**Sustainability Activities**

Unilever has long been recognised for its comprehensive approach to sustainability focusing on both environmental and social responsibility. It has laid down an ambitious sustainability targets, environmental goals where the company has committed to decreasing virgin plastic use by 50% in the medium term of 2025 and to ensure that all the packaging are reusable recyclable or compostable. By 2023, it has lowered virgin plastic usage by 16% and employed more than 300,000 metric tons of recycled plastic, having a rise compared to the prior year, which was 10%. The company is also working to cut the carbon footprint by launching Clean Future program, which aims at transition from fossil fuel-derived ingredients to renewable ones by 2030 and the company’s net-zero emission target is planned for 2039. This has been part of Unilever’s sustainability commitment; in January 2023, the company reported that over 50% of its electricity was generated from renewables, and it had cut emissions per unit of output by 40% since 2015. This is in line with Unilever’s overall climate plan which is a set of operational and product focused initiatives aimed at reducing carbon foot printing.

Social responsibility is another key part of the company’s sustainability plan with objectives oriented towards enhancing the livelihood of people in the supply chain. The Sustainable Agriculture Principles (SAP) give guidance to ethical employment relations based on, amongst others, wage levels, working condition, and no use of child labour in the supply chain at Unilever. Subsequently, the company initiated its Sustainable Living Plan in 2010 to help enhance the private label and the general well-being of a billion people by 2025; they partially achieved regards through multiple health and hygiene crusades; these include Lifebuoy handwashing campaign that extended across 1.5 billion people from all the world by 2023. Additionally, Unilever has achieved a satisfactory level of realization of social objectives, for example, providing employment to women. For women’s empowerment in 2022 it said it has benefited over 2 million women through empowering them through training and enabling them to access credit, training and jobs among others.

Thus, Unilever’s sustainability initiatives show a commendable contribution to global sustainability, though the efficiency of such initiatives deserves a critical examination. For instance, the company has managed to source 79% of its agricultural raw materials sustainably; tea, 100% and palm oil at 99% aligning to SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Nevertheless, there are still sourcing issues in maintaining high standards of sustainability across the geographical location. The fact that many companies conform to the RSPO certification is commendable, however it does not completely tackle the related issues like small producer integration or regional deforestation which erases the positive effects of the Whole Supply Chain modus operandi.

Also, Unilever has made a 16% reduction in virgin plastic use and efforts to increase the use of recycled material, indicating significant steps towards a circular economy. However, these figures are a small fraction of its overall plastic utilization impact, which makes one doubt its capability of hitting the intended 50% cut by 2025. Even though it has formulated various carbon reduction plans such as renewable energy deployment to cover more than half of electricity mixes, the reliance on offset processes rather than direct emission reductions has stirred doubts regarding the company’s efforts towards the SDG 13.

To understand the structure of sustainability activities of the specified organization, we must identify and critically assess key initiatives, their interconnections, and their broader implications. Sustainability is typically framed around three pillars: environmental, social, and economic. To some extent, the measures to decrease carbon emission, the use of renewable power source, and waste minimization can be a proof of the environmental responsibility of Unilever. For instance, applying circular economy ideas like reusing and recycling materials showcase how resource efficiency is elated to environmental and economic goals. As for the company-level responsibilities, social objectives like enhancing employees’ treatment, diversity, and responsible individual and community interaction also signal the concern with social sustainability. These activities are usually related; for example, the workforce inclusion as one of the means to achieve innovation, which in its turn can drive more efficient and sustainable processes.

It is crucial for Unilever must integrate all efforts to the company’s economic plan and the cost control measures which are needed to finance future innovations in sustainable technologies. Research evidence supports the view that organizations with sound sustainability programmes gain greater brand identification and organizational competitive edge. This matters because such related sustainability activities collectively form an integrated effect, engaging and impacting on a broad range of issues such as climate change and inequality, while ensuring organizational resilience. Evidence from industry leaders shows that embedding sustainability into core operations fosters not just compliance but transformative growth.

While launching its products to the market Nestle, a company in the food and beverage industry has developed dynamic sustainability strategies to reduce its environmental footprint and improve social outcomes. The company has pledged that all packaging must be recyclable by 2025, and net zero greenhouse gas emissions must be achieved by 2050 (Olumide G. Omoegun et al., 2023). Nescafé Plan is responsible for training more than 200,000 farmers in over 30 countries in sustainable farming, ensuring 100% of coffee beans used by Nestlé are sustainably sourced (Azhar & Waheed, 2024). This is true, the company’s water stewardship seeks to conserve water, with the goal of sourcing or using only the amount that is required especially in its production processes, while exercising responsible water extraction amongst other things. Socially, Nestlé’s initiatives in Pakistan has provided incomes and better lives for the rural women by hiring them as sales agents, it also promoting the UNSDG 5 Gender Equality and UNSDGs 8 Decent Work and Economic Growths (Rahman, 2024). In addition, the Nestlé Cocoa Plan is to assist the farmers in Brazil to make better wage, education and better farming practices aiming at eradicating child labor in their supply chain.

However, these advancements have not come without criticism, which undermines sustainability. Critics have accused Nestlé of greenwashing, for example though its Nespresso recycling program, because independent studies have confirmed that only a little of the capsules get recycled (Bowen & Aragón-Correa, 2014). The company has been accused of unethical water extraction especially in drought-stricken regions areas, besides depleting the various water resources in the regions. Moreover, controversy remains concerning child labor and poor working conditions in its cocoa supply chain, the efficacy of these certifications is also questionable (Sharipova & Zaynutdinova, 2021). Another concern is about materiality as more than 80% of significant negative events appear to have been either not disclosed or disclosed in a manner that is less than comprehensive. These challenges show that Nestlé should develop more accountability measures and extend sustainability in its operations worldwide.

Nestlé’s efforts towards sustainability have a mixed contribution to environmental, social, and economic sustainability in some ways while a weak contribution in others. Socially, the 2025 goal of ensuring 100% recyclable packaging supports SDG 12 focusing on Sustainable Consumption and Production while depressing 100% carbon neutrality by 2050 is aligned to SDG 13 focusing on Climate Action: The company moderately contributes to sustainable development goals. Nevertheless, the allegations of greenwashing and, thus, low effectiveness of recycling initiatives cast doubt on these statements, which, in fact, identify a gap between ambition and execution. For instance, findings revealed by independent analyses concerning actual recycling rates of Nespresso capsules suggest that they remain rather low, which weakens the overall impact on sustainability goals.

Nestlé has pointed efforts towards gender equality, giving this area a satisfactory percentage in achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality) as well as dedicating impacts towards improving livelihoods along the agricultural value chain, though these impacts give SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) only 1% level contribution. Social sustainability is only partially addressed through hiring rural women as sales agents in Pakistan to avail job opportunities as well as other interventions. Nevertheless, some factors such as child labor and low wages in supply chains are fundamental problems which depict considerable concerns; thus, making it difficult for the company to adhere to the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Reports of low levels of traceability and continuing labour issues in cocoa sourcing also underline this deficit. Although firm-level activities employed a useful approach in Nestlé toward reaching sustainable development, the firm’s activities are also often limited by low level of transparency and implementation deficits. More specifically, the increase of accountability and the independent assessment as a way of improving sustainability is more valuable for the company.

Nestlé’s sustainable activities point to the company’s goal of reducing environmental impacts, improving supply chain stewardship, and promoting social inclusion. These endeavours illustrate integrated processes that are significant for responding to global issues which include climate change, resource depletion, and social disparities. For instance, environmental and social sustainability management goals are established with reference to SDG’s 12 (Responsible consumption) and SDG’S 13 (climate action). However, the effectiveness of these efforts is constrained by operational gaps as it can be seen by criticisms of incomplete recycling infrastructure and supply chain traceability issues.

**Abundant Earth Foundation Grouping and UNSDG Contribution**

Unilever has made significant progress in advancing Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), while the advancement made on Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) are moderate. For SDG 12, Unilever is making significant progress in its Sustainable Agriculture Principles (SAP), having attained 79% of its sustainable agricultural materials by 2023 towards the 100% target. Also, the commitment to reducing virgin plastic use by 50% by 2025 and making all its packaging usable or recyclable or compostable shows conscious engagements to responsible production and consumption though challenges like the need for more innovative packaging solutions remain.

In SDG 17, Unilever has significantly advanced its goals through strategic partnerships with NGOs and local farmers to improve supply chain sustainability. These collaborations have assisted in strengthening environmental and social practice, which has been a sign of a great advancement in partnerships. However, regarding SDG 11 the company’s actions are moderate in supporting sustainable city and community since more push is still required to point explicitly to urban sustainably besides impacts on the environment within Unilever’s supply chain. Focusing on the concept of greenwashing and imprecise ecological statements hinder full achievement in this area.

Unilever should focus on communities’ partnership reinforcement. Through strategic partnerships with local governments and NGOs, as well as grassroots organizations, Unilever will be able to design and implement the sustainable solutions required by urban centers such as waste management structures and renewable power structures. Combining disaster preparedness coordination with designs for rebuilding community resilience in cities would be an additional benefit. For instance, in arid areas, Unilever could tap into Municipalities to drive water-hefty schemes incorporating expert knowledge with pooled capital to deliver sustainable changes. Increase effectiveness of Unilever’s initiatives The following initiatives can greatly boost the support of Unilever’s SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and confidence and responsibility.

In addition, Unilever needs to go further in developing circular economy policies for a community by creating information campaigns that help in minimizing the waste and promoting consumption habits. Activities such as deposit return systems for plastic packaging or mobile recycling units could likely engage populace in the urban areas. It is equally important that small holder farmers are empowered; Unilever can provide training in sustainable farming techniques and fair access to global markets, ensuring economic inclusion while securing sustainable raw materials for its supply chain. Interventions like the urban farming projects would help improve the food security among urban dwellers while at the same time decreasing the pressure exerted on the environment hence ensure alignment with Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

The proposed strategies can be integrated into the existing sustainability framework of Unilever, making them well suited to its goals and challenges. Building local partnerships and support is particularly relevant as Unilever has already partnered with NGOs and governments under projects such as the Sustainable Living Plan. A possible way to go forward would be to extend such collaborations to tackle problems, which address community-specific issues like waste management and water conservation, critical for urban sustainability.

Circular economic initiatives and empowering smallholder farmers are two practical and feasible strategies because Unilever already has backgrounds in implementing sustainable sourcing strategy and engaging the consumers. This strategy aligns well with its calls for appropriate consumption to cut the amount of waste produced throughout the value chain. Similarly, enhancing the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through sustainable agriculture practices aligns with its sourcing standards aimed at concerns of food security and minority economic engagement.

Nestlé’s sustainability activities represent a major contribution towards the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) primarily regarding Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17). Thus, the commitment to sourcing from the certified suppliers, keeping a high level of the food safety and following strong courses of sustainability is the evidence of the progress towards the SDG 12. Their focus on limiting waste, raising food safety, and incorporating regenerative agriculture practices further contributes to the goal, showcasing a moderate to significant contribution.

moderate progress in addressing climate impact and supply chain emissions.

To enhance Nestlé’s strategic actions in the areas of Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), the company would be to recruit and develop professionals with expertise in sustainable supply chain management, climate change, and regenerative agriculture. This could be done by investing in specialized talent programs and partnerships with universities in which sustainability is studied. These professionals would assist in intensifying the integration of sustainability into Nestlé’s supply chain worldwide, resource traceability, and usage of eco-friendly material, particularly in packaging. Training of current employees on sustainable practice would also bring a stronger internal corporate culture in environmentalism.

Furthermore, Nestlé can improve the sustainability visibility of the company through increased marketing efforts that emphasizes its commitment to the UNSDGs, through specific actions such as, reduction of waste, sustainable procurement, and food safety measures. Collaborating with external sustainability managers or replicating best practices from other organisations such as Patagonia’s supply chain practices could in turn augment Nestlé’s drive. This approach would enhance both their internal sustainability practices and the perception of their brand externally.

A highly suitable strategy for Nestle, given their commitment to achieving significant progress in SDG 12 and SDG 17 is recruiting and developing professional in sustainability. All of these are evident in their existing strategies and initiatives that show their willingness to invest in constant improvements, including the recent one in the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) process , as well as their initiative in sustainable sourcing. By strengthening their workforce with experts in climate change, supply chain transparency, and regenerative agriculture, Nestlé can tackle the challenges of ensuring sustainability throughout their global supply chains. This strategy also matches their current Sustainability objectives and would assist them maintain their competitiveness in an industry that is now shifting to sustainably.

The increased marketing of Nestlé’s sustainability initiative is also justified since the company continues to focus on building consumer trust and advocacy of the UNSDGs. With sustainability as an essential part of their marketing strategy particularly in consumption of food products, effective marketing of this initiatives will enhance Nestlé’s leadership in sustainable practices.

**Global Forces and Influences**

The implementation of sustainable development at Unilever is highly influenced by several global drivers that inform its policies and objectives. UN goals such as sustainable development goals, inform Unilever commitment to climate change, sustainable agriculture and Healthcare. For instance, Unilever Sustainable Living Plan corresponds to SDGs, aiming to reduce environmental impacts while boosting the positive societal impact. Studies indicates that relationship with trade agreements is also important because they determine Unilever’s access to its markets and materials. Adherence of the company to the principle of international trade ensures it sources products sustainably and runs efficient operations across borders. Another trend that is observed in the market and accustoms Unilever’s attention to health and sustainability is the increasing demand for ethical and sustainable products growth in developed countries. Additionally, Government regulations and NGOs support create credibility in implementing sustainable initiatives such as waste management and environmental conservation, further cementing its role as a responsible corporate entity.

Politically, the company is bound to political standards of the respective market, for example food and drug laws, and is influenced by policy shifts like stricter regulations under the U.S. government, which could affect foreign businesses. Unilever’s growth directly depends on developments in the economy of a particular country. For example successful economies such as China and India possess growth opportunities for this company. However, high unemployment creates less spending even if staff is cheap to recruit. Unilever must adapt its marketing to diverse demographics, with localized advertisements such as multilingual campaigns in India for products like Lifebuoy. Innovation and R&D are important. They help the company cut expenses while streamlining production and developing new products. In legal terms, they need to ensure the protection of their intellectual property and comply with regulations across multiple markets.

The internal and external environment of Unilever provides support and challenges for its sustainability programmes. Its strength is its large global presence and reputable brand image, which Unilever could help selling sustainable products. Due to its focus on research and development it has come up with new technologies in production of eco-friendly products. However, weaknesses are discovered in the emerging market competition where customers prefer cheaper and traditionally made products. Additionally, constant price wars, especially in the FMCG industry, reduces the sustainability budget continuously. Threats include economic downturn that can affect consumers’ buying power by buying fewer sustainable products as well as increased competition from big firms such as P&G and small agile firms with quick innovation. Moreover, political pressures in different markets, including stricter environmental laws for environmental protection, make costs and coordinate complexities for the global operations. These forces directly impact the Unilever long-term sustainability plan since they tend to narrow margins, creating inefficiencies and may also stall innovation in cost-effective sustainable solutions.

To overcome these threats, therefore, Unilever should consider making localized marketing a priority. It is more effective to adjust products and campaigns according to regional needs since emerging markets are often significant. This strategy utilises the principle of market segmentation where it is believed that fixing the products to the local preference will inevitably lead to customer loyalty hence high sale. Also, the sustainable acquisition of raw materials with the help of partnerships with NGOs and government will help Unilever to strengthen its sustainable development. These partnerships offer access to resources, funding, and regulatory support to accomplish long term objectives necessary for a sustainable environment. Applying the circular economy approach such as the reuse of materials and minimization of waste will decrease operating expenses and allow to maintain sustainability during adverse economic conditions.

Building up localized marketing initiatives is the natural extension of Unilever’s strategy to adapt products to regional needs, as seen in Lifebuoy’s success in India’s multilingual campaigns. Apart from increasing consumer engagement it also fosters development in diverse markets. The mentioned collaborations with NGOs and governments also contributed to Unilever’s use of collaboration as one of the key enablers to deliver the global goals like the SDGs. Since cost saving by supply chain strategies are one of the economic risks which Unilever must manage, as seen from Its campaigns in reducing waste and optimizing resource use.

All sustainability efforts made by Nestle in relation to sustainability are influenced by key global forces such as United Nations (UN) policies, World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic policies, and World Trade Organization policies on trade. The UN’s SDGs guides Nestlé’s policies in areas like zero hunger, clean water, and sustainable consumption, exemplified by its sustainable sourcing and nutrition initiatives. The commitment of Nestlé to the UN Global Compact aligns its operations with principles on human rights and environmental stewardship. WHO regulates Nestlé through nutritional standards, and in their formulation of products such as infant formula, in adherence to the global health standards. Indirectly the IMF impacts Nestle through the economic system it puts in place hence market forces and supply chain cost of the nations where Nestle is situated. The WTO also sets rules governing trade, which impacts Nestlé’s global operations, and ensures adherence to fair trade and sustainability standards.

The political factors that impact on Nestlé operation globally include the revised labour laws banning child labour, which impacts the sourcing of cocoa, the taxation issues like one that forced Nestlé India to cut its corporate tax for increased production. The US-China trade war in raw material price also determines the price and the revenue generation ability. However, efforts are made to mitigate these risks by running local production. The demand for healthier products and sustainability also pushes Nestlé to reformulate products and embrace solar plant for energy sustainability. The organization has employed the use of technologies such as blockchain for supply chain transparency and real time water usage data. These are changes that enhance Nestlé’s operational efficiency and strengthens customer’s trust. For a company like Nestlé, compliance with legal requirements across nations is critical, this is evident in the disputes over KitKat's design trademark and breastfeeding substitutes. The pressure from its immediate environment also drives innovations like recyclable packaging and water sustainability projects.

Nestlé has a Research & Development system that allows it to introduce environmentally, friendly aspects inclusive of recyclable material and plant derived products putting it in a vantage place in promoting environmental conservation. As it has effectively developed a sustainable supply chain all over the world, economic volatility negatively impacted challenges including operational disruption and decreased demand for high-quality green products. More stringent regulations governing the use of plastics in packaging as well as the labeling of foods compounds compliance risks, with fines and operational inefficiencies the company’s cost structure. Since the emergence of niche competitors focused on the sustainability of its production and use, Nestlé is already experiencing the increased pressure to determine how to maintain its dominance in the market while addressing such issues and maintaining profitability while transitioning to greener production methods in increasingly complicated regulations and business environments.

To seize opportunities, Nestlé should concentrate on introducing affordable and healthy food product to the new economy, targeting the rising middle class. This can be attributed with the market demands theories as demand for local products increases the rate of sales. Alternative proteins and plant-based food claims are essential to locking in the growing sustainability niche. The innovation theory supports this by emphasizing the need to adapt to changing consumer preferences for healthier, eco-friendly products. To address threats, Nestlé must develop a robust supply chain that adopts sustainable sourcing. This responds to the risk management theory that advocates for long term stability by eliminating sources of disturbance. equal importance should be given to the establishment of sustainable monitoring system for performance evaluation. Also, It adheres to the performance management theory where Nestlé’s operations reflect the organisation’s sustainability objectives, its practices are transparent and legal, thus building trust and creating sustainable business models to operate under competitiveness in future markets.

The recommendations can potentially solve sustainability issues because they directly address Nestlé’s key sustainability challenges, focusing on emerging markets and green innovations, areas in which Nestle is already investing. It is consistent with its current strategy of boosting nutrition around the globe and Nestle’s established goals of the UN SDGs, by promoting nutrition globally. The demand for shift to other proteins also translates to trends in the food companies. For instance, Beyond Meat have successfully captured market share. However, what is required is that these strategies are not only additions but changes to reflect Nestlé vision of environmental stewardship as seen in its commitment to reduce the use of plastic.

**Conclusion**

Currently, Unilever and Nestlé present vast and diverse sustainable activities that include responsible sourcing, packaging innovation, and health management multilingual campaign among others for Unilever; and focusing on plans like plant-based products, water conservation, and blockchain-enabled supply chain transparency among others for Nestlé. Both company’s sustainability efforts align with the UN SDGs like: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Partnership for the Goals. However, Unilever inclines more toward embedding the environmental and social objectives through supporting the practice of sustainable farming and community-based consumption incentives, while Nestlé puts maximum emphasis on environmental sustainability measures like the recycle and reusable packaging, and safe water utilization. Unilever adopt a more general Consumer Engagement approach, while on the other hand Nestlé seems to major in Technological Innovations in consumer engagement for environmental sustainability. Though overlapping in goals, their focus diverges, highlighting Unilever’s social inclusivity against Nestlé’s innovation-driven environmental strategy.

Unilever’s efforts, such as reducing plastic waste through its reusable and biodegradable packaging initiative, have significantly supported SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), it has eliminated more than 100,000 tons of waste from circulation within a given year. However, challenges persist in expanding such initiatives across the globe thereby limiting its impact in the low-income markets. Nestlé’s implementation of sustainable agriculture program, namely the Farmer Connect has positively impacted 600,000 farmers by increasing crop yields and incomes – thus effectively supporting achievement of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). While commendable, this puts Nestlé at risk through dependence on climate sensitive crops such as cocoa and coffee, thus limiting long term output. Both organizations exhibit measurable progress but face challenges: Unilever in equitable scalability and Nestlé in systemic agricultural sustainability solutions that limit their overall UNSDG achievements.

The vast presence of Nestle’s across the globe makes sustainable farming its practices like Farmer Connect touching the life of millions of people in the rural economies particularly in commodities crops. But relying on these crops and fragile supply chains are constraints when it comes to scale. While not as dependent on agriculture as the other competitors, Unilever certainly goes further in implementing sustainability across nearly all areas of the business, and its Sustainable Living Plan explicitly covers everything from product development to supply chain and marketing. This makes them more effective to address more localized issues such as biodegradable packing yet still lack the kind of outreach that Nestlé must affect food systems worldwide. Overall Nestlé has the largest coverage in addressing SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) still it does not have a strong operational alignment with other SDGs as seen in the case of Unilever which lately integrated sustainability into its operations but is challenged in engaging rural producers in agriculture.

Unilever appears to have a positive influence on global sustainability because of the overall incorporation of the sustainability and the company’s compliance with diverse UNSDGs. It has further adopted the Sustainable Living Plan that covers climate action, and responsible consumption, including tangible performance such as reduction of overall absolute CO₂ emissions by 64% across operations. Hence some important features such as scalability in rural agriculture a strength for Nestlé is a limitation. Farmer Connect by Nestlé has been providing considerable support to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and rural producers, yet its efforts are impaired by focus on commodity-linked products with volatile economic and environmental performance. Whereas Unilever targets many areas for systemic changes, upgrading agricultural activities could mirror Nestle’s rural effect. Overall, both struggles to address the issue of plastic waste in entirety.