

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

“Put your Money where your mouth is: matching the economics to the ambition of a sustainable food system”

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Good afternoon.

My grandma, her name was Alice. She would have loved this food forum.

You know, she lived to 99. And to the day she died she was as sharp as a knife. She could remember all of her grandkids' names. Especially when she was telling me off!

What was her secret? Well, it was simple.

She always used to say, you are what you eat. And she ate natural food, fresh from the garden, free from contaminants. Organic- and mostly plant-based.

She was basically a vegan- before the word was even invented. Which in case you didn't know was 1944.

And she credited her diet for her good health and long life. How right she was. She was literally ahead of her time.

It's not rocket science. But even though it seems simple, we're leaving a whole different sort of legacy to our grandchildren.

Which is what brings us together today- to see what we can do about that.

Now, you might ask why am I here? In this eminent company- of academics, scientists, politicians and campaigners.

I'm the first to recognise I'm not an expert in this field. Whenever I speak to Gunhild and Alessandro I'm well aware that I'm a mere student.

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But I do come today with a different perspective- that of big business.

My business- Aviva- we're 323 years old- started in 1696. We have 33 million customers. And we manage around 700bn USD.

And I understand how that money- and indeed the whole capitalist system- can make the world a better place.

I know a lot of people- maybe even some in the room right now- think that business is in fact the problem.

There are activists and commentators, academics and politicians who believe business by its very nature is the enemy of sustainability.

Well, they're wrong.

Not only **can** business be part of the solution- it **has** to be part of the solution if we are going to get anywhere at all.

Of course, business does not always get it right. In a 30 year career, working around the world, I've seen for myself the unacceptable face of capitalism.

But I've also seen that business can be the single most powerful force for good on the planet.

Look at China- it was market reform and business that took over half a billion people out of poverty.

The move to middle-class raises its own problems of course.

Meat is no longer a rare luxury. China consumes twice as much meat as the US- increasing demand for intensive farming.

And China has more overweight people than any other country in the world. (It's a big country of course.)

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But we won't relieve these pressures by ignoring market forces. Instead we need to harness them in the right direction.

Successful capitalism is all about aligning self-interest -of the individual and the organisation- with the interests of society and sustainability.

It's what I call enlightened self-interest.

It is clearly in the interests of society to produce enough food for everyone. It is clearly in the interests of society to do that in a way that does not destroy our planet. So how do we align the capitalist system to make that happen?

There are three things.

First- recognise the power of the investment community.

There are trillions of dollars of capital in the system. 300 trillion, to be precise. And if part of that 300trn has a sustainable voice that will help change behaviours.

And that's what we try and do.

So let's take an example. Let's take antibiotic resistance - one of the biggest threats to world health today. As you know better than me, 700,000 people a year already die from antibiotic resistant infection.

That is set to rise to 10 million a year by 2050- by which time the world would also have lost \$100 trillion of economic output. And that ladies and gentlemen is economics.

We know from the previous panel that intensive farming is one of the causes. So, following engagement from investors- including us- the fast food giant McDonalds have now decided to cut global antibiotic use in their chicken supply chain. That's one more step in the right direction.

Second- Give responsible investors- like us- the ammunition we need. We need NGOs, think-tanks, academics- people like you to keep us informed. In a simple way that people can understand.

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Tell us the risks and the economic costs. Risks like the scourge of plastic pollution and its impact on our oceans and fisheries. Or the nightmare scenario of disappearing pollinators – the humble bees.

Tell us what we need to know.

Investors need to know that 8 million tonnes of plastic leak into the ocean every year. Investors need to know that the environmental costs of plastic packaging are \$40 billion every year. Investors need to know that pollinators are worth \$577 billion a year to the food industry.

Again this is about economics.

So the solution is to align sustainability with the data of economics.

Let's coin a new phrase today, let's call it 'beeconomics'. And armed with the beeeconomic data, we can make the case for change in the companies we invest in.

And finally, the third thing we need to do is to force discussion on these issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, if you think sustainability is being discussed in most boardrooms or indeed by regulators, then you're sadly mistaken. So far it is still only the enlightened few. Like the people in this room.

The question is- how do we get them to talk about it?

The answer is to appeal to the very nature of the business people themselves. Their in-built desire and competitive spirit.

The same thing that makes them successful. We need to harness the power of competition that is inherent in the market.

This is the idea behind the World Benchmarking Alliance. An initiative supported by the UN, and funded by governments and others such as Aviva.

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The idea is simple: We want to turn the SDGs into a competitive sport. We are designing simple, transparent league tables on performance on the SDGs. And ranking companies- and importantly ranking regulators- into league tables according to how well they are doing.

We want to make it free. We want to make it accessible. And we want to make it simple.

And we want to re-use benchmarks where they already exist.

As a CEO, I promise you that when it comes to competitive league tables we are very, very interested. It is the nature of capitalism. And investors will be able to see how companies are performing and act accordingly.

I want to thank Gunhild and the EAT Foundation for their support and contribution to the Alliance.

But we want all of you to be involved- we need you to be involved- so if you have not already, sign up and become an ally for the World Benchmarking Alliance!

Another of my grandma's sayings was that Rome was not built in a day.

Well ladies and gentlemen, we also can't save the world in a single day. But each step and each day counts.

And when we take those steps one after another- we will all be moving towards the sustainable food system we wish to see.

And to be successful it needs all of you and it also needs business.

It is impossible for you to do it alone.

Our only chance is to walk this journey together.

And from the 600 people I see in this room, and from the passion and drive I see from Gunhild and the team at EAT, it gives me a lot of hope.