
SESSION 1 SUMMARY

SESSION TITLE: SETTING THE FOUNDATION: THE TRADE FOR SUSTAINABLE PRINCIPLES

SPEAKERS:

Charles Arden-Clarke, Head, 10YFP Secretariat, Sustainable Lifestyles, Cities and Industry, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Dave Boselie, Senior Manager Learning & Innovation, The Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH)

Kerem Saral, Supply Chain Manager, Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)

Morag Webb, Policy Advisor, COLEACP

Julia Lernoud, Data and Information Manager, Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL)

Mathieu Lamolle, Standards Database Coordinator, ITC Standards Map

(moderator) **Lanre Akinola**, Editor of African Business, IC Publications

CONCLUSION:

The T4SD principles constitute a commitment from ITC to work and collaborate with their signatories in delivering on the ITC mandate 'trade impact for good' and overcoming challenges to achieving sustainable development through trade.

Standards are one way to drive sustainability. To promote sustainable development, we must build up local – not only national – capacity of businesses to meet sustainability standards, enabling them to gain access to global markets. The goal of businesses in meeting these standards is to gain the trust of the 'very, very sceptical consumer'. Innovation therefore lies in the way we implement sustainability standards, not in the standards themselves. Certification is one way to show evidence of good practice.

QUOTES FROM EACH SPEAKER:

Charles Arden-Clarke:

- 'Achieving sustainable production and consumption is about getting the supply chain actors to work together.'
- 'Smallholder producers need to be helped financially and assisted technically to achieve certification, since most of them will not be able to reach economies of scale.'
- 'Third-party certification is the only way the sceptical consumer will believe that the products comply with sustainable criteria.'

Dave Boselie:

- ‘Working with existing standards through benchmarking initiatives is key to the success of our programme, Sustainability Initiative Fruit and Vegetables, in bringing sustainable sourcing to the mainstream.’
- ‘Certification alone won’t do the job.’

Kerem Saral:

- ‘Every country has a set of challenges, a different culture around cotton production, a different industry setting. You need to help them to tackle the challenges there. One of the ways forward is through benchmarking exercises to build up and leverage the practices they have already implemented.’
- ‘Everyone wants to buy sustainable goods. Not everyone wants to pay for it.’
- Instead of training a million farmers, benchmark them through partner organizations and if the quality of the products meets your standards, work with them.
- Producers must reach a certain scale to comply with standards.

Morag Webb:

- ‘You cannot rely only on multinational expertise, you need to build on the existing local expertise.’
- ‘Reaching out to smallholder producers is difficult. We need to use cascade systems, using local services providers, association networks and local technical resources.’
- ‘Our ultimate goal is safe food, not standards compliance.’
- ‘Sustainability is a necessity for suppliers and buyers. It goes beyond market access.’
- ‘One needs to differentiate between sustainability and sustainable standards.’
- ‘When people look for sustainability standards, they’re looking for evidence of good practice.’

Julia Lernoud:

- ‘The market for sustainable certified products is growing, but there is still a need to measure the impacts of the implementation of standards requirements. We need to focus on working together towards harmonization of those indicators to better prepare and inform the market.’
- ‘The importance of market data is that it tells us where we are and where to improve in the future.’

Mathieu Lamolle:

- ‘ITC believes that all the T4SD Principles signatories can contribute to the ITC mandate of trade impact for good. ITC’s commitment to those organizations is to work together to overcome the challenges they face with innovative solutions.’
- Trust is a key issue in sustainability standards.
- ‘Innovation lies in implementation of sustainability standards, not in standards themselves.’

QUOTES FROM THE FLOOR

Mathieu Lamolle: ‘When talking about innovative solutions that promote sustainability in international supply chains, emerging trends show that it is not anymore in the definition of new sustainability requirements but rather in the area of their implementation and the way sustainability standards and the framework are concretely implemented at all levels of supply chains.’

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The consumer is very, very skeptical. One way to gain consumers’ trust is through certification, which shows evidence of good sustainability practices. It’s not about the actual standards, it’s about what the standards – which are just one way to measure sustainability – represent.

- There is a need to work together with common action with a common language to achieve sustainability.
- The Trade for Sustainable Development Principles set the foundation for further collaboration among the organizations committed to embracing, supporting and enacting a set of core values to support sustainable trade.