

We will be sustainable without compromising on profits: HUL

Our Bureau

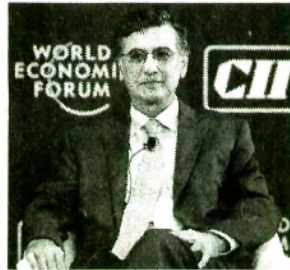
New Delhi, Nov. 15

FMCG major Unilever plans to source 100 per cent of its raw materials from certified sources by 2020, said Mr Harish Manwani, President, Asia Africa, CEE, Unilever and Chairman, Hindustan Unilever Ltd.

"There is a long road ahead and we do not even know how exactly to reach it, but we have to begin somewhere," he said, speaking at a debate on sustainability, chaired by the Minister of Corporate Affairs, Mr Salman Khurshid, at the World Economic Forum's India Economic Summit.

The company sources 350 varieties of raw materials, adding up to 7.5 million tonnes, of which tea and palm oil are currently sourced sustainably.

In some cases, where there are no certifying bodies, the company has been working with advisory bodies outside



Mr Harish Manwani, at the India Economic Summit in New Delhi. — Bloomberg

the organisation, said Mr Manwani.

With their help, the Unilever Sustainable Agricultural Code has been developed over the past 15 years, he said. Immediately on the radar of the company for sustainable sourcing are materials such as paper and board, soya, sugar, rapeseed, dairy and cocoa among others.

The company also intends to decrease the environmental footprint of its products by

halving the usage of water and energy. Some of the sustainable measures may actually help the company to reduce its input costs and increase savings, he added.

"We want to be an end-to-end sustainable company but without losing focus on our balance sheet and profits... We still need to produce good products that consumers want to buy," he said. Each brand of HUL will have a social mission going forward, he added.

In a bid to make safe drinking water available to half-a-billion people, HUL plans to extend the sales of its low cost in-home purifier Pureit, from India to other countries. Mr Manwani announced the launch of Pureit in Indonesia and Bangladesh at the conference.

The company launched the concept of its "Sustainable Living Plan" simultaneously in London, Rotterdam, New Delhi and New York.