Ladies and gentlemen,

Let’s get one thing straight: catastrophes are catastrophic only for transient life on this planet – like human beings, because our planet Earth, unlike us, is the product of as many as five billion years of natural catastrophes. In fact, the environmental pressure that we have been imposing on the planet over the last two-three hundred years represents just one of its many disasters.

It really would be wrong to want to reduce the topic or nature of sustainability to the environment or ecological systems. In fact, we must make an effort to expand our systemic view to encompass three independent but interactively operating systems – to wit:

- the social systems with all of their social and cultural players, such as the economy, science, politics – but also the arts...
- the personal system in which each individual has the capability of holding responsibility - and
- the ecological – or environmental – system as the habitat of mankind.

One can only be able to locate the key to appropriate, sustainable actions in the interplay of these three systems, which – together - have the capability of rescuing humanity from a nearly pre-ordained extinction.

But today, the term “sustainability” is being used both widely and in an inflationary sense. It stands for the preservation of any system. We are for instance supposed to understand “sustainable development” only as the continuation of our Western development model, which can only be sustained on a basis of constant material growth. In order to preserve this development, we have meanwhile begun to understand that we simply must take certain constraints into account – such as our environment and the upholding of social justice.

The three-pillar model of sustainability, proposed by John Elkington, thus simply describes the periodic trade-offs of our economic actions. But there are no indications as to how we are meant to resolve these conflicts of objectives. And so - at best – such a model of sustainable development can only arrive at compromises, but certainly not at winners. In the worst – and currently the most likely – case, there is likely to be one big loser: Us. Humanity.

And yet, ladies and gentlemen, there is also hope. Today’s economic crisis does not correspond to the recession phase of a normal economic cycle. Rather, we find ourselves today in a profound upheaval of our Western Industrial and Affluent Societies. This upheaval began slowly - some 30 years ago - and expanded in steps
with every crisis. Today, we find ourselves in a socially intermediate stage in which that – in which we have long had faith in - has collapsed. But that - in which we might trust in the future - has not yet gained shape or definition.

In order to understand the forces driving this social change to a new understanding of prosperity, we need to first confront the dynamic of the early industrial 19th Century. It was by means of this development model, based on standardization, economies of scale and efficiency driven mentality that - for the first time ever - the economic performance of humanity – represented by the gross domestic product – began to grow more quickly than the global population.

The rise of the affluent society and the faith in economic growth

Within only 250 years, The GDP grew from an estimated mere 600 $ per capita at that time to about 6.600 $ per person today. This enormous growth spurt which is actually still going on, indicates that at that time, after the homo sapiens sapiens, a new type of human being was born: the homo modernicus.

Our homo modernicus is a rationally-thinking offspring of the Enlightenment. He is a free and democratic Man, who shows his solidarity with others and is guided by the values of the French Revolution. He is an ingenious being, who made the Industrial Revolution. He is a pragmatic Man who grasps the economic dimensions of reality and knows his way around consumer economy. And finally, this homo modernicus is also an exuberant Man, who threw himself into the globalization project with all the exuberance of youth in order to be able to keep up with the exponential trend of economic growth at compound annual growth rates. But he also went beyond his goal of harvesting and correctly managing the profit of the real economy and launched himself into the hazard of the speculative financial markets.

According to general economic knowledge, the economic growth of the modern age, which has kept up for nearly two centuries now, is a factor touching on self – supporting processes, which are based on two main tenets:

With regard to the supply side, growth made it possible to invest in research and development, which produced significant technological innovations until now. This led to new products and more efficient production processes which, in and of themselves, reinforced further growth. That is why productivity today is 20 times that of 1820. In the eyes of economists technology is thus the true driving force of growth. They rely on technological progress to solve the repercussions of any environmental pressure and do not see any incompatibility between economic growth and environmental protection.

On the demand side, growth created an extraordinary improvement in the standard of living in the industrialised countries and led to the development of our present consumer society, which is itself an important mainspring of growth. For traditional economists our concept of well-being, as well as the social, civil and cultural development of societies, is therefore inextricably linked to economic growth.

The gap between economic growth and prosperity

More than forty years ago, in one of his speeches, Robert Kennedy was already questioning the gross national product as a suitable indicator of prosperity when he said: "...Our gross national product counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts napalm and the cost of a nuclear
warhead…It counts television programs, which glorify violence in order to sell toys to our children… Yet the gross national product… does not include the beauty of our poetry… the intelligence of our public debate… It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile…"

It will come as no surprise that the equation linking economic growth and public happiness has today being repealed - not by moralists or anti-capitalist activists - but by liberal economists such as Lord Richard Layard. There is scientific proof that – in economically developed countries the perception of wellbeing decreases after the acquisition of a certain level of material wealth linked to economic growth.

According to the findings of psychologist and Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman, we are presently moving from an economy based on the strive for material wealth to an economy lead by the pursuit of “happiness”. In such an economy, those goods that are valued most highly only have a significance within communities and are not exchangeable, cannot be reproduced or cannot be replaced by others, like for example security, peace, friendship, time, culture, knowledge or simply truthfulness and honesty.

Those people-centered aspirations are the platform of our future economy, but they have not really been taken into consideration in macro-economics to date. Until today, more than 30 different indicators have been developed in which the subject of prosperity has been assessed in different ways. The most interesting one for the consumer society is the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW). It shows that from the 70s onward the contribution of economic growth to prosperity has declined in all the industrialised countries. Today economists generally agree that a steadily growing portion of the GDP consists of the repair and maintenance of our societies. Such a portion of our economic growth is leaving prosperity out in the cold.

The British Government advisor, Sir Nicholas Stern, has evaluated the impact of climate change on GDP. In his report, which was published in 2006 and got confirmed by a McKinsey study at the end of January this year, the costs of climate change would amount to as much as 20 % of the global combined GDP if we do not commence immediate countermeasures. Costs for a necessary reduction of greenhouse gases, however, were estimated at approximately 1% - 2% of the global GDP.

For the stimulus of their economy, many countries of the world have and still are budgeting much higher expenditures! Many experts although are nurturing serious doubts about the fact that those stimulus packages will take us out of the crisis. However, those same experts do not have any patent remedy either. We have thus to admit that macroeconomics is still unable to describe the effect of the many and dissimilar national economic and political measures on complex and interlinked systems like our global economy. Nor can it predict the reaction time to modifying impulses within such systems. That is why, Ladies and Gentlemen, we must be very much aware of the fact that thirty years ago we entered into the adventure of deregulation, liberalization and globalization with a stirring declaration of faith but without any rudder. Even today, with all our economic stimulus packages, we are still navigating on sight!

**The faith in technological progress**

We should not only question if and how economic growth is really contributing to our well-being today, we should also take a much closer look at the concept of technology as the driving force of growth and progress. On one hand it’s true that
technology has already proven many catastrophic predictions wrong. In the past, for example, we thought demographic growth was going to throw us back into the dark ages, but increases in agricultural productivity have managed to solve the problem. Too bad that this same technological “solution” is also one of the factors that increases environmental pressure and will probably create the next generation of problems.

The advocates of “natural capitalism” claim that if technological progress could provide enough free energy by exploiting all forms of renewable resources, then we will have achieved heaven on earth. We would have built up a kind of perpetual production machine, a happy, everlasting world, fuelled by all kind of renewable resources. It is a world where the economy is in perfect harmony with all ecosystems, a world in tune with all imaginable consumerist lifestyles and a world in which we no longer need to question neither our economic system, nor the quantity of material “things” that we need for our pursuit of happiness.

Let us imagine for just a second that this vision can come true after we will have fixed our actual global economic crisis, before climate change becomes irreversible and before we run out of fossil fuels. Let us envision a world of tomorrow in which an endless availability of energy, an unlimited access to resources, and the development of all re-cycling techniques and “cradle-to-cradle” design system, based on the precept that there is no real end for any object we manufacture, just “reincarnation”, would make the unlimited production of material things feasible. Ladies and gentlemen, I think that even if this were to happen, we would still end up “hitting the wall” simply because the infinite growth of “things” would be unsustainable and incompatible not only because it will impinge the quality of our life, but also divert us from the essence of our human endeavour, which is about the construction of the meaning of life.

The fact is that we cannot just consider our physical environment. We also need to take into account our habitat, and our habits, meaning the totality of our living space and life-styles - in which the psychological dimension of space and time occupy a central position. Our space and our time are also limited and they are also - in some sense - non-renewable resources. They should thus be handled with care and be an integral component of our deliberations on economic development and environmental pressure. The issue of sustainability, ladies and gentlemen, certainly implies a technological challenge, but also an anthropological one, meaning an existential and ethical concern. And both of these facets of sustainability are closely correlated to each other and have to be viewed on equal terms.

The new life style of sober hapiness

It is a truism that people respond very differently to the economic, social and environmental pressures they are exposed to, depending on where they live. On the other side of our planet, we have new hopes for prosperity and for the achievement of a Western life-style – a hope that might collapse due to the world economic crises. On this side of our planet, we see the end of the dream of constantly growing material prosperity. This was the dream of Mr. and Ms. Everyman when they were – quite recently – still identifying themselves as members of an increasingly wealthy middle class.
For them, the Damocles sword of a next energy crisis and the soaring costs of basic foods, their children’s education, and of health care has become a serious problem. They do not care about whether prosperity is measured by one index or another. They only notice that the bursting of the speculative bubbles has also left deep holes in their own pockets and that, in the meantime, planet Earth has become as small as their own flat and suddenly, everything is somehow interconnected.

They have understood that the so-called BRIC countries have awakened and are hoovering up energy, raw materials and jobs by manufacturing cheap products for the whole world. Of course, Mr. and Ms. Everyman have noticed with their own daily purchasing habits that these cheap products are what have made it possible to more or less uphold their standard of living, despite the drop in real income - until recently. But their employer's "headcount reduction measures" showed them very clearly just how much these foreign cheap articles production sites impact the domestic industry. But they also realised, how much their jobs depend on those fast developing countries’ markets, too.

Thus, the life of Mr. and Ms. Everyman has changed all of a sudden and quite unexpectedly. Concerns about their standard of living, their pensions and their jobs are added to private crises, which are accelerated by the decline of the traditional family model and the dissolution of obsolete gender roles.

In view of the economic, social and environmental turbulences of our time, our previous life style, aimed at material, ephemerally hedonistic and irrationally entertaining consumption, can no longer provide the security they desperately need today. What was so self-evident until recently now seems remarkably unreasonable.

We should thus not be astonished that consumers have become more shopping reluctant. They are less and less impressed by the advertising campaigns and turn their attention increasingly to the cost-benefit ratio of what they eventually are still ready to buy. That is why they flock to discount shops, into factory outlets of all kinds or private label retailers like IKEA, Zara or H&M, which all manage to offer premium quality at discount prices. And their only luxury is a private item, a little something that is very special and unique, that is clean and fair however, very probably handcrafted, something that makes sense and that is able to tell the story of its tradition and origin. No extravagances. After the excesses and exaggerations of the past decades, when they helped to keep the "hedonistic treadmill" in motion, rather like hamsters, they began to discover what I call "the sober happiness" as a new lifestyle.

The new significance of consumption

Naturally, consumption also remains associated with the act of reaching for an object of desire. However, our research results clearly show that consumers are no longer fascinated with the ways and means that consumption manifests itself today. They prefer the sober and the moderate to the blatant and hype, the extraordinary dimensions of normality to the excesses of extravagancy, the creative and unexpected re-interpretations of tradition rather than the vernacular folklore. Shortly said: they feel much more drawn to the aesthetics of ethics.

On the past we knew this changed attitude towards consumption from politicized niche groups, later it developed into slow food, slow life, slow fashion movements, and more recently market researcher are identifying it as the new market segment of the so called LOHAS that refers to people striving for a healthy and sustainable
lifestyle. The new thing is that today this change in attitude can be found amongst a steadily increasing number of mainstream consumers in our saturated markets. It is thus becoming a socio-cultural flow and not just a new market trend.

It is starting to stretch across all social classes and across all generations. It is as if, after all of the hullabaloo of too much, too many, too tempting “offers, bargains, points-of-sale and advertising messages” aiming always and exclusively at their purse while making use of the most extravagant marketing means, consumers are now asking for a time-out.

We all know that consumers have become more mature, they are more competent and more demanding. But we also have to take into consideration that they have – all of a sudden - also become much more critical. They also want to look behind things in order to evaluate the world of consumerism and they want to be able to come to grips with it. This critical attitude of consumers is not directed against consumption per se, but is - much more - the expression of the consumers’ need to develop their own individual viewpoint and position towards the various brands, retailers and the products that they will eventually be evaluating, choosing and purchasing.

We must not understand that as an abstract, ideological, ethical transformation of consumption but rather as a substantiation of peoples’ new motivations and values orientation that gets expressed via the act of consumption. It is the logical consequence of the new social and ecological sense of responsibility held by more and more consumers.

The principle of responsibility, ladies and gentlemen, heralds the start of a new era in the history of consumption. If - instead of viewing society as an abstract entity on which the individual can hardly have any impact - we see society as a community defined by the interaction of individual deeds, then even the most ordinary daily event - like shopping - will contain social relevance. In this new “WE- society” the sense of responsibility transforms consumption into an active, conscious and self-determined gesture and it connects consumption with an economic purpose which not only gives meaning to our own lives, but which also establishes a relationship to all other people in our society and the environment.

The new consumption connects an economic purpose with a sense of responsibility towards society, environment and our future. Only this synthesis between the interests of our economy and those of our civilization will be able to generate growth in the future.

**New production realities: From mass market to a mass of markets**

As you may already be aware, Ladies and Gentlemen, there is much more going on in our societies than we might imagine. People are in fact not waiting for macroeconomist and world politicians to fix the problem of our crises ridden economies. People are already doing their part. They want to make sense, to make a difference. They are already starting to explore new systems to work, to consume and to live together in a more meaningful and sustainable way. They are starting to organize their own lives differently. They act. They show by doing so, that there are other ways to live a good life without at the same time threatening nature, other people, or their own inner peace.

In Italy for example there are people who only buy product that have a very special vitamin. It is called vitamin "L". The “L” stands for legality and it designates for
example products from cooperatives, which explicitly do not support the Mafia and to which the Italian state provides with land confiscated from the organized crime.

Some people join together to form peaceful armies armed with crochet hooks and knitting equipment in order to join the collective adventure of the DIY in one of these Knitting Cafes that are sprouting out like mushrooms in our cities worldwide. In those few square meters of freedom they gather together not only for revitalize the old model of self-supply but also to spread their knitted graffiti that are meant to give a gentler and colourful touch to our grey city streets.

Other are organizing themselves in second-hand neighbourhood ateliers for the redesign of second-hand garments or they gather together with a few bottles of wine and pile in to a living room loads of their old but still nice clothing and organise so called swap parties, which seems to be the ultimate shopping experience of green fashionistas.

Or they like to buy in those apparel shops where they can bring back their used garments for being re-cycled, or even more interesting, where their used clothes get sold on commission. This is the very smart case of Filippa K in Sweden, that last year opened in its own apparel stores a shop in shop for Filippa K second-hand clothes. By doing so, Filippa Knutsson is stating the high quality and timeless design of her collections, and at the same time creating a healthy antidote to fast fashion.

Today more and more companies can make good business with good business also because more and more people share information about shops, brands, goods, and services via internet sites and web-blogs or they form consumers’ purchasing groups in order to be able to acquire certain authentic, original, ethnic, pure, biological, traditional or typical products directly from their producers.

This is also the reason of the dramatic increase of successful new businesses based on ateliers and workshop production. Unlike industrial manufacturers, these types of producers commit themselves to the making of specific niche products.

An interesting label in my country is the "0 KM" label. As you may know, this label usually stands for carbon-free products that haven’t been imported from far-away countries. But there is a certain amount of irony when “0 Km” stands for products that are manufactured in the only place with the lowest possible rate of mobility: that is, in prison. And there are more of these products than you can imagine. I will quote only one: the fashion label cdsb, for example. People are buying these garments not only because cdsb is the favorite brand of one of the most famous Italian rock singer, but also because it is a social enterprise that concretely and creatively helps prisoners in their rehabilitation process. And last but not least cdsb is possibly the only Italian fashion brand where you can be 100% certain that it really is “made in Italy”.

It would be wrong to regard all these niche suppliers as a direct threat to the industrial mass market because they will never be a substitute for them. That would be a step backward and perhaps only desirable to a few representatives of the ideas of neo-pauperism. However, with their top quality or very special and unique products they represent an inspiration and an ongoing challenge to the industrial mass-manufactured range of goods. This could lead to new consumption scenarios and fascinating forms of symbiosis of “class and mass”. Seen from an economic point of view, this new generation of artisanal niche suppliers will not only become more significant in terms of turnover, they will also become an important motor of
employment for our post-industrial societies, especially because their business model is NOT based on economies of scale.

However, we cannot allow ourselves to envision the production facilities of these new niche suppliers as romantic arts and craft facilities without any kind of technology. On the contrary! These new producers, in spite of the fact that they see themselves as enlightened post-industrial artisans and regard their craft also as an art, have become real experts in the employment and use of small, flexible and hi-tech machinery which has meanwhile become accessible and affordable for every DIY amateur.

And, like every good artist, they know how to sell themselves. They make contracts with local retailers and even department stores, which are beginning to open up for such niche products because they have understood the importance of including excellence in their own range of products.

But they use the internet and its viral power as their preferred sales and - above all - communications channel. They are masters of the art of mouth-to-mouth propaganda using blogs, video blogs and, recently cell phone twitter-sites and make sure that people are able to discuss their products, principles and production methods in specifically themed forums. As Chris Anderson has highlighted in his book "The Long Tail", the internet is an integral component of the niche provider's business strategy because it turns masses of markets into a virtual mass market for products that are either innovative, unique or of excellent quality.

**The new importance of intrinsic quality and real quality**

Like every marketplace, the world wide web is also a place to exchange information and opinions. Therefore, it is also a place for people to socialize and educate themselves to become critical and responsible consumers. It enables them to sharpen their awareness of quality and price, to appreciate and to rate brands and also provides sites – or advise about "the right places" to purchase certain goods. Today's consumers are not on their own or isolated any longer, like they used to be. They are able to exchange their newly acquired knowledge and expertise with others and they can form alliances for smart and responsible consumption.

And since consumers are now closely linked with each other, the darker aspects of the value chain are also very easily revealed. That is why the intrinsic, the inherent quality of products is - in itself - a precondition for the purchase decision, which must be fulfilled. Product quality is now back in the news and spotlight specifically – but not only – because of the several scandals, which shocked the public and forced the topic of product quality and corporate social responsibility back into the focus of attention. All the scandals, which also occurred in the low price sector, have quite plainly revealed to consumers the risks of the "low-cost-at-any-price" strategy. They are now starting to think seriously about the "high costs of low cost".

But one must pay attention to not reduce quality only to its rational dimensions. There are also emotional, individual and, even more important, collective factors that influence consumers' perception and comprehension of quality. In our research for various international corporations we were able to identify 4 relevant values sites and 12 fields of action that define a new “socio-cultural model of consumption”. Our model illustrates the bandwidth of consumer shopping motivations today and shows that people are looking to link their purchasing gesture with their philosophy of life,
they seek for wellbeing, but also with their need of trust and relationship with the brands and their product and services offer.

**The driving forces of cultural transformation**

Ladies and Gentlemen, the last act of the odyssey of consumption has begun: Ulysses returns to Ithaca. As Ulysses did after his long wandering, consumers, too - after all the deceptions, the disappointments and transient seductions - are searching for tranquility, the sense of a safe harbour today where things are just authentic.

This need for a greater and real value of a good, and here I mean values which are not only added, but intrinsic to the goods, is closely linked to another basic human need, namely the need to grow, the need to invent oneself again and again. However, only *those* things that have meaning to us, broaden our horizon and stimulate us to keep on rising above our own personal limits are the things that we will buy.

After the economy of needs and the economy of wishes, the economy of momentous significance and meaningfulness has been rung in. Such a paradigm-shift requires a social transformation: from the actual culture of consumption focused on the possession of ephemeral things to a new culture of consumption not only linked to sustainable strategies of production, durability, recycling, waste management, and promotion but also linked to a new culture of consumption based on the principle that we should consume “less but of the best”. I am talking about a new consumption culture, because culture plays a central role for such a deep transformation. Culture can in fact constantly create new realities, integrating some and excluding others. And by doing so, its „invisible hand“ leads human cooperation and interaction towards sustainable lifestyles and a new understanding of prosperity.

This is why consumption could become a medium for delivering social and also political statements, that can soliciting new ways of life, new ways of thinking by debates and nudging the process that could help us shifting from a consumption culture based on material values to a consumption culture of significance and meaningfulness.

That means a culture that is able to convert the paradigm of the quantity of material goods ‘we need to need‘ into the paradigm of their quality. A culture that establishes a link between our way of consuming and a fair and equitable distribution of wealth in the world. It is a culture that does not demonize material goods, but that is based on what is essential and that transforms the superfluous things of our consumer world into goods of intangible yet priceless worth. And it is a culture that frees itself from the dictatorship of fast-ever-changing-lifestyle-driven consumption by suggesting new models of a good life. In brief: It is a culture that -by challenging the zeitgeist - spreads the seeds of a new prosperity and a new faith in the future. A culture that reconciles the world we are living in with the planet we are living on.

Responsibility, Ladies and Gentlemen, is at first an individual stance, but each individual takes his sense of responsibility into any societal subsystem he is part of, like for instance the company he runs or works for. This is what will provoke the next paradigm shift in companies’ self-understanding, since they would start to consider themselves not only as part of economy, but also as part of society. They will then understand their role of co-agents in the ongoing cultural transformation also as a strategic task for creating the market of the future.
History has already witnessed cultural and social movements that have dramatically changed the stream of time like Christianity, the Renaissance or the Enlightenment. All transformation emerges from that which distinguishes our species from all others: our human mind and spirit.

In the construction of such an “Economy of Significance and Meaningfulness”, we should also start to regard designers and artists as powerful change agents. Their ability to transform objects, bodies, behaviours and events has been mainly used for exclusive commercial and marketing goals in the last decades. We have been forgetting that they can also be the authors of scenarios that benefits sustainable practice has been neglected. Today more than ever they are asked to use their creativity to spark public imagination through their interpretations of what a good, clean and fair culture of living would look and feel like for the people of this planet. They – and not the technocrats – can really involve people emotionally and provide models to help us all to re-imagine the future. They are the ones that are designing the vision of our future.

**Designing sustainability**

Let me take some example from fashion to clarify how designers can be not only a highly sensitive seismograph of socio-cultural changes but also give impetus to societal transformation.

**Fashion design as a driving force of change**

For those of you who can think back that far - It was at the beginning of the 1970ies: Vivienne Westwood entered the scene with her rebel fashion creations, expressing the spirit of a new generation of young people and supporting their anti establishment cultural revolution. Or think to Katherine Hamnett and her pioneering role in conceiving fashion as a political, ecological and social equity driver. And in the late 70ies, Armani was not just inventing the prêt-a-porter. He was much more designing the new, emancipated and possibly also post-feministic woman, who strode with head held high into a working world largely occupied by men and masculinity.

In the 80ies Rei Kawakubo by challenging the established notions of beauty she created with her black, dark gray, and white austere deconstructed garments a kind of anti-fashion statement.

And my favourite artist, Martin Margiela, who revolted against the luxurious fashion world by creating the strongest aesthetics of recycles hand-made garments and transforming them into haute couture.

It is true that those designers didn’t change the flow of history, but they have posed profound questions about our ways of life, about the fashion system intended as the luxury of senseless excess and last but not least they have been nudging cultural change.

And today? Under the technocratic and short-sighted direction of the marketing departments, today’s fashion designers are just marketing agents of the apparel industry. There is no real distinction between fashion business and apparel business. Both businesse are prisoners of the strategy of “mass prestige” also referred as “masstige”. This strategy means bringing past dreams of luxury and the dream world of trendy life-styles to the masses and – in particular - to the many newly affluent people of the emerging countries. Revitalizing old fashion and old life-styles does not require much sensitivity nor originality. As a consequence fashion designers have
lost sight of their artistic creative talent and the apparel industry has lost its reservoir of cultural messages to be transferred into the mainstream product offer.

Today, everyone has just started to copy everyone. Zara’s designers copy Armani and Chanel, the new hordes of Chinese designers copy H&M and the luxury brands copy old Asian and Chinese heritage and transform it into a trendy exotic fashionism. And by so doing, fashion has just become fashion and repetitively refers to itself instead of nourishing our cultures and contributing to the evolution of our civilizations. Fashion has been losing its strong symbolism, its systems of signs and signifiers, its meaning and its messages. Miles of cloth are getting swallowed up by the rhetoric of fashion emptiness. And Fashion is starting to go out of Fashion at rocket speed.

But this, ladies and gentlemen, could also be a tremendous chance for a restart!

Today a new generation of artists, designers and cultural activists are working on the design of a new notion of prosperity. They are many, they are bold, they have taken action and they are redesigning not only design, the arts and artisanship. They are socially innovative, they are capable of reflexivity and they are ready to apply their design thinking to the next challenge: the design of change.

As I tried to express at the beginning of my speech, the challenge of sustainability implies a systemic approach. Sustainability is sustainable if it is built-in to each and every element of the value chain, or – as I prefer to call it – the “value net” of production, distribution, consumption and post-consumption.

But all that is not enough. It is necessary but not sufficient, because people today call for much more than just ecological, economic and socially sustainable products. They are looking for products that also can deliver a message for the ecology of their mind and of their spirit. Products that express their ethos through a powerful aesthetic impact. That means products with a strong cultural message that show us the journey towards what a new prosperity might mean, a journey that can reconcile us with a future we thought they had lost.

Ladies and gentlemen, the move towards sustainability is what customers are already expecting from us today. But the real challenge is to recompose the different pieces of the sustainability mosaic into a significant and beautiful whole. The entrepreneurs who will be able to design that to be lived in vision, will not only be part of that cultural transformation that is already underway, but they will be the leaders of the next and actually the last growth phase of the consumer economy, since the economy of meaningfulness and significance will be the only economy which is at the same time sustainable and allows for unlimited growth.

Ladies and gentlemen, the move towards sustainability is what customers are already expecting from us today. But the real challenge is to recompose the different pieces of the sustainability mosaic into a significant and beautiful whole. The entrepreneurs who will be able to design that to be lived in vision, will not only be part of that cultural transformation that is already underway, but they will be the leaders of the next and actually the last growth phase of the consumer economy, since the economy of meaningfulness and significance will be the only economy which is at the same time sustainable and will allow us a **TRULY** unlimited growth.