



## The greatest story (n)ever told

### The Copenhagen Manifesto on Sustainable Growth

Today we are seeing the dawn of the sustainable economy. It is emerging in dynamic cities, competitive companies and vibrant economies all over the world. It is improving quality of life for citizens. It is making our communities more livable. It is creating prosperity and new business opportunities – and hope.

It is the greatest story never told.

While we have struggled to understand and address the complexity of the global crises, a multitude of encouraging examples of sustainable practices have been successfully implemented around us. On a daily basis they are demonstrating that economic prosperity, social welfare and environmental responsibility can go hand in hand. That sustainability is about people, society and everyday life.

In coming years, we must follow their lead. We must learn, share, replicate, inspire – and be inspired. We must work together to discover, discuss and understand the nature of the sustainable economy - and how we collectively can unleash its potential for society as a whole.

We, 350 leaders and experts from 21 countries, have met in Copenhagen, Denmark, to take this leadership forward. Over the course of two days, we have examined the evidence behind “green growth”, based on research by leading scholars, and we have scrutinized pathways and solutions.

### Evidence: The potential awaiting us

We have seen a large body of evidence that businesses, civic society, cities and countries are making a positive difference and creating real growth, e.g. how

- buildings, where we spend 90% of our time, have huge potential for both lowering environmental impact and improving our quality of life. Sustainable buildings with healthy indoor climate, whether retrofitted or new build, can increase learning ability amongst youngsters by 20%, enhance productivity in our workplaces and improve livability in our homes.
- green cities are healthier and more livable, efficient and innovative. Green projects in a city like Copenhagen create economic and social benefits in addition to environmental, e.g. bicycling that annually saves 43 million USD due to less congestion and fewer accidents. For every kilometer traveled by bike instead of a car the city saves approx 7 cents.
- wind energy creates predictability and economic benefits such as stable prices, secure energy supplies, and significant new spin off businesses. Wind energy is an abundant and therefore increasingly competitive energy source that can fuel society’s growth.
- intelligent energy networks benefit society through optimization of energy use and avoided costs of overproduction, and at the same time enable new and additional markets and business models. The potential for smart grid equipment alone is estimated to reach between 15 and 31 billion USD in 2014.



- bio technology can turn waste and biomass into high value products such sustainable chemicals, energy and materials that have hitherto been based on oil.
- there is an emerging understanding of the positive synergies between solutions within welfare and sustainability. In the healthcare sector digital solutions can e.g. improve the treatment and safety for patients and reduce transportation.

These are few of the examples that form an image of a sustainable society in the near future that is more efficient, more innovative, more collaborative, healthier, cleaner, safer - and at the same time wealthier. This is the future we can choose. To start, we can multiply these examples of best practice (refer to the Best Practice Catalogue with many more examples).

We have come to see that creating the sustainable economy is a historic systems transformation akin to those of the railroad and the internet and that the benefits will go far beyond the cleantech and energy sectors themselves. True value creation comes not only from replacing “brown” with “green”, but in the new markets, jobs, products and services that more efficient integrated transport systems, intelligent energy systems, houses and cars will foster.

In a time of economic crisis, this is a promising way to grow the global economy and increase prosperity for all.

### **Leading by example**

Leaders can and should lead by example. Leaders should re-think business models to create value in a sustainable economy. Leaders can accelerate the transition by experimenting and encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit, by setting up public-private partnerships, by sharing information, by enabling people to make sustainable choices. By greening urbanization, by committing to clear and ambitious goals. Governments must enable cities to become platforms for innovative systemic solutions that unleash the green growth potential to the benefit of society as a whole.

Together, we have produced a comprehensive catalogue of examples and guidelines on how to shape a sustainable economy in order to underpin this manifesto. Together, we dare to lead.

### **The New Narrative**

First and foremost, we have assessed the potential and the benefits of the transition for society as a whole, because we strongly believe that in order to accelerate it, we need to put people first. What promotes change is a vision of where to go; presenting consumers, the electorate and the media with a tangible, compelling image of what the world would look like if we unleashed the potential. The green economy, however, is not a goal in itself. It is a means to achieve a better tomorrow and higher quality of life for people all over the world.

With effective and qualified communication we will succeed. Therefore we have developed a set of Principles for Sustainability Communication (see appendix) – and we have worked to create a green communication role model, an example of a new narrative, that can move hearts and minds; Sustainia, a fact-based scenario of how our world could look in 2020 if we implemented the green solutions at hand.



We met in Copenhagen to give this vision form and shape - but work has only just begun. We invite you to contribute with your expertise and lessons learned and to share our positive spirit in this endeavor.

We call upon you to work with us, act – and take lead. Accelerating the emerging sustainable economy is a challenge we can only meet in common.

We pledge to make our significant contribution. We are already changing our business models and strategies as organizations and institutions to accelerate the transition, and as profitable businesses, vibrant cities and competitive economies we testify to the fact that there is no contradiction between sustainability and prosperity.

The sustainable economy is emerging around us. It is our choice if we want to embrace it – and turn it into the greatest story ever told.

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*Adopted in Copenhagen on 13th of October 2011 and presented to the EU Commission for Climate Action, the OECD, the Danish Government, the C40, Eurocities and the UN Global Compact in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainability, Rio+20.*

*Signed by:*

Councilors

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