

The Old Mutual Future of Sustainability Summit: Day 2 highlights

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On 1 July 2022, day 2 of the [Old Mutual Future of Sustainability Summit](#), organised by [Topco Media](#), continued after a highly successful first day. Over 5,000 virtual attendees from more than 30 countries joined the event and engaged through the trending hashtags #FOS2022 and UpYourESGame. And as promised, the innovative discussions on creating environmental, social and governance sustainability didn't disappoint.



Ralf Fletcher, CEO, Topco Media



Iain Williamson, CEO, Old Mutual

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The summit's second day kicked off with a welcoming speech by Ralf Fletcher, CEO of Topco Media, during which he encouraged attendees to participate in the conversation to find solutions to our current sustainability challenges. To reach the target of net zero by 2050, he identified four accelerators:

- Influence policy and politics through a unified approach
- Turn plans into action
- Find and nurture innovations
- Grow the funding for our future

Portia Bangerezako, head of Sustainability at Old Mutual, addressed the conference and emphasised the importance of our actions in the fight for sustainability and against climate change. Although many aspects, like the pandemic and extreme weather damage, are out of our control, we can still take action by having a more sustainable approach to living. "The devastating social and economic impact of these developments has required an altogether different response from all players across the sectional divide. A response that would finally begin to recognise the systemic interconnectedness between environmental, social and governance systems and deliver a more joined-up and coordinated effort to address these issues."

The summit saw numerous highlights, from discussions on fair pay to recycling. Here are a few highlights:

Case study: Green washing

The first case study of day two was presented by Jorja Wilkins, divisional executive: Marketing and Marketing Services of Primedia Outdoor. This study showed that brands realise the need to put 'green' first if they want to sell their products and services. Media supply chains must also act in pursuit of net-zero because consumers look to 'green' products and companies as the new standard when making purchase decisions. Some greenwash ads present confusing or misleading claims that lack concrete information about the product's environmental impacts. Therefore, it's up to the media industry to be honest and transparent about what the corporations or industries are doing to reach net zero.

Case study: A pathway to a second life for plastics

This case study, presented by Dion Drew, sustainability director at Coca-Cola, highlighted the importance of understanding that recycling is a balancing act between the two halves of the cost-value equation. The question was raised whether we can collect, sort and process recyclables for less than the value we can get when we sell the recyclables and make a return on investment? One of the benefits of Project Up is an increased understanding of the prices paid for recyclables across South Africa. "There is a need to help close the economic gaps that will develop as we push for higher and higher collection and recycling rates."

Fireside chat: Climate impact on the retail value chain and Shoprite's response

The discussion led by Shanjeev Raghubir, sustainability manager at Shoprite Holdings, raised numerous interesting points. "When we see that global warming impacts like this, it impacts the supply of goods, the availability, the quality and the price. Our supply chain looks at diversifying supplies, so we're not restricted to one supplier based in one part of the country. When we use less energy, we reduce our greenhouse gasses, leading to climate change. The Shoprite Group sponsors more than 170 community food gardens and more than 3,000 household food gardens across South Africa. It is the most vulnerable in our society that faces the biggest impact when it comes to climate change-related disasters."

Panel discussion: The future of sustainability in retail is now!

The panellists for this discussion included:

- Feroz Koor, Group head of sustainability at Woolworths: “It’s not just about us doing the right thing; it’s about us influencing where we can. Not just on the consumer side but also behind the scenes with suppliers. No one will deliver something on their own without buying from several players.”
- André Nel, general manager of sustainability at Pick ‘n Pay: “We often think that sustainability is an expense or that it adds cost, but it doesn’t have to. As a customer, you’re very dependent on where you shop and the sustainable products they offer.”
- Margo Fargo, environmentalist and entrepreneur, founder of Far_Go Straws: “When we talk about respecting the environment and being sustainable, from retail to clothing to supply chain to produce, it’s important to remind ourselves as people, we take the power, and we have the responsibility. We don’t have to wait for big organisations to make that change.”

On that note, it’s clear that the future of sustainability is firmly in our hands. We have the power to improve our circumstances by making better, more sustainable choices and helping Mother Earth to exceed our existence and preserve our environment for generations to come.

This year’s Old Mutual Future of Sustainability Summit was a raving success, and we’re excited about next year’s event, which will include rewards. Remember to claim your delegate badge and certificate of attendance to share with the world.

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