Welcome & Conversation on the state of ESG Disclosure Standards
Dan Esty, YISF

Dan Esty began by acknowledging the huge uptake of interest in sustainable finance across different industries and institutions today. There is an increasing possibility of bringing ESG issues into routine portfolio decision-making. It is an urgent time, because we are quickly approach several planetary boundaries, and the IPCC’s recent 1.5 degree report has revealed that we are not doing enough climate change mitigation. Dan’s green-light agenda, as opposed to a red-light agenda, encourages the uptake of solution-oriented technologies to address climate change.

The main topics to be discussed in the Symposium are: ESG metrics, standards for ESG metrics, diversity in viewpoints, and investor theses for ESG investments. Dan acknowledged that analytical reasoning on ESG investing today is not as solid as we wish it should be. Companies are unclear as to what they should be reporting, creating challenges for investors. Consistency in the methodology for monitoring and reporting ESG issues needs to be established. The ultimate question to be answered is: what do we need to do to overcome the hurdle of ESG metrics that are holding back the flow of capital? Ten papers will be discussed throughout the symposium on these topics.