

Sustainability Conference
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Dow Benelux Symposium
50 Years Dow in Benelux: Building a Sustainable Position
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Pre-recorded tape

Hello, I'm Andrew Liveris. Since I cannot be with you in person, I'm happy to be able to talk to you via the magic of digital video. First let me offer my congratulations on Dow's 50th anniversary in the Benelux region and 40th anniversary in Terneuzen. I know that the success of Dow this past half century is in large measure built upon the pioneering achievements in your region and that those achievements would not have been possible without the close working relationship we have with the government and with the community.

I happen to be in China this week for meetings on Dow's continued investment in that rapidly emerging economy, which is now Dow's third largest market in the world, behind only the United States and Germany.

You will be interested to know that one of the subjects of my visit to China will be sustainability. We have found, as have many other companies doing business China, that the country's leaders are keenly aware of the importance of sustainability.

They know that it is neither wise nor necessary to repeat the mistakes of the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th century because we know so much more today about the damage that unbridled development can cause. And, we also know that development can occur without wasting resources, damaging the environment or compromising the health and safety of workers and communities. What the Chinese wants is what everyone wants --- higher living standards and a better quality of life.

When you think about it, sustainability is all about addressing the concerns of our various constituents: investors, employees, customers and the communities where we live and work. We believe that a company that is financially strong is able to give a fair return to its investors ... to provide to employees good, well paying jobs and benefits and a healthy and safe workplace ... to offer a broad tax base, philanthropy and voluntarism

to its communities ... to fund pensions and health care coverage for its retirees ... and to invest in new products and new technology for its customers ... and to be responsible stewards of the environment.

In other words, strong financial performance is the engine of a virtuous cycle of wealth creation whose benefits go well beyond those who own the stock of a company.

We are mindful that companies like Dow are often in a position to reach beyond the bottom line; for example, by setting high standards in how we operate. As a global company, Dow operates 165 manufacturing plants in 37 countries. Not surprisingly, each country has its own set of rules and regulations governing the operation of our plants. Some are more stringent than others. Our standard is a global standard, which means that if Dow's standard goes above-and-beyond the rules of a particular country, we will abide by our own higher standard because we believe it is the best and safest way to operate.

We also recognize that the products we make touch people's lives every day – in food, sanitation, packaging, medicine, electronics, transportation, and much more. Our plastics make cars lighter and more durable ... and allow them to use less energy. Our membrane technology turns sea water into drinking water. Our coatings make electronics smarter, smaller and lighter. Our chemicals are found in medicines of all kinds, and many life-saving medical devices would not be possible without the materials we make.

The core of our company is science ... the science of chemistry. We know first-hand the pivotal role chemistry has played – and continues to play – in improving people's lives. We believe that chemistry still has much to offer the world ... for example, alternative energy sources such as fuel cells, the use soybeans to make polyurethanes ... the development of better food sources, such canola oil that does not contain unhealthy fats. And that's just naming a few.

We look upon meetings as opportunities to communicate and to recognize those who have made exceptional contributions to science. We also see them as opportunities to learn what we can do better ... how we can apply the extraordinary power of chemistry

to solve many of the problems that a growing world population presents to us. One of those areas is energy ... where we in the chemical industry have a particular interest, because we use fossil fuels not only to power our plants but also as raw materials to make our products.

The foremost energy expert in our company also happens to be your host today, Theo Walthie. So now I will turn it over to Theo, and in doing so, I want to again express to you our thanks for your interest in our company, and in the continuing promise of chemistry to improve our world.

Over to you, Theo.