



Corporate Sustainability: Shooting for the moon?

"I don't think anyone thought I was serious ... People said it's like swimming to the moon, because it just seemed so impossible" exclaimed Nirmal Purja, the fastest climber who scaled 14 highest peaks in just over six months in 2019 – an incredible achievement of human endeavour. Even after over 50 years since the first human set foot on the lunar surface, many seemingly insurmountable challenges have been likened to a brilliant moon landing.

Sustainability has been one of those challenges. As a complex undertaking requiring long-term vision and collective effort, it has even been called our generation's moon landing. And if sustainability is our generation's moon landing, how do we build the Apollo 11 spacecraft that will get us all there? What type of policies, accompanying measures and partnerships will be necessary? This year's edition of the T4SD Forum will look at **corporate sustainability due diligence** and its potential to achieve transformational change.

Background

From factory collapses to dam failures and mine disasters – the past two decades have seen a string of tragedies exposing the life-threatening risks in supply chains. Such incidents not only revealed the dire conditions faced by upstream workers, but also shined a light on the need for better risk monitoring in value chains. Along with social concerns, environmental challenges have further strained supply chains, with climate change amplifying cross-cutting issues. Policymakers around the globe responded with a patchwork of new laws, often at national levels, to prevent such incidents from re-occurring. However, there was a pressing need to develop international frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to streamline the national policies that were fragmented at best.

Evolving policy landscape

In light of these challenges, a growing movement emerged to safeguard human rights and protect environment in the global economy more effectively. In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council endorsed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). In turn,

the OECD developed the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (OECD Guidelines) which provide additional international references for responsible business conduct.

Over time, initiatives such as the UNGPs or the OECD Guidelines were integrated into national and regional regulatory frameworks. Indeed in the early 2010s, various national legislations introduced the concept of mandatory corporate sustainability due diligence, such as the California Transparency in Supply Chain Act, the UK Modern Slavery Act, the French Law on the Corporate Duty of Vigilance, and the Australian Modern Slavery Act. On a supranational level, in February 2022, the EU adopted its proposal on **corporate sustainability due diligence**, which aims to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour throughout global value chains.

This fast-evolving policy landscape has considerable implications for small businesses worldwide. As such, ITC and its partners have recently pioneered public-private co-creation initiatives and pilots to assess the potential implications of due diligence regulations for MSMEs in producer countries, and published guidelines for designing effective and inclusive accompanying measures¹.

Ultimately, as we gear up to achieve the sustainability moonshot, will these initiatives launch us in the right direction?

Reaching the moon

To answer this question, multiple questions must be addressed:

- With due diligence efforts spearheaded by major importing countries, how can affected stakeholders around the world, especially in producing countries, more meaningfully engage in the conversation?
- How will small-business owners be impacted by these legislations and what are their requirements?
- What is the role for voluntary sustainability standards in aiding this transition?
- Ultimately, how effective and inclusive is corporate sustainability governance as a vehicle to achieve the moonshot and reach the moon?

The panels will place due diligence squarely in today's context, and also examine how due diligence can be linked to risk mitigation in a world facing supply chain disruptions amid geopolitical instability and climate change. To address these issues, ITC will bring together its trusted network of partners and experts from around the world, with a special focus on voices from producing countries, and leverage its partnerships to support MSMEs.

Objectives

- Break down the corporate sustainability due diligence concept: Why did it emerge? What are the regulatory approaches?
- Discuss the implications of the due diligence regulations for different actors in the supply chain, from micro-and small-business owners to buyers and retailers
- Explore how we can move beyond good intentions towards sustainable transformation
- Identify measures to support the implementation and promotion of a socially and environmentally sustainable transformation

¹ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/publications/making-mandatory-human-rights-and-environmental-due-diligence-work-all_en

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

10:00-10:30	REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE
10:30-10:50	INAUGURAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND OPENING REMARKS
10:50-12:10	PANEL 1 Defining the mission: what is the sustainable development moonshot?
12:10-13:00	LUNCH
13:00-13:20	SPECIAL KEYNOTE
13:25-14:45	PANEL 2 Building the spacecraft: corporate sustainability due diligence
14:45-15:00	COFFEE BREAK
15:00-16:20	PANEL 3 Ready for take-off?
16:20-16:40	CLOSING DIALOGUE
16:40 onwards	COCKTAIL

AGENDA

10:00-10:30 REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE

10:30-10:50 INAUGURAL KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND OPENING REMARKS

- **Pamela Coke-Hamilton**, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC)
- **Rebeca Grynspan**, Secretary-General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Other esteemed speakers

10:50-12:10 **PANEL 1: DEFINING THE MISSION: WHAT IS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MOONSHOT?**

Phase 1 of any moonshot requires defining the why – and uniting different actors behind a common vision and timeline. What does the mission entail?

Corporate sustainability due diligence is no different, and this panel will address the reasons behind corporate sustainability regulations, including the adverse impacts upstream. Indeed, from the food and beverage sector to electronics, from agriculture to apparel, no trading sector is immune to environmental and human rights violations. How widespread are these environmental and human rights adverse effects? Which sectors are most at risk? Let's discuss Mission Sustainable Development.

- Speakers**
- **Jeffrey Sachs**, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University, USA
 - **Pamela Coke-Hamilton**, Executive Director, ITC, Switzerland
 - **Siddharth Kara**, Author, researcher, screenwriter and activist on modern slavery, USA
 - **Danielle Morley**, CEO, Bonsucro, United Kingdom

Moderator **Stacey Vanek Smith**, Author, Global Economics Correspondent, National Public Radio (NPR), USA

12:10-13:00 LUNCH

13:00-13:20 SPECIAL KEYNOTE

- **Helene Budliger Artieda**, State Secretary, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Switzerland

13:25-14:45 **PANEL 2: BUILDING THE SPACECRAFT: CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY DUE DILIGENCE**

What sort of a spacecraft is needed for our moonshot? And if corporate sustainability due diligence is the spacecraft, what does the timeline look like? When and how can it reach the moon?

This panel sets the scene by exploring how *corporate sustainability due diligence* can be a tool to achieve sustainable development, and identifies the challenges and opportunities that spring from these regulations. The panel members will discuss the policy landscape and address questions such as: What are the main implications for suppliers in international value chains, especially for small-business owners? Where do developing countries, and particularly least developed countries (LDCs) stand in this changing policy landscape? How can we

maximize stakeholder engagement? How can developing countries make the transition while maintaining their economic development goals?

- Speakers**
- **Francisco Pirez Gordillo**, Senior Adviser on Sustainability, Due Diligence and Accompanying Measures, ITC, Switzerland
 - **Gabriel Quijandría**, Regional Director for South America, IUCN, Ecuador
 - **H. E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad**, Minister of Environment, Arab Republic of Egypt
 - **Heidi Hautala**, Finnish Member of European Parliament for the Greens & Vice President, European Parliament, Belgium

Moderator **Stacey Vanek Smith**, Author, Global Economics Correspondent, NPR, USA

14:45-15:00 **COFFEE BREAK**

15:00-16:20 **PANEL 3: Ready for take-off?**

Apollo 11 lifted off on 16 July 1969, as millions of people around the world held their breath. In our case, how can we ensure that corporate sustainability due diligence takes off successfully?

Legal frameworks on mandatory corporate sustainability due diligence must go hand-in-hand with concrete support, partnerships and collective action to succeed. How can developing country producers manage the costs and technical requirements? What type of assistance will they need to comply with these regulations?

Ultimately, how can we move beyond “business-as-usual” and ensure that new regulation and practices bring change on the ground – at scale – and do not merely become a box-ticking exercise? This panel will explore the wide array of potential accompanying measures, bringing together buyers and retailers, small-business owners, sustainability standards experts and lead thinkers on the way forward, to ensure that the proverbial “Eagle” indeed lands safely.

- Speakers**
- **Ana Yaluff**, Sustainability Manager, ADM, Germany
 - **Daniele Giovannucci**, President & Co-founder, Committee on Sustainability Assessment, USA
 - **Emi-Beth Aku Quantson**, Founder & CEO, Kawa Moka Coffee Company, Ghana
 - **Marika de Peña**, President, CLAC (Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers), Dominican Republic

Moderator **Stacey Vanek Smith**, Author, Global Economics Correspondent, NPR, USA

16:20-16:40 **CLOSING DIALOGUE**

- **Pamela Coke-Hamilton**, Executive Director, International Trade Centre (ITC)
- **Marie-Claire Graf**, Climate justice activist and youth advocate

Moderator **Stacey Vanek Smith**, Author, Global Economics Correspondent, NPR, USA