

L'Oréal emphasises sustainability at COP21

As COP21* - the most important global climate change summit in several years - starts today in Paris, L'Oréal has underlined its own vision for keeping CO₂ emission levels in check.



Chairman and CEO of the beauty giant, Jean-Paul Agon, says: "A company in the 21st century can no longer envision its success and durability exclusively through the prism of economic performance. It has a duty to be responsible and to share its success."



Agon says that success is not just about economic performance

The company has outlined three goals: to cut CO₂ emissions from its production by -60% in absolute terms by 2020, from a 2005 baseline; to raise consumer awareness about sustainable consumption [*since the majority of L'Oréal's environmental impact is in the product-use phase*]; and to ensure zero deforestation.

L'Oréal already achieved a key milestone at the end of 2014 – a year ahead of its initial objective – by reducing CO₂ emissions from its operations by -50% in absolute value between 2005 and 2015, despite a +22% increase in production over the same period.

COUPLING GROWTH WITH REDUCED EMISSIONS

The development shows that companies can act to fight climate change, without compromising growth. This mid-period target has been achieved through improved energy efficiency and the use of renewables.

L'Oréal claims that by the end of 2015 all its production sites will achieve a carbon neutral footprint. Its £652m/\$987m acquisition of pioneering UK green beauty retailer, Body Shop in 2006, also appears to have rubbed off on product development.

Alexandra Palt, the Group's Chief Sustainability Officer, comments: "We are currently overhauling all of our products on the market from a sustainable development perspective. We are analysing the whole life cycle of each product.



"For us, today, the challenge is to find the solutions that will enable us to encourage our consumers to adopt more responsible consumption attitudes. It is at the heart of our vision and what we believe is our responsibility."

Palt: we are analysing the whole life cycle of each product

At COP21, L'Oréal is a partner of the Solutions COP21 initiative, created by Comité 21 in collaboration with Club France Développement Durable (Sustainable Development Club of France: a 120 public and private member network).

The main focus of this initiative is a free-entry exhibition at the Grand Palais on 4-10 December where L'Oréal will have a 100sq m space explaining more about the group's transformation towards a low-carbon model.



L'Oréal is a partner of the Solutions COP21 exhibition in central Paris

Agon notes: "Companies can have a really positive impact, not only through their actions but also through the chain reaction they can initiate among all their stakeholders."

The world's biggest beauty house has thus thrown down the gauntlet on climate change and it will be interesting to see whether it can stick to its sustainability targets, and also to see how many other beauty houses – or other category leaders in duty free and travel retail – follow in its footsteps.

* COP21 will run until 11 December and brings together representatives from 195 countries plus the European Union to determine measures to keep the rise in global warming below 2°C. The summit could prove historic if, as hoped, there will be a binding agreement on CO₂ emissions applicable to all countries, something that has not happened in 20 years of UN negotiations on the topic of climate change.