
SESSION 2 SUMMARY

SESSION TITLE: SPEARHEADING NEW INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS

SPEAKERS:

Mika Vepsäläinen, Chief, Market Access Section (Economic Cooperation and Trade Division), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Emeline Fellus, Deputy General Manager, SAI Platform

Jim Bracken, Sustainability Director, Global Standard 1 (GS1)

Kristian Moeller, Secretary and CEO, GLOBALG.A.P.

Puvan J. Selvanathan, Head, ITC Office to the United Nations in New York

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

CONCLUSION:

- Access to innovative services should be expanded to more producers at the local level, and the tools need to be made more available to farmers and SMEs.
- Communication is key to achieving this goal: players in the sustainability field must share information on who is doing what at which levels (local, national, global), and which public and private agencies are engaged in which activities.
- Must incentivize farmers to comply with standards and become more sustainable, remembering that cost isn't the only driving force.

QUOTES FROM EACH SPEAKER:

Mika Vepsäläinen:

- It is important that standards reflect reality and what consumers want and need – this comes at a cost. Yet the cost of compliance must be bearable.
- When you have strict sustainability standards, you'll have waste and loss.
- National standards are a bad idea. 'Life's not always fair' – producers must meet *global* – not just national – standards to reach global markets.

Emeline Fellus:

- SAI Platform's work is not just about developing a system, but also helping farmers to put the system in place.
- It is SAI's aim to provide a communications tool for all, from farmer to consumer.
- When one quits smoking, cost is not the only incentive. Same goes for standards implementation.

Jim Bracken:

- The Blue Number Initiative is a wonderful development and GS1 is happy to be a part of it.
- 99% of GS1 certified companies are SMEs.

Kristian Moeller:

- We need an incentive for every farmer to produce more sustainable products. This includes easy market access.
- There also needs to be a 'common language' of sustainability standards, in order to advance sustainability goals.

Puvan J. Selvanathan:

- The Blue Number Initiative is about ensuring that there is empowerment within countries as much as in export supply chains.
- Must match what farmers are already doing in terms of complying with sustainability standards with what people/consumers are expecting.
- How will blue numbers work? Farmers will share data and connect to supply chains, supporting the aims of the SDGs, and anchored by government policies.
- We must still be careful not to overlook national standards, which are already in place.

QUOTES FROM THE FLOOR

We need to go beyond ticking the box, but to really be sustainable, we need to go further than that.

RECOMMENDATIONS OR NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- All agree that there should be a common language for standards in order for users to understand and comply with them. However, the question is at which level – international or national.
- Selvanathan says that Blue Numbers (<http://www.unbluenumbers.org/>) will not become a certification body, but will provide a means to integrate farmers into supply chains. How? By communicating their approach to sustainability.
- *Traceability* should not be seen as a cost or as a differentiator, but as an investment.