

GERMANY: Danone urges industry to act on sustainability

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The fear of failure should not prevent business from embarking on sustainability projects, the chairman and CEO of French food giant [Danone](#) said today (19 June).

Speaking at the CIES World Food Business Summit in Munich, Franck Riboud urged top food industry executives to lead from the front on sustainability.

"The mistakes are not so much linked to the projects. It is in the way they are implemented in a large corporation," Riboud said.

Riboud pointed to Danone's project in Bangladesh that was set up two years ago to make affordable dairy products for local consumers.

The company has built a yoghurt production plant in Bangladesh and wants to build 50 more to serve the country and improve nutrition among deprived local people.

Danone is mulling plans to set up similar projects in other developing countries. Riboud admitted that he was unsure whether the schemes would prove a success but he insisted the initiatives were not simply an act of charity.

"We're not out to make a profit - but we don't want to make a loss either," Riboud said. "I don't want to talk about charity. There is business to be done - and I'm not scared to say that word."

If other companies want to bolster their efforts on sustainability, there needs to be a change in mindset at a corporate level, Riboud added.

"The real lesson is not whether something is a failure - that doesn't matter," he said. "The real lesson is that you cannot any longer manage people by just laying down financial data. You need to have meaning. Actions speak louder than words."



Danone chairman and CEO Franck Riboud