

## **Sustainable Apparel Forum 2019**

Dhaka, Bangladesh

4-5 November 2019

The Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) is a leading global forum on sustainability established in Bangladesh to promote the sustainability agenda within the textile and apparel supply chain. The event was jointly organized by the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA). Given that the industry generates about 80% of Bangladesh's export income, this forum is a very important event and an excellent networking platform which allowed for discussion around the issues facing sustainability in this sector.

Over the course of two days, more than 50 speakers from Bangladesh and abroad shared their views on issues such as transparency, water, environment, the wellbeing of workers, responsible business conduct and climate change.

The UN Climate Change Regional Collaboration Centre (RCC) Bangkok participated in the SAF to support and regionally amplify the work of UN Climate Change's Global Climate Action team.

UN Climate Change has initiated several climate action initiatives in collaboration with fashion industry stakeholders, leading to the creation of the [Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action](#), which contains the vision to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 in this sector. The Fashion Industry Charter was launched at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018.

### **Highlights from the SAF 2019 panel on Climate Action and Fashion**

Mr. Jens Radschinski, Lead of the UN Climate Change RCC Bangkok for Asia-Pacific, shared insights on the global collaborative momentum of efforts to shift the fashion industry to an increasingly sustainable path in a session entitled "Delivering Fashion of the Future: What Roles for Government, Brands & Supplier towards Ambitious Climate Action?".

Mr. Radschinski elaborated on how the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action is convened by UN Climate Change, whilst at the same time driven by industry partners. The Charter is a tool to help brands, suppliers, NGOs, industry associations to translate the goals of the Paris Agreement into concrete action for the industry. The role of the UN in this case is to facilitate work, convene, ensure transparency in reporting and to initiate dialogues with policy makers.

The global and inter-connected nature of the fashion industry combined with its inherent innovativeness make it a vibrant sector in which to design solutions for sustainability with the additional expectation of spillover effects to other industries. The fashion industry can lead other sectors in tackling the climate challenge and therefore this work is potentially catalytic in leading innovation and creating climate solutions.

Panelist Mr. Pierre Börjesson of the H&M Group recognized the need for urgent action and that business-as-usual is no longer an option. He expressed H&M's commitment to climate action as exemplified through its ambition to become climate neutral in the supply chain by 2030 and climate positive (value chain) by 2040. H&M is also working with suppliers to influence practices and with governments to create enabling environments.

A common concern echoed throughout the forum centered around consumer behavior. While consumers may demand sustainable practices in production they become picky buyers when it comes to real consumption, making purchases based on considerations other than sustainability. This behavior has made it difficult for the industry to successfully set green prices for greener products. Panelists made an appeal to consumers and buyers to commit to fair purchasing practice and considerate consumption.

In addition, all panelists put forth a clear message to continue to improve industrial practices and become more sustainable and resource efficient.

For more information about the Sustainable Apparel Forum 2019 and future events, please see <http://sustainableappareforum.com/>

Want to know more about the Global Climate Action and the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action? Please see <https://unfccc.int/climate-action> and <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/global-climate-action-in-fashion/about-the-fashion-industry-charter-for-climate-action>