



Brief overview of your role as President (Southeast Asia and Australasia) at Unilever:

Pier Luigi Sigismondi is the President of Unilever South East Asia and Australasia (SEAA) - one of Unilever's most dynamic and fast-growing regions comprising ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand, prior to which he was Chief Supply Officer across the whole of Unilever. He is a Non-Executive Director on the Board of Ben & Jerry's and on the Council of Food Industry Asia (Further details in the biography)

Was there a defining moment in your career path that led you to where you are today?

There have been many defining moments, but the one that has really helped to anchor me during my career has been discovering my own purpose 'build to last', in my pursuit to build strong legacies that can endure for generations to come. It came from my own humble background, my heritage and the values my parents instilled in my growing years that led me to discover this purpose. For me, this means making a difference in everything I do both personally and professionally for the business and for my people as strong and resilient leaders of the future.

What is a unique challenge faced by Unilever in the ASEAN region?

With its 600 million + consumers, growing middle class and young demographics, ASEAN is a priority for Unilever. We are hugely supportive of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which aims to create a globally connected single market and production base where there will be free flow of goods, services, investments, skilled labor and freer flow of capital. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed and these include:

- Regional harmonization of regulations
- Reduction and eventual removal of all non-tariff barriers
- A more level playing field with focused changes in legislation and regulation
- A stronger commitment to sustainable development across businesses

Eliminating these challenges can help businesses unleash the region's full potential.

Any exciting news/developments one can look forward to in 2017?

While there are several exciting initiatives across the region, the one that we are most excited about is our recent launch of the LEVEL3 Hub, part of the global Unilever Foundry. LEVEL3 is a collaborative workspace in our headquarters, bringing together many of the best startups and entrepreneurs willing to collaborate with Unilever in the region to create innovation for real business impact. We already have several piloting innovations such as mobile apps which educate consumers on dental hygiene for brands like Pepsodent, to technology that's helping smallholder farmers in Indonesia deal with challenges of productivity and profitability, thereby making our own sourcing from them more sustainable. This is just the start and we welcome more startups to create win-win innovations at LEVEL3 in the coming years.

How do you bring fresh insights into your work?

We need to look beyond our traditional sources of gathering insights and listen to consumers when and where they are most engaged and often today this is via social communities. Our consumer insight tools help us build more effective relationships with our consumers and communities so we can give them what they want, where they want it and how

they want it. As an example, traditional convention is that ice creams are impulse purchases, but by observing and listening to consumers, it was clear that they also may plan to create moments at home with the whole family. So now we provide specific home occasions for ice-cream consumption, by understanding these trends via social media. This has tremendously helped brands like Ben & Jerry's keep up with what people want. It has not only reduced lead times from idea to innovation, because they can pick up sentiment quickly, but saved thousands of euros in traditional market research. It's all about being as agile and consumer-centric as possible.

Which Unilever CSR programme are you most involved with?

Operating sustainably is core to who we are as a company. Our model is a long term, successful, compounding one, delivering value for our shareholders, for our consumers and for the communities in which we operate. We don't have a CSR department as such, because sustainability is embedded in everything we do across brand strategies, our operations and the way we engage employees – everything. The Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) is our blueprint to achieve our vision to decouple our growth from our environmental impact while increasing our positive social impact, driving profitable growth for our brands, saving costs and fostering innovation.

We see the USLP creating value in four ways:

Firstly, as a driver of top-line **growth**. For example, every year 1.7 million children under the age of 5 die of diseases like diarrhea and pneumonia which can be prevented by the simple act of washing hands with soap. Lifebuoy has a mission to help children reach the age of 5 through a comprehensive hand washing program. With this program, we have reached over 300 million people globally and 140 million in SEA. People not only identify with the purpose behind the brand, but also buy it for its functional benefits, and the blend of the two is a powerful driver. Today, all of our sustainable living brands are growing 40% faster than other brands.

Secondly, USLP reduces **costs**. Being more efficient in the use of natural resources has helped us achieve more than €700m of cumulative savings globally. Thirdly, by reducing **risk**, particularly in our supply chain. We see this as essential to protect against future shortages of raw materials and the impact of new regulation. Globally, over 50% of our agricultural materials are already sustainably sourced. And whilst our operations have substantially increased, we have cut our CO2 emission intensity by 30% over the last 8 years in our region (more than 60% globally over the past decade). I saw this work first hand in my previous role leading supply chain across Unilever. Last year we reached a new industry-leading achievement of sending zero non-hazardous waste to landfill across more than 600 sites in 70 countries including factories, warehouses, distribution centers and offices. Finally, the USLP builds **trust** with consumers, customers, and partners; a big factor in Unilever being ranked the number one employer of choice across 34 countries and in majority of our markets in ASEAN.

What do you think is currently the greatest challenge in the pursuit of sustainable living?

Southeast Asia has enjoyed vibrant and fast-paced growth. However, 50% of its population is rural which poses several challenges in the pursuit of sustainable living such as - raising more people out of poverty, reducing hunger, access to clean sanitation and ensuring the natural environment is protected. Overcoming these challenges will require collective efforts and a new commitment from companies, governments and NGOs. For example, in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Myanmar we are turning some of these challenges into a win-win opportunity by partnering with Grow Asia which helps us source from smallholder farmers for palm sugar & cocoa sugar. It means we can empower farmers with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), access to markets, technology and financing. This helps farmers and Unilever grow profitably and sustainably.

It's important that we recognize that operating sustainably is not just the right thing to do, but equally great for the business. It means you can be around for the long term and create legacies, it means you can deliver value for shareholders, attract the most talented employees and win consumers who in an increasingly transparent world, demand good practice from their brands.

What advice would you give your younger self?

To succeed in both your career and in life, the combination of having strong ambition and confidence, but also high humility is essential. Don't be afraid to surround yourself with people who are better than you, so you can learn from the best and challenge yourself. Life is a journey with up hills and downhills, so it's important to enjoy the ride!