or watches television news. But everyone shops." Retailers should "stimulate demand for sustainable fish" in their stores and also lobby government for regulatory support.

For this to happen, the Prince said, the human race needed to overcome its "collective hubris" and face facts. As a possible model, the Prince proposed a template drawn up by environmental group WWF, in which industry collectively pays for fisheries to be closed for a period and allowed to regenerate, effectively investing in a future market. The consequences, if industry failed to act, would be "truly terrifying," the Prince said. "No change," he underlined, "is not an option."

Tesco, Unilever Chiefs set out sustainable agenda for industry

Sir Terry Leahy, CEO of Tesco, and Paul Polman, CEO of consumer goods giant Unilever, today gave an unequivocal call for immediate, concerted and collaborative action on climate change. "All the evidence is that climate change is a reality," Leahy told the Summit. "Experts remain 90% certain that it is caused by man's activities." He said that consumers wanted business to take a lead and to help them be sustainable in their own lives. "Our challenge is to harness that desire and help fulfill it by creating a mass movement in green consumption."

Paul Polman said that, with 75% of all emissions influenced by consumers, the time to act was now. "To those who say, 'Can't we wait until the recession is over?' I say no. And to those who ask, 'Why can't we leave it to government?' my answer is that no single institution can tackle this problem alone. Of course governments need to act — and many are. But by working together — business, government, consumers — we can achieve collectively what none of us can achieve alone."

Polman said the Consumer Goods Forum represented retailers, manufacturers and service providers from 70 countries and with combined sales of over two trillion euros. "No one pretends that change will be easy. The economies of the world have been built on fossil fuels. A shift to low carbon consumption will not happen by itself. But we can grow without carbon, there is such a thing as green growth. To achieve it, we need to think afresh."

Leahy said industry needed to challenge the entire value chain and question how goods were designed, sourced, produced, packaged, labelled and transported. Leahy said consumers responded to encouragement when it comes to buying sustainably. Removing the price barrier is paramount; simple, transparent information is also vital.

The two industry leaders used the platform of The Global Summit to announce its four collaborative projects on sustainable consumption:

1. **Packaging:** The Forum's programme has developed a common approach to packaging, a new means of measuring its environmental impact. A pilot is underway with 25 companies.
2. **Measurement and shared language:** "If consumers are to trust phrases like 'carbon neutral', one supplier's definition cannot be different from another's," Leahy said. A common global system for measuring the greenhouse gases in the life cycles of products is targeted.
3. **Deforestation:** "Our aim is simple — to persuade the 300 or so member companies of The Forum to make a public commitment to help put an end to deforestation by 2016," Polman said.
4. **Refrigeration:** Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), should be replaced by natural refrigerants. The Forum's role will be to drive adoption and draw up plans to overcome barriers to transition.

"To make this a reality," Leahy told the Summit, "we have to embrace it together ... We cannot go on as we are. We must change." Polman called the delegates to action: "I ask you to help us in the Forum's ambition to make our businesses more sustainable, and create a mass movement in green consumption."

Consumer goods industry recognised for sustainability progress

The industry sectors recognised by consumers worldwide as making the fastest progress on sustainability are retail and food manufacturing, according to Joanne Denny-Finch, CEO of research firm IGD. With reason, judging by Denny's long list of examples of sustainable actions taken by major consumer goods retailers and manufacturers.

Tesco, for example, is a leader in climate change, while Nestlé is improving nutrition in developing countries with fortified drinks, Denny said. Sainsbury had "taken a leap of faith on Fairtrade", while Unilever helped set up the Marine Stewardship Council, which certifies sustainably sourced wild ocean fish, and chairs the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. Walmart is preserving wildlife habitats and South African retailer Pick n Pay is supporting economic renewal in South Africa's the country's underprivileged townships via entrepreneurial sponsorship. Coca-Cola has set up community water partnerships in 70 countries.

Denney-Finch's resounding message was that companies cannot hope to make breakthroughs by acting alone. "You have to work with others," she told The Global Summit. "It could be developing a new standard, agreeing a common language or solving a shared problem."

Consumers, too, want to be involved, Denny said. "They're delegating leadership because the issues are complex, but shoppers are ready to play their part."