



Sedex Conference **2018** Summary



The Sedex Conference 2018 took place on the 13th – 14th March in London's financial district at The Brewery. The event brought together world-leaders in sustainability to discuss the various ways in which we can go 'beyond compliance', through practical examples, panel sessions and debates.



From discussing the future of impact measurement, to leadership skills, to forced labour, and technology innovation – the conference covered relevant topics in responsible sourcing and supply chains. Delegates from hundreds of organisations listened to and engaged with a range of speakers.

The CEO of Sedex, Jonathan Ivelaw-Chapman then took to the floor to firstly review the difference a year has made since the last Sedex Conference with many global issues in a worse state. Jonathan discussed how all too often, businesses are simply meeting objectives and standards, than striving to go beyond them helping organisations perform better socially, environmentally and financially.

Martine Croxall, BBC Presenter and Journalist, opened the conference and welcomed delegates from over 40 countries, including hundreds of online webcast attendees, to hear from experts on a range of key topics around the theme 'Impact Through Leadership. Defining 'Beyond Compliance' in Responsible Sourcing'.



Key themes covered at the Sedex Conference 2018 included:

- **Martine Croxall** moderated a panel discussion on '**Defining beyond compliance – what does this mean to you?**', including key points from **Wesley Wilson**, **Professor Steve Evans** from **Cambridge University**, and **Genevieve LeBaron** from **University of Sheffield**. During the discussion, **Avedis Seferian** re-iterated "you do not fatten a pig by weighing it" – suggesting audit and measurement alone would not make the change required, a statement that resonated with the panel and delegates. The panel also went into great detail to debate the evolution of compliance, with frank input from **Marco Baren**, of **Philips**, about stopping auditing completely.
- **Dr Sally Uren OBE**, the Chief Executive of **Forum for the Future**, keynote discussed how trends and systems interact in order to influence society. Changes to systems included insightful discussion on citizen innovation, shifting retail and consumption, and changes in technology including blockchain development.
- Our sponsor breakout **DNV GL** lead a talk about their use of blockchain adoption for certification, helping to change how supply chains operate. The talk highlighted how technology has helped move from owning platforms to governing them, increasing depth in verifications at a lower cost, and reducing audit report counterfeiting.

Tom Smith, the Director of Stakeholder Strategy for **Walmart**, gave a keynote speech discussing 'Trust' within responsible supply chains. Tom analysed why and how consumers begin to trust companies, whilst navigating through what he described as a VUCA world – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous.



Key themes covered in the Sedex Conference 2018:

To kick-start day two, **Warner Ten Kate**, the Dutch National Public Prosecutor for Trafficking in Human Beings and People Smuggling, led a fascinating keynote where he discussed modern slavery occurrences and legal implications in the Netherlands and beyond, and the various ways authorities and corporations can tackle such issues.

The breakout session '**The future of impact measurement**' discussed the idea of impact measurement becoming the 'new' risk assessment, with **Louise Nicholls** from **M&S** emphasising that measuring impact is essential in understanding the effectiveness of specific interventions.

The panel debate '**Whose responsibility is it to go beyond compliance**' argued the statement: 'This house believes that better compliance alone is insufficient and we are all responsible for going beyond compliance'. **Jill Tucker, Dr Simon Lord, Rona Starr** and **Baptiste Carrier-Pradel** discussed this challenging topic, with most of the audience agreeing with the motion. The panel agreed that there is time and place for audits and certifications; they are limited in scope. Further challenges discussed included ensuring organisations understand that 'beyond compliance' cannot be achieved if they have yet to reach 'compliance'.

Trevor Waldock, the founder and CEO of **Emerging Leaders**, delivered a powerful keynote speech. Trevor explained how empowering workers and people become their own leaders can create effective and positive change in businesses and communities.

The '**Changing approach from risk management to impact**' breakout session saw representatives from companies such as the **BBC** and **Twinings**, discuss approaches to best engage with workers to identify efforts are actually making an impact on their lives, as well as the specific programmes currently being used (by Twinings) in other countries.

'Modern Slavery – turning talk into action' panel focused on what businesses and legislators can do to combat slavery, including the delivery of schemes for victim support, investment in training and capability of suppliers, education awareness programmes and increased governmental support in this area.

Gavin Milligan's breakout focused on how companies can use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guide to go beyond compliance. This discussion reiterated the importance of viewing the goals alongside each other and emphasised that learning from and communicating with other businesses is key to improving your own sustainability policies.

'Achieving impact from the start' breakout highlighted the various aspects organisations need to address when creating their sustainability goals; from how to gather 'good' data, to gaining control of your supply chain.

The breakout **'Human rights made simple'**, was evident that whilst many organisations have a human rights policy in place, very few have actually carried out a human rights impact assessment. It was agreed that a human rights approach is a natural evolution moving on from a purely compliance-based approach, but we must ensure this remains holistic and addresses the root cause.

The breakout **'Technology innovation in sustainable sourcing'** discussed the latest technology that has the potential to aid responsible business within supply chains. They agreed that technologies such as blockchain adds an invaluable contribution and expressed that businesses must be careful not to lose the human element within these programmes.

A panel with from **Sedex, Woolworths SA** and **ILO** to name a few, spoke during the breakout session for **'Transforming supplier training and capacity building'**. They agreed that collaboration was key and the sharing of expertise and understanding was integral to achieve real improvements. Interestingly, alternative routes of communication were discussed, with the suggestions of buyers first building relationships with suppliers before actioning audits.



- **'Beyond Health and Safety, addressing worker well-being'** breakout focused on the worker health and safety. Re-assessing the use of only 'voluntary' assessments and the ways to look beyond the physical security of workers to understand their true 'well-being'.
- **Keren Pybus** keynote discussed changes to the apparel manufacturing industry in Africa, alongside videos of her colleague **Linda Ampah**, who offered real-life stories of how her employees' lives have changed for the better, through the training offered by **Ethical Apparel Africa**.
- Final keynote by **Marco Baren**, of **Philips**, who challenged the standard compliance processes, and discussed how he and his team are implementing new practices; replacing traditional audit reliance with great suppliers engagement.



We were also delighted to host the Sedex Awards, celebrating the fantastic work done by Sedex members worldwide, giving them the opportunity to highlight the sustainable work they have carried out across a range of different industries.

The Winners of each category were:

- Most Innovative New Programme: Laborlink (USA) for their mobile technology that established a two-way communication channel for workers to share their anonymous views in real-time, and for companies to receive unfiltered data directly from workers.
- Best New Programme Implemented: Clas Ohlson (Sweden) worked with QuizRR to build capacity and awareness through innovative training solutions in workers' rights and responsibilities, health & safety and worker engagement.
- Best Example of Continuous Improvement: Mondelēz (USA) for their Cocoa Life scheme backed by a \$400 million investment to help empower cocoa communities in a sustainable cocoa supply chain.
- Best Collaborative Effort: James Cropper (UK) for their upcycling scheme with Selfridges and Veolia, which has seen used coffee cups being upcycled into Selfridges iconic yellow shopping bags.



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