



2030 Trends: Extending the Life of Things

Overview

A circular economy responds to the main challenges of our time; helping our economy to become more competitive and resilient while relieving the pressure on our resources and the environment. In a world where the population is on the rise, with huge demand placed on land, water, food, feed, raw materials and energy, it makes business sense to reflect on our reliance on external resources. Innovation is key, not only to achieve a circular economy but to make headway in all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and only through considering the limitations of the earth's resources and through incorporating innovative strategies can we remain resilient in a sustainable world.

Hear insight on the future trends, innovations and key challenges that will be faced by businesses in the years to come.

Speakers

Moderator (of plenary discussion afterwards): **Julie Gichuru**, FTA Conference Moderator, Owner at Arimus Media Limited

- **Dr. Janez Potočnik**, Co-Chair of International Resource Panel at United Nations Environment Programme
- **Aranca González**, Executive Director at the International Trade Centre
- **Amy Hall**, Director of Social Consciousness at EILEEN FISHER
- **Parul Sharma**, Head of CSR Compliance at Vinge Law Firm

Session Highlights

The 20th century was the century of great acceleration – in one generation we will have an additional 2.5bn people.

100 years ago there were 1.5bn people on the planet.

This is all happening in countries which are relatively less developed

The pressure on resources will be enormous.

Nearly 800 mil people are hungry.

2bn people are obese.

Half a million people are dying prematurely because of pollution.

In just a few years, China has used more cement than the US has in the past century.

First time ever that we're facing a human ecosystem.

Producers and consumers are behaving rationally and then we are surprised when we have environmental problems. The thing for which we should all fight for is that socio-economic systems would be subordinated by respecting that we are living in a world with limits and boundaries

In Zambia, somebody was privately pocketing money from water pollution, so it will take until 2040 for them to have a system like we now enjoy in Europe.

It's important to look at how much you earn – not just GDP. Obviously developing countries will have a higher growth rate. We are focusing too much on flows instead of stocks. 10% growth means doubling of everything in 7 years.

Consumption has been a stronger driver of material use than population growth in last 40 years. Richer countries consume much more than poorer countries.

The better you are living, the better your footprint. In development, you always go up the graph in terms of footprint, then you start to move down when you realise the problems.

Developed countries have to show that we are able and willing to move down. Developing countries cannot repeat our mistakes because there are not the resources. Trade has grown faster than domestic extraction.

Only two continents are net importers of raw materials – Europe and America. Everyone else are net exporters.

It's extremely important that we connect the whole story, land, water etc.

This is not happening (resource efficiency) quickly enough. Using other incentives is crucial (prices, taxes).

On the Circular Economy:

The circular economy story is keeping the resources as long as possible in the production cycle. You can do it however you want, you can redesign the business model, tell consumers to use products differently...

Which are the major investment opportunities in the circular economy world: mobility, food sector

Circular and digital are on the same curve.

12 of SDGs linked to resources. Trade-offs are unavoidable – production and consumptions is essential. If we do not change economics, we will not be able to change the SDGs.

Integrating all pillars of sustainability should be essential. Circular economy is a good concept to operate in practice. But you should be an important part of the answer.

We should refocus our efforts not into the consequences of migration but the things leading to them.

All sectors should actively participate in the change. If we are to avoid frequent conflicts and problems this needs to be addressed now.

It's a major new opportunity for development.

Quotes

- "The circular economy story is keeping the resources as long as possible in the production cycle. You can do it however you want, you can redesign the business model, tell consumers to use products differently..."
- "The better you are living, the better your footprint. In development, you always go up the graph in terms of footprint, then you start to move down when you realise the problems."
- "Developed countries have to show that we are able and willing to move down. Developing countries cannot repeat our mistakes because there are not the resources. Trade has grown faster than domestic extraction."
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Plenary Discussion Highlights –

Should countries adopt mandatory CSR rules? (like in Brazil, India etc)

Who's best placed to lead on these issues?

Potočník: We are critical of the EU today. But we should also be proud. The first continent agreed to put on a higher level their management responsibility. We are the best pilot model in the world on how we should deal with those things. But this is the best.

I think the best thing that happened to climate change was the statement of Trump. Finally, people have understood that waiting for the leaders will not deliver. You are the leaders, you should do it.

Gonzalez: A lot of the ingenuity that is getting us there is also coming from the south, so it's not necessarily looking at the usual suspects in the north. It's going to be poly-governance, not the usual governance. A lot of it is being driven by civil society and other groups.

Sharma: The interacting between civil society groups and corporations and government is the new partnershiping we should look at.

Potočník: I was participating in the World Circular Economy Forum in Helsinki last month and they had to close the registrations because there were so many private sector reps there – so the genie is out of the bottle.

Parul: Brazil and India have picked a few hardcore SDG goals – I'm all for mandatory rules and we need more legislation and regulation in this area.

Gonzalez: The whole company has to do good. CSR can't be the department doing good while everyone else is doing business – it has to be everyone doing good.