

# Collaboration and Positivity: The Sustainable Investment Conference

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The theme of environmentally-friendly products, sustainable farming, and energy conservation in consumerism is gaining traction in the asset management industry. More and more investors are aligning their investments with their personal beliefs. The idea is to hold the companies that you own to the same standards that you hold yourself to, and by doing so, make the world a better place via capitalism. In a time when 24/7 media coverage is filled with violence and conflict, the offer of something to be hopeful for is appealing to many.

On September 11th, 2018, the third annual Sustainable Investment Conference was held at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York City. The event was sold out with 570 representatives from investment advisory firms like ours from across the country wanting to learn and collaborate on ideas to achieve investors' wishes for creating social change. The day started somber with a remembrance of 9/11. It was a powerful experience being in New York City and the UN building on the anniversary of the tragedy. The experience makes me want to go back and see the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, which I hear is something that is hard to put into words. As the day progressed, the energy level elevated, knowing that with collaboration and positivity, change is possible with action.

The theme of this year's conference was aligning investors who are already incorporating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into their investment process with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. One discussion panel consisted of portfolio managers and analysts from investment teams that have built strong, long-term track records in both returns and measurable social improvement. They shared what strategies have been successful and ideas to achieve more impact going into the future. Delegates from Member States and UN project chiefs talked about past successes and struggles, and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which launched in 2015. The goals are a collection of 17 big, aspirational goals such as Zero Hunger, No Poverty, and Affordable Clean Energy. At first, the goals seem daunting; but, they are structured as action plans with measurable metrics and committed accountability from a large amount of the 192-Member States. It is likely that the 2030 target date will come, and the end goals will not be achieved in absolute terms; however, measurable progress would still be a good thing and make the endeavor worthwhile. All 17 goals might not be of interest to everyone, but the overarching theme of fairness to all and leaving nobody behind is appealing whether your motivation is coming from beliefs from your faith or just personal values that you hold.

More information on the Sustainable Development Goals can be found at:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.



Source: United Nations Department of Public Information  
(<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>)

