Dallas

Hello and welcome to episode five of the KTN Geo4Earth Podcast Series. I'm Dallas Campbell, I'm a science and technology television presenter.

Suzie

And I'm Suzie Imber, a space physicist. We'll be with you throughout this series talking to some of the finest minds grappling with climate change. In this episode, we're chatting with Andrew Deutz, Director of Global Policy Institutions and Conservation Finance at The Nature Conservancy.

Dallas

And Victor Ohuruogu, who is the Senior Africa Regional Manager at the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. And this episode is all about the value of nature. Hope you enjoy the series, hope it gives you food for thought, enjoy this episode. Thank you very, very much for joining us today, we got all kinds of things we want to talk about, we want to talk a little bit about how we pay for solutions to climate change, we want to talk a little bit about collaboration, we want to talk about all kinds of things. We want to talk about data. But I thought actually Suzie, before we do that, why don't we get our guests to just introduce themselves a little bit and tell us where you're from and what it is that you do.

Andrew

So I'm Andrew Deutz, I lead the global policy team for The Nature Conservancy, one of the largest conservation organizations in the world. And my specialty is in environmental diplomacy. So I like to joke my natural habitat is a windowless UN conference room, negotiating around climate change, biodiversity, oceans and recently, a lot more time spent on conservation, finance and climate finance.

Dallas

So when you say diplomacy, does that mean you have to be sort of nice all the time and calm?

Andrew

That's the stereotype, being a diplomat actually means communicating and reaching agreement, although sometimes it can mean being very strident. So I have a doctorate international environmental law, I've spent my whole career as I say, in environmental diplomacy, working on trying to come up with global solutions to environmental problems, and helping countries figure out how to implement them and how to how to get the world to pay for it.

Dallas

That basically sounds like Earth's most challenging job.

Andrew

Well, my wife is a doctor. So she gets to see sometimes instantaneous results and I'm still waiting for to see some results after a 25 year career. So it's long, slow, patient.

Dallas

You can't even gaze out the window and sort of look longingly outside, they just lock you away and tell you to get on with it and just just make it happen Andrew, we want diplomacy, we want solutions.

Suzie

We're going to dig down into loads of these topics as we as we proceed today. But Victor, why don't you give us a brief introduction to yourself.

Victor

So I'm Victor Ohuruogu, the Senior Africa Regional Manager for the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data at the UN Foundation. Typically, I normally [unintelligible] in Lagos, Nigeria, but at the moment, I'm [unintelligible]. And I work and engage with all our technical level, you know, managers and political leaders across the African continent. And of course, we heard a lot about global technical stakeholders helping to galvanize action that's focused on the use of data for the SDGs and also for the various development priorities of this national partners. So good to be here.

Suzie

Welcome, Victor. I should just say SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals. And actually, that's probably a good place for us to start actually, with the Victor talking a bit about some examples of how data is used to tackle the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. Do you have some good examples to share with us?

Victor

A number of examples from the work that we've done in the last couple of years, let me start with, you know, one of the very defining programs that, we put together with a couple of partners a few years ago, called the Africa Regional Data Cube. So it's an Earth observation, satellite data infrastructure that has about 17 years of ingested data, and has tools and algorithms for producing analytical ready [unintelligible] products for environmental monitoring and this was co-developed by the committee

on Earth observation satellites use Group on Earth Observations, Amazon Web Services, the Deputy President of Kenya, and of course, the Global Partnership with the University of Strathmore in Kenya. And it was just packed, packed for five or six nations in Africa at that point in time, including Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Tanzania and Kenya. But now that platform has, you know, evolved into what we now call the Digital Earth Africa and the continent wide resources, initially it was just for five or six countries, but now they've got data on that platform for about 54 countries in Africa and the idea was that this satellite infrastructure could be used free by these nations to address various issues relating to agriculture, food security, deforestation, urbanization, water, you use illegal mining and more.

And we've got fantastic case studies coming out of a few of the countries, for instance, in Senegal, we did work with the government institutions and some other non state actors in Senegal, you know, providing them training for several months on how to use that particular platform and infrastructure, enabling them to put together the necessary coordinating and governance infrastructure that then can create sustainable use of these various applications. Just to quickly run forward, you know, three major key areas of impact that we have documented with respect to that work in Senegal has to do with agricultural, deforestation and water quality. So in Senegal, the lake that produces or provides water for the city of Senegal called Lake [unintelligible]. you know, provides about 40% of the water consumed in Senegal and that infrastructure was used to study the water availability and quality of that lake over a course of time.

And they saw that, within that period of study, the lake had shrunk in several percentages and that was a big question for the regulatory bodies, the folks who are in charge of water issues in the country, so the process data from the infrastructure were able to help address a couple of key policy issues that came out of the outcomes, so to speak of that work that was done using the RDC. An important one also that struck the government was the issue of deforestation, a particular forested area in the country was also studied and they saw that over the last 10 years or so they've lost over 5000 hectares of forest cover in that particular location, which would not have been possible, if they had not used the, you know, this technology, because having to travel several kilometers in and walking through several hectares of forest land, it would have been very difficult to achieve that in a couple of days, but within 15 minutes, they were able to achieve that kind of result using the Africa Regional Data Cube and then put into place a couple of policies that will further help to protect the forested region.

So this was some of the results that we saw in Senegal, the work caught the attention of a number of other partners, including the Islamic Development Bank and they have asked us to see if we can replicate that work at the moment, and few other countries. We started talking to the Togolese government and of course, the governments in Guinea and Mali are all pretty excited about the opportunity of using Earth observation satellites, infrastructure and capability to address [unintelligible].

Suzie

Fantastic, so your organization basically put together a place where people could access this observation data, or governments and presumably scientists as well

could gain access to the data. Was that the main role that your organization played in this bigger picture?

Victor

Yeah, so we broke out that, you know, whole collaboration, bringing the various partners, NASA, you know, of course, you know, CEOs Amazon Web Services provided the cloud infrastructure with [unintelligible] credits, we have a number of scientists who also have worked with us and ingest that methods and algorithms that various nations could use, then we brought in the government partners, we have to actually carefully identify the right institutions in each of these countries from Senegal, to Kenya to Ghana, you know, to Sierra Leone who are this right [unintelligible] you know, institutions who got the mandate to work on spatial data from the spatial agencies to the national statistical offices, to the likes of the Ministries of environment, land, water, forestry, you know, bringing together and each of this nation about 15 government institutions.

And of course, on the other non state actors side civil society groups who are keen and work in an environment in research institutions, bringing them all together to discuss these issues, agree on a common framework, agree on a governance and coordinating infrastructure for you know, implementing the work and then bringing in partners from NASA to provide training over a couple of months in how to use the technology, working with them to deep dive on specific use cases and producing analytics that then could be used by policymakers, then we of course, engage the policymakers in all these institutions bringing them together to see the results coming out of this work.

For instance, the Vice President's office in Tanzania was quite excited when they saw the results because the issues of environment sits directly within his office, so was able to use these results and outcomes for key policy interventions. [unintelligible] difficult conversations, we bring people together from different walks of life, all about just using data for sustainable development.

Suzie

Well, it sounds like collaboration really is at the core of your business and what you've been up to. Tell us a bit more about the role of collaboration and achieving your goals?

Victor

Well, so part of what we have seen across the world is, you know, where governments want to make better use of data to tackle the world's toughest challenges, including how to transform the economics, to still protect the planet and people. And on the other hand, non state actors, like companies are constantly innovating, producing huge amounts of data and trying to see how that all could be used for public good. And here are communities who are also struggling about how to access data and use that data to serve their people, and of course, to hold their leaders accountable. Yet, we see that this action within the data ecosystem is often fragmented, when people act in different silos, change makers don't know how to

find each other and when they do find each other, they don't speak the same language. So that's what's the major challenge is. So the global partnership bridges this divide with connect with facilitators, with broker [unintelligible]. I saw an advocate and in the last five years of our founding, we have brokered over 100, partnerships across the world delivering on data for the SDGs. In achieving this, one of the things we've seen is that the multi-stakeholder governance model is absolutely important, specifically, the collaborative governance model, which we have actually leveraged.

And I would like to define it, you know, I [unintelligible] definition from Ansel and [unintelligible] he said, and I quote, "it's a government arrangement, where one or more public agencies directly engage non state stakeholders in a collective decision, making process that is former consensus oriented, deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets". you know, so in most of the cases across these nations, where you have national issues, that are being connected to a global agenda, such as the SDGs, the multi stakeholder governance approach is arguably often the better approach to take, given the multiple layers of governance, the interest, the conflicting institutional mandates that you see across most countries and all of these needs to be brought together.

Dallas

So it's complicated?

Victor

It is very, very complicated, trust me. I mean, imagine them 15 different institutions in one room, to talk about a specific agenda, all of them come with institutional mandates, that are even personal mandates. And oftentimes, there's a bit of a trick in terms of how to balance, you know, personal interests versus institutional interests, and aligning all of that to the national interest in itself. So we have exploited [unintelligible] this model, tried various initiatives, programs, the project that will lead, you know, to tap the capabilities of our over 300 partners in fostering collaboration, to put power behind data in delivering on the SDGs.

Dallas

Let me bring in Andrew. I just want to pick up on that, you said something about the problems of not speaking the same language and I can imagine that just within the context of, you know, one country in Africa, let alone all the countries in Africa, who presumably all have sets of unique challenges and priorities. Andrew, for you, working where you are, and you're a diplomat, and you deal with issues all over the world, the problem of not speaking the same language, I don't mean literally not speaking the same language, but everyone must have just their own priorities. How on earth do you square that circle?

Andrew

Honestly, yeah, I often get the question when I'm talking to students, what's the most important skill that they should develop to work in the environmental field, and I say

basically, it's being a translator. Because as you're trying to grapple with environmental problems, you're actually trying to grapple with everything and it doesn't work for us as environmentalists to go and say, you should care about the environment. If you're trying to fix problems caused by the transportation sector, or in the agriculture sector, or the industrial sector or change the way companies behave because of concerns about their balance sheets, you need to be able to talk to them and engage with them in their language. So talked to farmers about agricultural productivity, and changes that they can make that will improve soil quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or even sequester carbon and improve their bottom line, right and feed the world.

And if you're gonna go talk to corporations, it's about understanding their risks in life, speaking to them in the language of risks and liability, which is how corporate decisions get made around the bottom line. So this was like the most important skill for environmentalists actually is to be able to be that translator to speak in different languages. We can't just be trained in the science, but we've got to be able to understand or be able to think in the the frames and the mentality of the people we're trying to influence and work with because ultimately they're the ones whose behaviour we're trying to change. So, to me that's the most important skill as an environmental advocate is being that translator or interpreter to be able to speak multiple, if you will functional languages and understand the way different mentalities work.

Dallas

Are there any kind of universal themes that one can apply to everyone that people will just sort of understand and latch on to. I mean, presumably everyone wants to improve the environment and look after natural habitats and reduce climate change. The other kind of universal words that are used in between all these different factions.

Andrew

The easiest thing to do is always bring it back to thinking about the future and how it impacts you in your backyard and your kids and your family, things that everybody cares about. I live in the US, climate change has been a controversial issue for a long time, and a deeply politicized, ideological issue. But the way you can break through that is talk about, what's going on in your backyard and how you want to make the world a better place for yourself and your kids and connect to the values that people have, which you can do on an individual basis. Then when you start thinking on a larger scale, you kind of look at, back to the the sustainable development goals I mentioned earlier, which is a list of 17 things that ultimately is an articulation of how we want to make the world a better place for ourselves and our kids.

What was interesting to me when when we negotiated the sustainable development goals in the UN, we sort of thought it was just going to be something that the UN diplomats cared about. But surprisingly, as we talk to a lot of our corporate partners, they've latched on to it because there is increasing sense of corporate responsibility, and companies want to justify to their investors and to their customers, that they are responsible, corporate actors. The way they do that is by saying, this is what we're

doing to support the sustainable development goal around reducing poverty, around reducing food insecurity, about providing clean drinking water, about ensuring access to education, about improving gender equality. So that list of sustainable development goals becomes, interestingly, a common narrative to talk about what you do to make the world a better place and that's a way to connect and connect actions to the outcomes that we want to achieve collectively.

Dallas

And does that cut through sort of politics? I mean, I know that climate change is so deeply politicized along left right, axes, you know, certainly in America and in Europe, I don't really know about Africa as much, but does sort of conservatives and liberals both see it in those terms?

Andrew

You see there's a whole different range of ways of looking at it, right? There's concerns about, what's the nature of the problem? What's the nature of solution? And whether or not any individual from their ideological likes that solution? And therefore they want to start getting into denial. I think we're sort of past that and I say we're past that in that, these days major companies understand climate change is real. The direction of travel of the global economy is towards a low carbon future, customers and investors expect that's the way the world is going to go and so companies have to react and adjust to that reality. So we're at the point now, where the UK, the European Union, even the US now the Securities Exchange Commission, which is the the US government entity that regulates companies that are listed on the stock exchange, is now putting out regulations to require companies to disclose their climate change impacts, their greenhouse gas emissions, and the impacts that their products and supply chains have. To the point of like, it's getting into the nitty gritty, but that's how you actually move the whole global economy through requiring companies to first evaluate and analyse their greenhouse gas emissions profile, and then set some targets and then hold them accountable to that and make the report on it and disclose it publicly.

Because big investors now are looking at companies and saying, you know, if I'm investing in, or money that goes into a pension fund for someone who's at the beginning of their career today, they're expecting to get paid back out of the returns on that 40 years from now. So institutional investors are looking at the companies they're investing in and saying, is your business model going to be viable in the year 2060?

At a time when we expect that there will be no more fossil fuel use, at a time when every car is going to be an electric car, at a time when coal is in the ground, basically, and we're running the economy and running the energy system that fuels the economy in a completely different way. Is your business model driving towards that future that we think we're going to have? In which case, you're a good investment so I can pay back the pension in 40 years, if not, I don't think I want to invest in you today because I'm not gonna have any return on investment 40 years from now.

So the financial system is now starting to incorporate long term climate thinking and that's shifting the behaviour of companies, which is where we need to get to. The biggest question is, are we moving fast enough? So the direction of travel has now shifted in the right direction but we need to press the accelerator.

Suzie

And is this how we go about encouraging financing investments into supporting our fight against climate change or protecting our biodiversity and nature? Is this how we go about sort of, you know, incentivizing that investment Andrew, do you think, thinking about future, long term sort of financial gain?

Andrew

Yeah, we're sort of stepping back, say, look, there are probably three major industries that are going to drive the economy of the 21st century, clean energy technology, biotechnology and information technology. So if you think about what we have to do is shift the world to run completely on renewable energy and that's going to make huge investments in electricity generation capacity. So building all the wind power and solar power that we need, and building all the transmission infrastructure to get the energy sources, the new energy sources from where the energy is generated, to where the people are, who are going to use it and where the industry is, that's going to use it. That's a multi trillion dollar a year investment opportunity that's going to help drive economic growth and development.

Now it's gonna leave some some behind and there is going to be transition costs, and we need to figure out how we help pay for the fuel adjust transition for the industries that are left behind, but my father founded his own company in 1962, selling typewriter ribbons. By the time he retired and sold the company it had been 20 years since he sold the typewriter ribbon right because the product line evolved to where he was selling dot matrix, printer cartridges, and then to sell... so it evolved to where he was then solving laser toner cartridges and then the the final innovation before he retired was called remanufacturing where you open up the the plastic casing, pour in the toner and sell it back. So you're recycling. And the dirty or I should say the clean secret that paid for my college education is that the profit margins on the recycled cartridges were higher than on the freshly manufactured ones.

So my father had all this advertising material about reducing landfill waste and reducing energy use and what have you, not because he was environmentalist, because that was where the higher profit margin was. It's that shift in thinking that there's better and cleaner ways to do things, and a changing product line. Now, you know, my father was a three person company making typewriter ribbons originally. But to then think about shifting the whole fossil fuel system to where we're now generating our electricity, not by coal and oil and natural gas, but to shifting by wind and solar, geothermal and other sources of renewable is a multiple orders of magnitude different change.

But it's the same evolution, like we shifted from horses to cars and now we're going to shift from internal combustion engines to electric batteries. But that's the evolution of the products and there is money to be made in that process along the way,

especially if government sets the right regulatory conditions and incentives. Then the capital markets will come in behind and we can we can drive the change. But government and the private sector and the investors need to all be taking steps in tandem to reinforce the direction that we need to go.

Dallas

That was my question, actually, is everyone, is the government and big energy producers, is everyone in tandem? Or are they kind of sort of missteps when you talked about stepping on the accelerator pedal? Is it a nice smooth acceleration? Or is it a bit jerky at the moment?

Andrew

I would say it's extremely jerky at the moment.

Dallas

How can we smooth it out?

Andrew

Well, we had like a big step forward with the Paris Agreement in 2015. We had world leaders coming together to say this is what we need to do. And simultaneously, what I thought was really interesting was the financial industry at the time came out with a statement recognising that climate change is a systemic risk to the financial system, the same way like the collapse of Lehman Brothers, and the global financial crisis around the real estate market in 2008 2009, was a threat to the global financial system. By 2015 at Paris there was this recognition that unmitigated climate change is a threat to the global financial system and we can't keep investing and working the way that we are. You know, a few years earlier, Lord Stern come out with this economic report that basically said the cost of doing nothing far exceeds the cost of doing something. So we need to fix this. But it shifted the mentality in that when I first started in the climate world, we negotiated with the Kyoto Protocol and countries took on emissions reduction commissions at different levels and the Europeans came up with what they called a burden sharing agreement, right?

Because it was assessment that fixing the climate problem is going to be bad for your economy, so we're going to share the burden. Whereas today we look at driving the new economy of the 21st century that will be low carbon and [unintelligible] positive as what's going to drive innovation and drive economic growth. Political leaders, sometimes take their cues from industry, sometimes take their cues from other parts of industry or other constituencies. So you get sort of fits and starts. So under President Obama, the US was played a leadership role in getting the Paris Agreement and made some commitments, then President Trump came in and withdrew from the Paris Agreement, then President Biden came in and joined back up. So you sort of see the sort of the fits and starts.

What's probably the most important element in the Paris Agreement itself is, we call it the ratchet mechanism, because it's meant to do two things and this is where the the kinds of data that Victor talked about is so important. Every country came in and set a set of commitments of what it can do today and then we're going to go back and review the implementation of those commitments and ask are countries doing what they've agreed to do? But through the science process globally, we're also going to ask the question, is what we've agreed to do adequate to solve the problem? And we know right now, the answer is no.

So the Paris Agreement builds in sort of a ratchet mechanism for countries to come back every couple of years, and ratchet up their level of ambition and their commitments to do more and we keep running that ratchet process every couple of years. So hopefully, you get industry driving down costs, driving investment in the right direction, driving innovation and that becomes more politically feasible and for the politicians to say, oh, I can step out and set higher commitments because the world can get there. And then the industry and the investor say, Oh, the politicians are serious about this, the direction of the economy is changing, how do I make a business advantage out of that? And they start moving more and you get that positive dynamic going. But it goes in fits and starts, you know, we can look at Brazil, for example, that has record levels of deforestation, but an election coming, so we'll see if things change in Brazil, and well, the ratchet works sometimes faster, sometimes slower, but that's where we need to go.

Dallas

Which kind of makes you think how important the public is, the public votes in presidents and votes in our politicians. So keeping climate at the top of the political agenda in terms of the general public, I always think is incredibly important. And it certainly at the moment in Europe and America, it's very high up the political agenda, and it sort of shifts around. I wonder, though, in Africa is it the same in African countries? Do people in Africa, which have a different set of problems to us and Europe and America, do people talk about climate change? Is it something that is worried about, is it up there in the political agenda?

Victor

Yeah, so there's a growing awareness, about climate change, of course, you know, environmental degradation, as seen in many parts of Africa. And there is a political consensus, you know, across the various, you know, divide, so to speak, in terms of what the issue is, and interventions that needs to be undertaken. I think that's where the problem or the challenges often lie around the issue of resource allocation, and where those interventions should be pointed to, in terms of, you know, constituencies and communities that will receive, you know, this support, but generally across political divide, you know, there's, there's a consensus around what the issue is around the need to indeed intervene. I think that one of the biggest issues, you know, that, you know, is a cause for concern, Africa is financing, so to speak, you know, for adaptation and mitigation approaches. And the second issue that we've seen so, so around political, you know, what I would say, policy capacity, you know, for most of the, you know, policymakers who are supposed to drive down interventions and policies that they develop, you know, straight out of evidences that,

you know, coming from the type of work that we have done with a couple of these countries. So, what we have seen is that, you know, environmental issues, climate change, is among the top priority agenda of most governments right now, in Africa, and particularly in communities that was, you know, affected, we've seen that is increasingly causing a lot of risk. In fact, the risk of food insecurity, even at the household level, you know, changes in climates, the water stress that we're seeing across many parts of Africa, you know, sea level rises in some island nations, like Zanzibar, and we've seen that these countries are also struggling in terms of putting the effective adaptation approaches in place.

And it's largely because they don't have access to timely and up to date data and information to help drive policies and mitigation or adaptation plans and efforts. So this is the type of challenge that we have seen, you know, we're pretty much working very quickly with a number of African countries and I can give you a few of the issues that we have come across talking to a number of them, for instance, was speaking with the Togolese government and there are major issues around how to deal with the issue of flood and drought. That pretty much devastates you know, the ecosystem for them, so they're looking at how to regenerate the type of data, have access to the type of real time information that could you know, help policymakers, you know, field level managers to take appropriate decision and policy actions. In Guinea Conakry, the government is concerned with a huge forest loss and desertification that is really, you know, being a stress to them in Zanzibar.

We're speaking with Zanzibar government, climate change is real, sea level rise, leading to regular flooding, beach erosion, shoreline erosion, of course, you know, these are big issues, biodiversity loss that they are pretty much struggling with. We're currently discussing with [unintelligible] and it's about how they put together a tracking mechanism or reporting platform that could help these nations from Ghana to Zanzibar to Namibia, you know, to help them to identify the issues of biodiversity and be able to actually track them in real time. We currently have been talking with the Somalian government, the issue of flood, of drought, rising surface temperature is hugely impacting food security situation in the country. Mali is really huge, they've got of course, the crisis and climate change, of course, also leading to heavy malnutrition across the country. Was speaking to Paraguay, they've had flooding in the recent times, and it's compromising the waters immune system in the country and they are looking at how do we put together an effective water information management system that enables us to quickly respond to crisis like this and manage water resource more efficiently and effectively. So these are some of the issues that we're seeing.

So climate and environment issues are really, really, top line agenda for government. We're pretty much also excited about the support that's also coming in from the private sector. We're bringing in a couple of our private sector partners, including ESRI, Nvidia, Future Tech, all of them are keen to helping, work with us to support this nation from an infrastructure point of view, to capacity in data science, because you need such capacity to be able to harness, you know, the types of data whether it's geospatial, you know [unintelligible] positioning data, and all of that, mixing all of that together to help policymakers have access to the type of real time information that will help them in making decisions. Decisions as to what to do, how much they need to allocate each of these actions, how do they track these various changes? How do they report on, you know, align with Global Reporting Standard? And these

are some of the issues and we're calling on more partners to actually join us in addressing these issues across the world.

Suzie

Well, it sounds like you know, what you've just been talking about, which is interesting, is that you have kind of real time data requirements based on current events that are unfolding, like floods and other disasters where you need real time monitoring, you need to understand the climate change more broadly, which means you need long term datasets going back significant time periods to see changes that might be slow, but cumulatively produce significant changes. Then it sounds like we also need to think about looking forward and you know, trying to predict which areas might see what kind of disasters or which areas might be most affected. So different kinds of data, but it does sound to me, like a lot of this data probably exists somewhere. So perhaps the challenge is taking the data and putting it in a way or making it available to the right people.

And this comes back, I think, to the idea of kind of collaboration as well, you know, how do we create a data collaboration model that gets everybody access to the data they need in a way that they can interpret it? So Victor, what do you think, what do you consider as a good data collaboration model to strengthen what you're trying to do? And the partnership as well between private public sector organizations and local communities?

Victor

Yeah, so that takes me back to the collaborative [unintelligible] that I spoke about, the model that we have exploited, that is enabling us to actually identify within a local data ecosystem. Who are the critical players? What are their priorities? So in any one country, with what, civil society groups, non government organizations who are working in that space, we want to identify which of them are keen, you know, because not all of them are interested in collaborating with others. So one, find out who is keen on working on this challenge, we're not just working alone, but connecting your resources [unintelligible], like [unintelligible] same ecosystem, we're talking to universities, we're bringing the private sector also into this particular conversation, the likes of Ezri and Vidya [unintelligible] Future-tech, you know, all of them.

We're bringing the multilateral institutions like Islamic Development Bank, you know, who has really, really been supportive, you know, of course, with speaking with World Bank and a number of [unintelligible] CDO have funded a number of our work in the recent times as well, you know, bringing all of these folks together, identifying what is the key issue? What are their strengths? How do we create a mutual value proposition that creates sufficient incentives for everyone to want to work together? How do we build trust within that community that enables everyone to actually, you know, contribute resource? Data is a huge resource, university has a huge amount of data, and oftentimes just sits there. And this is the culture and most part of Africa, tons and tons of data, you know, within the investment research institutions that are not accessible by all the players. So we're bringing them together, creating that, you know, common incentive for everyone, creating a common library of, you know, syntax or language that everyone can actually connect into.

Dallas

Back to speaking the same languages again, same languages and trust. I want to bring Andrew back in. I'm conscious of time, so I just want to bring Andrew back in. Victor, trust, that's a really good point, actually, just just to move across trust, trust, trust, trust. You know, Andrew, you talked about Paris, earlier on and your job as a diplomat, and I just wanted to just get some thoughts post COP. What your thoughts about COP were, and your sort of predictions for the next sort of 12 months or so? Did you get a sense of trust, a sense of collaboration and cooperation? Are you quite optimistic about how COP went?

Andrew

Yeah, what was interesting about the Glasgow COP, the expectations of it got so big, just because the world hadn't been able to meet and convene for two years. So had been delayed for a while.

Dallas

Was there too much expectation, do you think? Everyone was like, we've got to do amazing things.

Andrew

I was a little worried that the expectations were being set too high, because there wasn't the expectation of a really big negotiated outcome and yet I came away really pleased with what happened, mainly because of what happened in the private sector. The UK Government did a good job of lining up the private sector to come out and say, yes, we are committed to this issue and here's the next steps we're taking. So we saw lots of commitments around efforts to reduce deforestation and for companies that import commodities to reduce deforestation in their supply chains, whether it's around beef, or soy, or oil palm or timber. And we saw big commitments from financial institutions to figure out how they were going to drive a commitment to stopping deforestation through the companies that they're investing in and developing the tools to do that over time, and measure deforestation in their investment portfolios and reduce it.

So a lot of companies starting to come forward with, these are our new business models and our new plans to demonstrate how we are going to meet the Paris commitments to be basically carbon neutral by 2050. And start backing that up and setting targets for 2030, in a timeframe that actually is going to change business decisions today. So in that sense, I saw some real progress, more so from the companies than from the government's at this point.

Dallas

That's good. Optimism is what we like. Victor, were you at COP as well? I wasn't sure whether you were there too. Was data.org there?

Victor

No, no, I wasn't at COP but I was actually very busy working with nations who have real problems at that point in time.

Dallas

Well, I would like to, we're running out of time, I'd just like to give you all a magic wand and if you could just quickly wave a magic wand to solve a big problem or something that's sticking, that you can shift. I'm wondering, from where you're both sitting what that might be? Andrew, if you had a magic wand, what would it be?

Andrew

So this is probably really wonky but there are processes underway right now to require companies to assess and disclose their impacts on climate change, their greenhouse gas emissions. And there's a new process developing now to help countries understand their impacts and their risks around biodiversity and nature as well. So if I could wave a magic wand, I would accelerate those processes so that we actually had the tools and the metrics and the monitoring capability, so that companies could understand and set realistic targets, around reducing greenhouse gas emissions and becoming more nature positive and reducing their negative impact on nature, and be able to disclose that information in real time, so that investors can make decisions. So at the end of the day, if you're an investor, and you look at your Bloomberg Terminal, and you've got the profits and earnings ratio calculation there, and you've got the bond rating there, I want to see that you've also got the greenhouse gas emissions rating and the nature impact there, so that you can decide which are good companies to invest in that are headed in the right way and which ones aren't. So again, it's making that data available and transparent on climate and nature risk and climate and nature impact for all companies.

Dallas

Get that sorted, do that, next time we speak I want that done.

Suzie

Yeah, I could explore this a lot more. That's fascinating thinking about how you wrap up all the complexity of a company's footprint and impact on nature into a number, that's fascinating. And Victor, what would you choose, if we could help you sort of solve one thing, what would that be?

Victor

Well, you know, I'm gonna ask for more three major things here, you know, they're gonna be very quick one is around, how do we pool our resources together to strengthen better capacity for nations, we're pretty much, you know, focused on public sector, because they're pretty much left behind the private sector, the

development sector, you know, the public sector is really left behind, how do we help to develop long term capacity that is sustainable with regard to data and [unintelligible] of data governance? You know, it's a major issue for government. The second thing is around how do we better access to better data? You know, we all agree that there's data seated somewhere, but access to this data is a big challenge, how do we bring them big corporates? Amazon, Google, and the likes of them to open up their datasets, you know, so this low and middle income countries free access to this type of data, then on right and on top of better capacity, so to speak by the users of this data.

And I think the final thing here is about financing data, that data is expensive across the entire data value chain and requires a huge amount of investments and we have a growing walk in that regard together with a World Bank, you know how to unlock financing for data for the SDGs, you know, we're on the [unintelligible] so to speak, you know, I will respect the SDGs and we need all the money. Even when it comes to climate financing, we need huge investments, so unlocking that financing for data is critical. Thank you.

Dallas

Okay, that's it for this episode. Hope you enjoyed our discussion. Thank you to Victor and Andrew for taking part. Thank you, most of all for listening and we look forward to your company very much next time.

Suzie

Don't forget to get in touch with Luca Budello or Andy Bennett at KTN if you'd like to collaborate further on any of the topics we've been discussing today. You can find a link to the publication Meeting Net Zero and the Power of Place, which goes alongside this podcast series in the podcast description. See you next time.