

A personal reflection on Sustain our Africa

By [Paul Clements-Hunt](#), issued by [Sustain Our Africa](#)

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Almost three years ago to the day that Sustain our Africa (SOA) will launch in late October, my former organisation, the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), convened its 2009 Global Roundtable (GRT) in Cape Town to coincide with the City's first Green Week. In 12 years with the United Nations I was involved in GRT's, bringing hundreds of bankers, insurers and investors together to explore sustainable finance, in cities around the world including Frankfurt, Tokyo, New York, Melbourne and the most recent in Washington D.C. In October 2011.

All such events have their own flavour and, yet, Cape Town stood apart for one reason: the vibrancy, energy and excitement around Green Week that flowed in and through an event that normally deals with the drier issues of capital markets, the systemic risks of climate change, biodiversity destruction and resource depletion, and new types of investment approaches. To have eco focused "flash squads" roaming the conference venue, itself decorated with drawings supplied by hundreds of South African school children, and with a vibe of social change pervading all facets of the South African event, this was a UNEP FI Global event like no other. To see hard-nosed bankers revelling in a tree planting ceremony at a special needs school in Khayelitsha brought the social and environmental elements of sustainable development together with high finance in a very tangible way.

So, three years on, with the tantalizing prospect of Sustain our Africa beckoning it is clear that the same energy - if not more - that we witnessed in 2009 is alive in Cape Town. I have now left the United Nations after 12 years of service to establish a new investment advisory company, The Blended Capital Group. TBCG's mission and business focus is very simple: to work to bring investment and finance at scale to create stronger communities, cleaner capitalism and accelerate environmental rejuvenation. To be coming once again to South Africa and to have the chance to be in Cape Town working with the amazingly inspirational Change Agents of SOA is a simple, straightforward privilege. See you all at the Waterfront next week.

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