**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS - Chapter 10: Sustainability and the ethical business**

Sustainability implies thinking long-term about business models, resources and environmental impacts. It also involves thinking about human well-being both in today’s businesses and the evolving social impacts that are unfolding into the future. Businesses which focus wholly on shareholder value are not well placed to respond to these sustainability issues, as their focus is almost exclusively short-term profits. To what extent can they adapt to more long-term perspectives within their current business models? This chapter has shown that many of the world’s leading companies have little in the way of a strategy for sustainability, even though the issues, such as climate change, are urgently in need of being addressed. Part of the blame lies with governments.

As the chapter has pointed out, international frameworks for mandating sustainability goals are weak, deferring to sovereign states to initiate changes. States, however, have been slow to adapt resource-greedy models of economic development, largely because they are locked into thinking in terms of national competitiveness rather than global threats and universal values. How can both corporate and governmental priorities be refocused on sustainability goals? As we have seen, the message that long-term survival depends on rethinking current ways of doing things appeals to companies’ and countries’ self-interested outlooks. But sustainability has always had an ethical dimension as well: social justice requires an intergenerational approach. Sustainability matters because it provides the guideposts to the right way to behave towards others and towards the environment. This message is increasingly being appreciated by companies that espouse CSR strategies, often because stakeholders are urging that ethical considerations need to rise up the agenda, even in companies which cling to shareholder primacy.