

United Nations Global Compact Communications on Progress (COP) Message from our Chief Executive Officer – 22nd June 2017

Unilever strongly supports the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) Ten Principles and welcomes its recognition of the positive contribution business can make to create a more prosperous and socially and environmentally sustainable world. It sets a critical framework for establishing a culture of integrity, upholding business to meet their responsibilities to people and planet, while setting the stage for long-term value creation. The Communication on Progress (COP) is an important tool of transparency that provides the chance for an internal and external annual evaluation of achievements.

The world is going through a period of profound change, where we see a backlash against globalisation, rising inequalities and many people feeling left behind. Trust is at an all-time low, both in governments and business. To restore trust and deliver a system that benefits the many, and not just the few, we need to change the way we operate. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have given us the opportunity to do this and we now have a unique chance to redirect our course towards a more sustainable and equitable growth path.

The brilliance and elegance of the SDGs is that it covers all aspects of sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth. From peace and prosperity and climate action to education of the next generation and protecting the most vulnerable. To achieve the SDGs, business must be part of the solution. In turn, as the Business and Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC) has shown, delivering the SDGs will unlock market opportunities of up to 12 trillion US dollars a year. It creates new markets, drives growth, reduces operating costs, restores trust, and ultimately future-proofs our businesses.

For Unilever, the SDGs have certainly reaffirmed our own belief in the relevance of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP), acting as a further catalyst for our own actions. Now entering its seventh year, the USLP remains our blueprint for sustainable business.

- By providing quality, affordable products, we are making good progress towards our goal of helping more than 1 billion people take action to improve their health and well-being. We have reached 538 million people since 2010.
- By 2030 our goal is to halve the environmental footprint of the making and use of our products as we grow the business. This covers our entire value chain, from the sourcing of our raw materials and our own manufacturing, through to consumer use and disposal. We continue to source over 50 per cent of our agricultural raw materials sustainably.
- Our third big goal is to enhance the livelihoods of millions of people through our social and economic contributions to many communities through employment, training and advancing human rights.

We continuously review the USLP, challenge ourselves and set new targets. We announced in January 2017 that we are committing to ensuring that 100 per cent of our plastic packaging will be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. This was in addition to our existing commitment to increase our use of recycled plastic in packaging by at least 25 per cent by 2025.

We are making ongoing improvements in the management of our environmental and societal impact and to the longer-term goal of developing a sustainable business. To achieve this, we work in partnership with others – including government, NGOs and other companies – to create the transformational change needed in today’s world, while also increasing our understanding and sharing of good practice.

Every day, we continue to strive to do business with care for the environment, respect for human and labour rights, and with the highest standard of business integrity.

That is why we are proud to be a founding signatory to the UNGC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Polman', is written over a light gray grid background. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Polman
Chief Executive Officer