

Unilever to eliminate fossil fuels in cleaning products by 2030 as part of €1 billion Clean Future investment

- €1 billion Clean Future investment will drive a complete transition away from fossil fuel derived chemicals in Unilever's cleaning and laundry products by 2030, while also unlocking new ways of reducing their carbon footprint
- Investment will fund global research, development, and innovation in circular cleaning chemistry
- Unilever calls on other businesses to adopt new 'Carbon Rainbow' approach to transition to renewable and recycled carbon sources from plant, air, marine sources, and waste

Egypt, 14 September 2020. Unilever, a leading manufacturer of cleaning and laundry products, has announced it will replace 100% of the carbon derived from fossil fuels in its cleaning and laundry product formulations with renewable or recycled carbon. This move is set to transform the sustainability of global cleaning and laundry brands including OMO, Sunlight, Jif, and Domestos.

This new ambition is a core component of Unilever's 'Clean Future', a ground-breaking innovation programme designed by the company's Home Care division to fundamentally change the way that some of the world's most well-known cleaning and laundry products are created, manufactured, and packaged. Clean Future is unique in its intent to embed the circular economy principles into both packaging and product formulations at the scale of global brands to reduce their carbon footprint.

Most cleaning and laundry products available today contain chemicals made from fossil fuel feedstocks, a non-renewable source of carbon. Unilever's move to renewable or recycled sources of carbon for these chemicals is a deliberate shift away from the fossil fuel economy. The first initiative of its scale, Clean Future is a critical step towards Unilever's pledge of net zero emissions from its products by 2039.

The chemicals used in Unilever's cleaning and laundry products make up the greatest proportion of their carbon footprint (46%) across their life cycle. Therefore, by transitioning away from fossil fuel-derived chemicals in product formulations, the company will unlock novel ways of reducing the carbon footprint of some of the world's biggest cleaning and laundry brands. Unilever expects this initiative alone to reduce the carbon footprint of the product formulations by up to 20%.

Ageel Angawi, Vice-President Home Care Unilever MENA explains: "Clean Future is our vision to radically overhaul our business at both a global and regional level. As an industry, we must break our dependence on fossil fuels, including as a raw material for our products. We must stop pumping carbon from under the ground when there is ample carbon on and above the ground if we can learn to utilise it at scale.

"We've seen unprecedented demand for our cleaning products in recent months and we are incredibly proud to play our part, helping to keep people safe in the fight against COVID-19. But that should not be a reason for complacency. We cannot let ourselves become distracted from the environmental crises that our world – our home – is facing. Pollution. Destruction of natural habitats. The climate emergency. This is the home we share, and we have a responsibility to protect it".

Clean Future has already inspired the launch of Seventh Generation in the UAE a few months ago. “A brand that has been formulated to not only focus on the health of people and planet, but also providing products that really work. Developed on the principle of considering the brands impact on the next seven generations, each ingredient used in our products, in both formula and packaging is carefully selected. Seventh Generation prioritises biodegradability in its formulas and post-consumer recycled plastic in its packaging,” further explains Angawi.

Unilever is ring-fencing €1 billion for Clean Future to finance biotechnology research, CO2 and waste utilisation, and low carbon chemistry - which will drive the transition away from fossil fuel derived chemicals. This investment will also be used to create biodegradable and water-efficient product formulations, to halve the use of virgin plastic by 2025, and support the development of brand communications that make these technologies appealing to consumers. The Clean Future investment, which is additional to Unilever’s new €1 billion [‘Climate and Nature fund’](#), is focused on creating affordable cleaning and laundry products that deliver superior cleaning results with a significantly lower environmental impact.

Clean Future already supports industry-leading projects around the world to transform how the chemicals in Unilever’s cleaning and laundry products are made. In Slovakia for instance, Unilever is partnering with biotechnology leader Evonik Industries to develop the production of rhamnolipids, a renewable and biodegradable surfactant which is already used in its Sunlight dishwashing liquid in Chile and Vietnam. In Tuticorin in Southern India, Unilever is sourcing soda ash - an ingredient in laundry powders - made using a pioneering CO2 capture technology. The soda ash is made with the CO2 emissions from the energy used in the production process. Both technologies are hoped to be scaled significantly under the programme.

The Carbon Rainbow

Central to Clean Future is Unilever’s ‘Carbon Rainbow’, a novel approach to diversify the carbon used in its product formulations. Non-renewable, fossil sources of carbon (identified in the Carbon Rainbow as black carbon) will be replaced using captured CO2 (purple carbon), plants and biological sources (green carbon), marine sources such as algae (blue carbon), and carbon recovered from waste materials (grey carbon). The sourcing of carbon under the Carbon Rainbow will be governed and informed by environmental impact assessments and work with Unilever’s industry-leading sustainable sourcing programmes to prevent unintended pressures on land-use.

Tanya Steele, Chief Executive of WWF UK says: “The world must shift away from fossil fuels towards renewable resources that reduce pressure on our fragile ecosystems and that help to restore nature. These significant commitments from Unilever, combined with strong sustainable sourcing, have real potential to make an important contribution as we transition to an economy that works with nature, not against it”

Ageel Angawi, Vice-President Home Care Unilever MENA concludes: “We’ve heard time and time again that people want more affordable sustainable products that are just as good as conventional ones. Rapid developments in science and technology are allowing us to do this, with the promise of exciting new benefits for the people who use our products, from ultra-mild cleaning ingredients to self-cleaning clothes and surfaces”.

“Diversifying sources of carbon is essential to grow within the limits of our planet. Our suppliers and innovation partners play a critical role through this transition. By sharing our Carbon Rainbow model, we are calling on an economy-wide transformation in how we all use carbon”.

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How people, businesses, and partners can help deliver a Clean Future

- Visit the [Clean Future website](#) to find out more about Unilever’s Carbon Rainbow approach, Clean Future, and the projects that it is funding.
- Unilever is a founding Advisory Board member of the Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI), an emerging coalition from the Nova Institute, which aims to bring renewable carbon to the political stage and to develop and implement a sustainable future for the chemical and plastics industry. If your business is interested in finding out more, visit the [Nova Institute website](#).
- If you have an idea for an innovation, solution, or opportunity to partner with Unilever to accelerate its Clean Future programme, get in touch through the company’s [Sustainability Partnerships and Open Innovation Submission Portal](#).

Unilever’s existing sustainability commitments

Today’s ambition to replace 100% of the carbon derived from fossil fuels in Unilever’s Home Care formulations with renewable or recycled carbon by 2030, builds on Unilever’s existing environmental commitments, including:

1. Ensuring net-zero carbon emissions from all its products from cradle to shelf by 2039
2. Achieving a deforestation-free supply chain by 2023
3. Halving the GHG footprint of its products across the value chain by 2030.
4. Aiming to make its product formulations biodegradable by 2030
5. Halve its use of virgin plastic, help collect and process more plastic than it sells, ensure all of its plastic packaging is reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025, and use at least 25% recycled plastic in its packaging, also by 2025.

Renewable and recycled carbon

Renewable and recycled carbon entails all carbon sources that replace the use of fossil carbon from the geosphere. Renewable carbon can come from the biosphere and atmosphere. Recycled carbon comes from the technosphere. Renewable and recycled carbon circulates between biosphere, atmosphere and technosphere, creating a circular carbon economy.

The Carbon Rainbow in practice

The Clean Future programme is already funding Research & Development into projects such as:

- Purple carbon (carbon capture and utilisation to produce soda ash and other chemicals)
- Green carbon (rhamnolipids surfactant derived from terrestrial biomass)
- Grey carbon (surfactant derived from plastic waste)
- Biodegradability (biodegradable cleaning polymers)
- Low carbon formulations (weight-efficient ingredients)

About Unilever

Unilever is one of the world’s leading suppliers of Beauty & Personal Care, Home Care, and Foods & Refreshment products with sales in over 190 countries and reaching 2.5 billion consumers a day. It has 150,000 employees and generated sales of €52 billion in 2019. Over half of the company’s footprint is in developing and emerging markets. Unilever has around 400 brands found in homes all over the world, including Dove, Knorr, Dirt Is Good, Rexona, Hellmann’s, Lipton, Wall’s, Lux, Magnum, Axe, Sunsilk and Surf.

Unilever’s Sustainable Living Plan (USLP) underpins the company’s strategy and commits to:

- Helping more than a billion people take action to improve their health and well-being by 2020.
- Halving the environmental impact of our products by 2030.
- Enhancing the livelihoods of millions of people by 2020.

The USLP creates value by driving growth and trust, eliminating costs and reducing risks. The company's sustainable living brands delivered 78% of total growth and 75% of turnover in 2019.

Since 2010 we have been taking action through the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan to help more than a billion people improve their health and well-being, halve our environmental footprint and enhance the livelihoods of millions of people as we grow our business. We have made significant progress and continue to expand our ambition – in 2019 committing to ensure 100% of our plastic packaging is fully reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. While there is still more to do, we are proud to have been recognised in 2019 as sector leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and in 2020 - for the tenth-consecutive year - as the top ranked company in the GlobeScan/SustainAbility Sustainability Leaders survey.

For more information about Unilever and its brands, please visit www.unilever.com.

For more information on the USLP: www.unilever.com/sustainable-living/