



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GİYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

16-17 Ekim / October 2024
Çırağan Palace Kempinski



Final Report

17th Istanbul
Apparel
Conference
in numbers

CONFERENCE AND B2B

1200+ PHYSICAL PARTICIPATION

B2B SPEED NETWORK EVENT

50+ BRANDS AND BUYING OFFICES

200+ MANUFACTURERS

1500+ BUSINESS MEETINGS

17 SESSIONS

32 SPEAKERS

About TGSD & Istanbul Apparel Conference

Turkish Clothing Manufacturers' Association (TGSD) was established in 1976 with the aim of supporting the growth and development of the apparel industry by providing guidance, promoting the businesses overseas and getting manufacturers cooperate with each other. With annual production volume of USD 33,6 billion, total exports of USD 19,2 billion and total employment of almost 1 million (jointly with textile industry), garment manufacturing is one of the leading industries within the Turkish economy.

TGSD has nearly 500 members that account for the majority of Türkiye's apparel export in value. TGSD captures the whole supply chain end-to-end and, is the largest network for apparel and textile companies in Türkiye.

For 17 years in a row, TGSD has been organizing Istanbul Apparel Conference that is well-known internationally and has been attended each year by more than a thousand participants consisting of industry professionals and experts, academia as well as local and foreign government officials.

17th Istanbul Apparel Conference took place at Çırağan Palace Kempinski on October 16 and 17 this year with the main theme of "Redefine, Realign, Re-Fashion".

We have proudly accomplished 17th Istanbul Apparel Conference on 16th and 17th October. The main theme of this year's conference was set to be "Redefine, Realign, Refashion".

We listened to more than 32 experts, professionals, brand founders as well as start-ups from three continents.

We gained valuable information about new legislations in the EU, opportunities in the US market, evolving AI and its impact on apparel and fashion industry, the impact perspective as the future of apparel. We learned how brands and manufacturers establish collaborative partnerships for sustainable and efficient supply chains.

On the second day of our Conference, brands and purchasing groups representing hundreds of global brands have met local manufacturers in a B2B network event, and have the opportunity to establish new business connections. More than 1.500 meetings were held on appointment basis.

We thank all speakers, participants and, of course, the companies which supported our annual two-day event.





17th Istanbul Apparel Conference Programme

08.00 – 09.00 Registration & Breakfast

09.00 – 09.25 Opening Session

Ramazan Kaya, TGSD Co-Chair
Mustafa Gültepe, TIM & İHKİB President

09.25 – 09.45 Vision for Strong and Sustainable Growth from one of the Leading Apparel Manufacturers in the World, EPIC Group

Moderator: Matthijs Crietee, International Apparel Federation (IAF) Secretary General
Ranjan Mahtani, Executive Chairman of the Epic Group

09.45 – 10.10 SANKO Textile: Journey of Transformation and Sustainability Vision

Moderator: Sedef Uncu Aki, Gozen Chief Product Officer
Mutlu Toksöz, Sanko Textile Sustainability Manager

10.10 – 10.35 Adapting to a Moving Target: the EU Circular Textile Agenda

Moderator: Ayşegül Kaya, Member of TGSD Youth Platform and TYH Innovation and Sustainability Manager
Karina Grucka, Ohana Public Affairs, Senior Consultant – Circularity

10.35 – 10.50 The Benefits of Reducing Impact: Let's Tackle the Regulatory Tsunami!

Daniel Rüfenacht, bluesign technologies ag CEO
Melda Amber Arslan, SGS Environment Department Manager

10.50 – 11.10 Coffee Break - Network

11.10 – 11.40 How an Emphasis on Quality and Innovation is Fueling One of America's Fastest Growing Brands

Moderator: Vittorio Zagaia, Galata International Freight Forwarding and Logistics Vice President and CEO
Michael Faherty, Faherty Co-Founder and Creative Director

11.40 – 12.10 Reimagining the Future of Apparel: Impact Perspective

Moderator: Sanem Dikmen, TGSD Co-Chair
Şafak Müderrisgil, Impact Investing Advisory Board (EYDK) Chair

12.10 – 12.30 Sustainable Finance

Gül Cora, KPMG Sustainability Director
Seçil Yıldız, Development and Investment Bank of Türkiye, Executive VP, Sustainability and Impact Leader

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 13.40 Afternoon Opening Speech

Cem Altan, TGSD Vice President and IAF President

13.40 – 14.10 Designing Change: Unlocking Opportunities in the USA Market

Hatun Aytuğ, PDS Limited/Spring, EVP Product Development and Business Development

14.10- 14.30 What's Current in US Cotton?

Nezihi Aslankeser, Cotton Council International Director - EMEA Region (Inc. Central Asia)

14.30 – 15.00 Value Chain by Design and Investing in Partnership Collaboration

Moderator: Ahmet Nakkaş, TGSD President, 16th Term

Michele DiGenova, Ralph Lauren Head of Product Management

Şükran Alot, Ralph Lauren Head of Sourcing Türkiye & MEA

Ali Yayla, Yeşim Group Supply Chain and Purchasing Vice President

15.00 – 15.20 Coffee Break - Network**15.20 – 15.40 Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Future of Apparel Manufacturing**

Samantha Taylor, The Good Factory, Founder

15.40 – 16.10 From Carbon to Silicon – Molding the future of Industry 4.0

Joachim Hensch, Joachim Hensch Consulting Founder and Senior Adviser

16.10 – 16.40 Evolving AI: Exponential Change | New Solutions | New Challenges

Barry McGeough, AmeriCo. Group, Group Vice President Innovation

16.40 -16.55 Coffee Break - Network**16.55 – 17.30 Crafting Tomorrow's Trends: The Fusion of AI and Fashion**

Arzu Kaprol, Human Innovation Designer

Seda Domanıç, Refabric Co-Founder

Yiğit Alp Elmas, T-Fashion Co-Founder and CEO

17.30 – 18.00 Forging Collaborative Partnerships: A Path to Sustainable and Efficient Supply Chains

Moderator: Matthijs Crietee, IAF Secretary General

Janet Mensink, Social & Labor Convergence Program (SLCP) CEO

Verónica Casado Paredeso, Global Lead of Sustainable Action and Transformation in Inditex Value Chain

Nikhil Hirdaramani, Partner of the Hirdaramani Group

18.00 – 21.00 Cocktail Reception

OPENING SPEECHES



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

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Ramazan Kaya, TGSD Co-Chair

Challenges in the World

The challenges we are experiencing today are greater than ever. The world is going through a process full of uncertainties: wars, climate crisis, social events, geopolitical and economic crises lead to disruptions in supply chains, uncertainties in production and increased costs. As a result of all this, world apparel exports have been diminishing for the last two years. Türkiye is going through a similar process in parallel with the world. We are gradually losing our profitability, especially as manufacturers. Our capital and energy are also extremely limited. Therefore, we are in a period where we need to use our resources more correctly and positively. However, Mr Kaya also underscored that these challenges are opportunities to redefine ourselves and review our ways of doing business.

Global Supply Chain and Türkiye's Role

First of all, near-by supplying and secure supplying are a window of opportunity that emerged after the pandemic, and has become even more important due to recent geopolitical developments.

We are closely witnessing how geopolitical developments and the climate crisis affect supply due to the ongoing war in Europe and the Middle East, and the natural disasters in Southeast Asia. As a result of these, serious disruptions are being experienced, especially in the supply chain extending from the Far East to Europe. At this point, the importance of near-by supplying, and therefore the importance of Türkiye is increasing.

However, the biggest challenge we face as Turkish ready-made clothing manufacturers in this process is last-minute orders. In order to use our existing capacities more efficiently, we need to work with purchasing groups in a more planned manner. The correct planning that we will make together will increase both efficiency and competitiveness.

Strategic Collaborations

We should no longer focus on "my success" but rather on "our success" and develop strategic collaborations together. These collaborations will not only increase the resilience of our supply chain, but will also enable us to strengthen in the areas of innovation and sustainability. Successful strategic partnerships provide not only profit, but also mutual learning and development.

Sustainability and Circular Economy

Collaborations are also of great importance for us to achieve our sustainability goals. We have to adopt a responsible production approach for the future of both our world and our sector. With the circular economy approach, we should use our resources more efficiently, minimize our waste, adopt eco-design principles and create collections that minimize environmental impacts. As an industry, we must pioneer this transformation by investing in recycling and reuse processes.

Again, the steps we will take in the field of digitalization will gain greater meaning together. By collaborating, we can create a stronger presence on digital platforms and make our supply chain more transparent and traceable.

We should focus on social sustainability goals as well. It is of great importance to raise awareness of both industry employees and consumers. For instance, we should develop education programs that appeal to a wide audience, from school-age youth to professional employees. Especially the young generation being more conscious and sensitive about sustainability will be the biggest supporter of this transformation in the future. Again, in this process, issues such as gender equality, occupational health and safety, and employee rights are also of great importance.

Theme of the Conference

In light of all these developments, we have determined the theme of this year's conference as "Redefine, Realign, Refashion". The rules of the game have actually started to be rewritten with the Sustainable Development Goals announced in 2015. We have no choice but to accept these new definitions and add alignment to agility and flexibility as a sector. We have all witnessed that those who take these goals into consideration make a difference in the global arena, while those who ignore them gradually lose their competitive power. All our partners from supply to production need to have the same mobility and be on the same level. From our yarn maker to our accessory maker, we need to speak the same language in our own field, work our muscles fast, and achieve this harmony as a sector. This alignment will give us quality and value.

In summary, with our theme this year; we emphasized three basic steps that we believe are necessary for our sector, which is in a constant transformation with rapidly changing trends, technological innovations and sustainability demands, to be successful.

Closing Remarks

As the apparel industry, we must evaluate the opportunities offered to us by the crises, strengthen our strategic partnerships and accelerate our transformation processes for a sustainable future.

As in the past, we must stay dynamic and innovative, and continue on our path in cooperation and strength.

Mustafa Gültepe, TİM & İHKİB President

Mr Gültepe emphasized future goals regarding Türkiye's apparel and textile sector. His speech includes important points such as the transformation of the sector in the 32-year period, relations with the European Union, the Green Deal, digital and green transformation.

Export Performance of the Sector

42% of total exports and 60% of apparel exports are made to the European Union (EU) whereas 37% of textile exports are made to EU countries.

Türkiye is the 3rd largest supplier of apparel and the 2nd largest supplier of textiles to the EU.

Cooperation with the European Union and the Green Deal

In line with the EU's 2050 goals, Türkiye focuses on environmental and sustainable production processes within the scope of the Green Deal. The Eco-Design Regulation has been put into effect and the digital product passport application will be implemented in 2027.

New regulations such as the Border Carbon Mechanism are among the issues that the sector must adapt to.

Transformation and Digitalization

Türkiye aims to switch to high value-added production through digitalization, innovation, design and branding.

The sector has been working on circular economy and sustainability for years.

In value chain management, traceability from cotton to the final product is ensured, emphasizing Türkiye's advantageous position.

Challenges and Goals

Challenges such as shrinkage in global demand and weakening of competitive power are being faced.

It has been stated that Türkiye should move away from price-focused competition and focus on high value-added production.

It is aimed to transform existing collaborations into strategic partnerships.

Partnership and Education Studies

Sector representatives attach importance to partnership chain management by establishing strong collaborations with stakeholders in the value chain.

The Turkish Clothing Manufacturers Association has been supporting these processes for 17 years.

Awareness is being raised through webinars and symposiums.

Closing Remarks

Sustainability, digitalization and growth targets with high value-added production are priorities in Türkiye's textile and apparel sector. The successful implementation of these processes will enable Türkiye to become stronger in the sector in the long term. The sector should continue its transformation focused on sustainability and digitalization despite the difficulties.

VISION FOR STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH FROM ONE OF THE LEADING APPAREL MANUFACTURERS IN THE WORLD, EPIC GROUP



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Moderator: Matthijs Crietee, International Apparel Federation (IAF) Secretary General

Speaker: Ranjan Mahtani, Founder and Executive Chairman of the Epic Group

Content: This session highlights EPIC Group's efforts to adapt to challenges in the apparel industry through sustainability and a mindset of innovation, emphasizing the importance of both environmental and social responsibility in modern business practices. EPIC's holistic approach to ESG balances environmental goals with community and workforce development.

Highlights

Current Challenges and Mindset in the Apparel Industry

The discussion began with an analysis of global economic challenges affecting the apparel industry.

Global Tariffs: The impact of U.S. tariffs (15-20% on China) and potential 20% tariffs on other major manufacturing countries (India, Bangladesh, Vietnam) were presented.

Retail Pricing Dynamics: Price increases are rare, except for luxury brands. The challenge of inflation and limited flexibility in retail pricing was highlighted.

Mindset and Attitude: The importance of mindset in overcoming external challenges was stressed, with a personal anecdote demonstrating how attitude can lead to success.

Sustainability Efforts by EPIC Group

Roadmap to 2030: EPIC aims to complete sustainability initiatives by December 2028, focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fresh water usage, and risky chemicals. Sustainability is expected to be mandatory for vendor selection by 2026-2028.

Some tangible outcomes of ESG efforts are given as example:

Solar Power: 5.8 MW solar installation at the new Indian factory, with plans to supply nearby villages as part of CSR efforts.

Water Treatment: Upgraded effluent treatment plants with membrane therapy for cleaner water.

Water Recycling: Advanced washing machines that recycle water every 15-30 days.

ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance): Environmental initiatives are paired with social investments, such as sponsoring five students at the Asian University for Women, leading to top executives within the company.

SANKO TEXTILE: JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABILITY VISION



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Moderator: Sedef Uncu Akı, Gözen Chief Product Officer

Speaker: Mutlu Toksöz, Sanko Textile Sustainability Manager

Content: The conversation details Sanko Tekstil's sustainability journey and efforts to transform the textile industry with a strong ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) approach.

Evolution of Sanko Tekstil

With its 121-year history, Sanko Tekstil has transformed from a small business into a major player in the sector. Sustainability-focused transformation is achieved by integrating ESG principles into the business model. Sanko Tekstil aims at taking a leading role in a sustainable and ethical textile industry.

Evolution of Sustainability

Sustainability has evolved to encompass environmental, social and governance issues in a broader context than just health and safety. Today, it encompasses concerns such as ethical business practices, social equality and long-term environmental responsibility.

Cradle-to-Cradle Certification

Sanko Tekstil is the first company in Türkiye to receive the Cradle-to-Cradle certification, demonstrating its long-standing commitment to sustainability.

Compliance with Global Changes

Sanko Tekstil adopts a flexible and innovative approach to remain compliant with the rapidly changing global environment. The company is constantly adapting to legal frameworks, changing regulations and customer demands, and acting according to the expectations of the younger generation regarding energy consumption and traceability.

ESG Integration

ESG principles are integrated into the strategy with clear targets in the environmental, social and governance areas. Their commitment to ESG principles has been a model for innovation, collaboration and sustainability.

Durability, Recycling and Material Innovation

Durability is emphasized as an important element of sustainability, because the longer a product lasts, the more sustainable it is. Innovative materials, such as recycled fibers and bioplastics, help reduce environmental impact.

Sanko Tekstil recycles both pre- and post-consumer waste, transforming it into usable fibers. Together with its sister company RE&UP, it uses innovative technologies in this process. Sanko Tekstil envisions a future where production will mimic nature's cycles, products will be recyclable and integrated into the ecosystem.

Energy and Agriculture Support

The company invests in renewable energy by installing solar panels on 25% of its roof area. Recognizing that sustainability is important at the agricultural level, it provides support to farmers.

Call to Collective Action

The company emphasizes the importance of working with suppliers, business partners and customers to achieve sustainability targets. The speech concludes with a call for other companies to join the sustainability journey and the importance of partnerships to ensure a sustainable future for the industry.

ADAPTING TO A MOVING TARGET: THE EU CIRCULAR TEXTILE AGENDA



**define
align
fashion**

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Speaker: Karina Grucka, Ohana Public Affairs, Senior Consultant – Circularity

Moderator: Ayşegül Kaya, Member of TGSD Youth Platform and TYH Innovation and Sustainability Manager

Topic: This talk provides a comprehensive overview on the future of the European textile sector, particularly in relation to sustainability, and the impact of new EU regulations on the European textile market, which is a significant export area for Turkish apparel and textile manufacturers.

Key highlights

Shifting Targets and EU Circular Textile Agenda

The session emphasizes the dynamic nature of the EU's sustainability targets, making it challenging for businesses to keep up with the regulations. It also aims to explore strategies for adapting to these constantly changing regulations, with a particular focus on circular economy principles.

EU Regulations and Sustainability

Ms Grucka explains that the textile industry, being highly regulated in the EU, is undergoing significant transformation to align with sustainability goals. She mentions that the EU aims to make the textile sector more sustainable while navigating challenges posed by global production systems.

EU Circular Economy Framework

- EU Green Deal is a key element of the EU's strategy for achieving climate neutrality by 2050. It focuses on shifting from virgin materials to secondary materials, promoting sustainable product design and consumption.
- Circular Economy Action Plan is a comprehensive plan to make all products in the EU, including textiles, sustainable and circular. This involves durability, recyclability, and using recycled materials.
- EU Textile Strategy aims to make textiles sustainable by focusing on environmental factors (e.g., durability and recyclability) as well as human rights, ensuring that textile production is socially responsible.

Eco-Design Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)

- ESPR will take effect in 2028. This regulation mandates that all products sold in the EU must comply with sustainability criteria. Key requirements include:
 - o Durability: Products must be durable, with companies needing to provide information on product lifespan and performance (e.g., wash cycles for clothing).
 - o Recycled Content: Companies will need to disclose the percentage of recycled content in products and provide detailed information on the sourcing of these materials.
 - o Recyclability: Products must be recyclable, which involves using simpler material blends that are easier to recycle.

Waste Framework Directive

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): The directive requires producers to take responsibility for the end-of-life disposal and recycling of their products. This will involve additional costs, potentially increasing prices for consumers.
- Eco-Modulation: The EU is considering offering financial incentives (e.g., discounts) to companies that meet sustainability standards such as using recycled materials or designing for better recyclability.
- Fast Fashion Penalties: The directive may penalize brands that produce large quantities of low-quality garments quickly.

Recommendations for Industry Adaptation

- Eco-Design Investment: Companies should invest in designing products that are durable, recyclable, and contain recycled materials.
- Traceability: Ensuring that the materials used in products are traceable will be crucial for verifying sustainability claims.
- Regulatory Compliance: Businesses should prepare for compliance with 2028 regulations, while aiming to exceed the minimum requirements to stay competitive.
- Planning Product Lifecycles: Companies should plan product lifecycles carefully to avoid unsellable stock after the 2028 regulations come into force.

Conclusion

This panel discussion highlights the significant regulatory changes coming to the European textile industry, focusing on circular economy principles. The EU is pushing for sustainability through measures such as the ESPR and the Waste Framework Directive, which will require companies to redesign their products, track materials, and comply with stringent sustainability standards. As a result, companies need to start adapting their business models now to meet these regulations and gain a competitive edge in a more eco-conscious market.

THE BENEFITS OF REDUCING IMPACT: LET'S TACKLE THE REGULATORY TSUNAMI!



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Moderator: Melda Amber Arslan, SGS Environment Department Manager

Speaker: Daniel Rufenacht, bluesign technologies ag CEO

Content: The conversation revolves around the growing regulatory landscape in the textile industry, specifically focusing on sustainability and new EU legislation. It also highlights the role of BlueSign, in collaboration with SGS, to help manufacturers adapt to a future where sustainability is integral to their business models.

Key points

EU Legislation & Impact

New laws like the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) will hold textile brands accountable for environmental and human rights impacts in their supply chains. Manufacturers need to comply with these regulations, which affect product lifecycle management from design to end-of-life.

Digital Product Passport (DPP)

One significant development is the Digital Product Passport, required by 2027 (with a more robust version by 2033). The DPP will provide traceability and sustainability data, helping manufacturers report product-related information clearly and transparently, supporting both regulatory compliance and consumer trust.

Greenwashing & Transparency

A concern highlighted in the conversation is the prevalence of misleading environmental claims, which new EU regulations are aiming to address. The importance of substantiating claims with verifiable data and independent verification is emphasized.

Impact Reporting & Risk Management

As legislation mandates greater transparency, manufacturers will increasingly need to measure, report, and manage their environmental and social impacts. BlueSign's services support this shift by offering impact assessments and improving sustainability metrics.

Sustainability Partnerships

BlueSign helps foster long-term relationships with manufacturers, offering not only testing and certification but also support for improving sustainability practices. This includes carbon footprint assessments, waste management, and the use of sustainable chemicals in production, with tools like the BlueSign chemical database.

BlueSign's Role

BlueSign, in collaboration with SGS, help manufacturers adapt to a future where sustainability is integral to their business models, providing essential tools and guidance to meet new EU regulations and make sustainable production practices the standard. They focus on helping companies reduce environmental impacts, such as CO2 emissions and water usage, through resource management and risk assessments. Additionally, BlueSign offers dashboards and reports to track and present sustainability data.

HOW AN EMPHASIS ON QUALITY AND INNOVATION IS FUELING ONE OF AMERICA'S FASTEST GROWING BRANDS



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Moderator: Vittorio Zagaia, Galata International Freight Forwarding and Logistics Vice President and CEO

Speaker: Michael Faherty, Faherty Co-Founder and Creative Director

Content: The conversation details the journey of the brand Faherty, tracing its origins from the founder's childhood inspiration and his love for textiles. This passion led him to create a brand that blends coastal style with city sophistication.

Highlights

The brand gained momentum through organic growth, leveraging small family-run stores and expanding into e-commerce, with a significant boost during the COVID-19 pandemic as consumers turned to comfortable, stylish, and quality casual wear for working from home. Today, Faherty operates 74 retail stores across the United States, with a notable presence in major department stores like Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's.

Sustainability is a core principle for Faherty, with the brand focusing on high-quality materials like organic cotton and recycled polyester, ensuring product traceability and ethical production.

Türkiye plays a vital role in Faherty's operations, offering both competitive pricing and exceptional craftsmanship, which has helped the brand expand into the Turkish market while upholding its sustainability efforts.

Through close relationships with Turkish suppliers, Faherty continues to prioritize quality, ethical manufacturing, and innovation.

The commitment to sustainability, alongside the use of eco-friendly fibers and recycled cotton, is central to the brand's ethos and long-term success.

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE OF APPAREL: IMPACT PERSPECTIVE



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Moderator/ Speaker: Sanem Dikmen, TGSD Co-Chair

Speaker: Şafak Müderrisgil, Impact Investing Advisory Board (EYDK) Chair

Topic: This dialogue provides a comprehensive look at the apparel industry's transition towards sustainability from an impact perspective.

Highlights

Sustainability as a Core Focus

The apparel industry is increasingly prioritizing sustainability, which now needs to be embedded within business models. Addressing environmental, social, and human impacts of production is crucial for future growth.

Global Drivers of Change

Factors like technological advancements, climate change, and political shifts are pushing companies to rethink their operations. Integrating sustainability with financial success is no longer a choice but a necessity for the industry.

Impact-Driven Business Models

Businesses are being encouraged to adopt models that create measurable, positive impacts in social, environmental, and economic dimensions. This approach is integral to future industry success.

Crises as Catalysts for Change

Global crises—such as the 2008 financial crisis, COVID-19, and ongoing climate challenges—have acted as accelerators, prompting the apparel sector to adopt more sustainable practices and risk management strategies.

Aligning with Global Standards

Sustainability regulations are evolving especially around reporting and social compliance, which are increasingly important for access to international markets. Adherence to international labour rights and environmental standards is emphasized as essential for competitiveness, especially in European markets.

Türkiye's competitiveness

The importance of Turkey's strategic location and its competitive advantages in production and proximity to European markets was also highlighted, along with the need for innovation in waste management and supply chain efficiency to strengthen its position in the global market.

As new international sustainability reporting standards and the European Green Deal are shaping industry compliance, Türkiye's garment sector is noted for being proactive in adhering to sustainability and social compliance standards, even ahead of formal regulations.

Conclusion

The conversation underscores the apparel industry's need to evolve in response to global shifts towards sustainability. Businesses must integrate these practices into their core operations to remain competitive and socially responsible. Additionally, there is an emphasis on the importance of measuring and reporting on sustainability to secure international investments and loans.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCE



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Speakers: **Gül Cora, KPMG Sustainability Director**
Seçil Yıldız, Development and Investment Bank of Türkiye, Executive VP, Sustainability and Impact Leader

Topic: This session addresses the critical need for sustainable finance and its broader implications for industries, particularly in the context of climate change and the circular economy.

Key insights

The Urgency of Sustainability and Collaboration

Gül Cora from KPMG and Seçil Yıldız from the Development and Investment Bank of Türkiye emphasize that sustainability is a shared responsibility and that no organization can achieve it alone. Extreme weather events such as floods and wildfires caused by human-induced greenhouse gas emissions highlight the urgency of combating climate change.

The Impact of Climate Change

Climate change presents an urgent global challenge leading to rising temperatures, rising sea levels and loss of biodiversity. Unsustainable practices in industries such as agriculture contribute to these problems, as illustrated by historical examples such as China's mass extermination of sparrows, which has disastrous ecological consequences.

Sustainable Finance

The main focus of the session is on sustainable finance, which is essential to support the transition to a green economy. The sustainable finance market is expected to grow significantly in the coming years. Businesses must adapt by embracing new models such as carbon-neutral and circular economies and investing in innovative solutions to remain competitive.

Circular Economy and Financial Challenges

While the circular economy is vital to sustainable development, it comes with challenges, especially in terms of high upfront costs and technological complexity. This makes it difficult for industries, especially textiles, to implement without financial support. Financial institutions are encouraged to provide more incentives, subsidies and funding to make such projects viable.

Role of Financial Institutions

Development banks and other financial institutions play a critical role in financing sustainable projects. However, current financial support for sustainability in the banking sector is minimal at around 5%. This share needs to increase significantly to achieve the global green energy and sustainable development goals.

Intersection of Sustainability and Gender Equality

The session also highlights the link between sustainability and gender equality. Promoting female employment is seen as an important social benefit that should be integrated into sustainable development projects.

Requirements to reach sustainable finance

- o Transparency and Corporate Governance
Businesses should demonstrate transparency and robust governance structures, especially when seeking funding from international sources. Investors value accountability and the ability to track progress over time over a project being perfect, and this signals that even incremental progress can attract funding.
- o Small Steps Towards Sustainability
The conversation emphasizes that sustainability is a gradual journey. Companies do not have to be perfect from the start, but they should demonstrate intent and make steady progress towards sustainability goals. Small steps can open doors to financing and allow companies to scale their initiatives over time.

AFTERNOON OPENING SPEECH



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Speaker: Cem Altan, TGSD Vice President and IAF President

Cem Altan emphasizes the importance of collaboration and shared responsibility in the fashion and textile industry in his speech at the 17th Istanbul Apparel Conference. The speech is a powerful message about the need for change in the fashion industry, focusing on collaboration, sustainability and the shared responsibility of all stakeholders to drive positive transformation.

Key highlights

Challenges Facing the Fashion Industry

Cem Altan highlights the ongoing challenges facing the fashion industry, such as intense competition, low prices and high-volume production, which often results in inefficiency, overproduction and shrinking profit margins.

Call for Industry Transformation

He emphasizes that the industry needs to transform, focusing not only on speed, cost reduction and competition, but also on collaboration and shared success. The industry needs to move beyond the cycle of low-cost production and high volume, which leads to excess inventory and waste.

Sustainability and Innovation

He discusses the ongoing efforts of the industry to implement sustainable practices such as lean manufacturing, eco-friendly dyeing processes, organic farming and the use of recyclable raw materials. He believes that creating a culture of innovation and sharing best practices can help elevate the entire industry.

Collective Responsibility

Cem Altan emphasizes the importance of creating a shared mission focused on protecting the planet, ensuring workers' rights and promoting high-quality, ethical production. He advocates moving beyond competition to create a collaborative environment that supports ethical and sustainable production.

Value Creation and Impact Perspective

He emphasizes that being a good manufacturer is no longer enough; businesses must also create value. In today's world, success is measured not only by profit margins but also by the positive impact it has on the environment and society.

Closing Remarks

Cem Altan closes his speech with a call to action for the fashion industry to take the lead in promoting unity and collaboration. He believes that by working together, the industry can create positive and lasting change. The aim is not to leave others behind, but to respect each other's contributions and work towards a common goal of sustainable, ethical production.

DESIGNING CHANGE: UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE USA MARKET



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GİYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

16-17 Ekim / October 2024
Çırağan Palace Kempinski



Speaker: Hatun Aytuğ, PDS Limited/Spring, EVP Product Development and Business Development

Topic: Hatun Aytuğ's presentation offers an insightful analysis of the current trends and challenges in the U.S. fashion and apparel market, touching on various aspects of retail, sourcing, consumer behaviour, and brand dynamics.

Key themes

Market Dynamics and Production Shifts

Ms Aytuğ highlights the complexity of the U.S. market, noting how the industry is shifting from traditional production methods to more modern, often synthetic-based systems. She also discusses the rise of direct-to-consumer (D2C) models and the disruptive impact of platforms like TikTok on consumer purchasing behaviour, forcing brands to adapt and create promotional models much earlier.

Social Media and E-Commerce Impact

The role of social media platforms in reshaping consumer behaviour is emphasized, with well-known brands adapting by creating early promotional campaigns. The speaker observes how social media has enabled more personalized and immediate brand-consumer interactions, accelerating the pace at which fashion is marketed and sold.

Circularity and Resale

The importance of circularity within the fashion industry is growing. Ms Aytuğ notes that Europe and Türkiye are ahead of the U.S. in terms of sustainability practices, but the U.S. is catching up, particularly with the rise of resale options.

Inventory Issues and Financial Planning

Excess inventory, particularly post-COVID, has become a significant issue, with brands having to deal with unsold goods. U.S. companies often rely on markdowns and pre-season discounting as part of their financial strategy, making retail increasingly promotional and driven by sales cycles that start before new products even hit the shelves.

Challenges with Suppliers and Product Quality

The speaker reflects on the strain that value-based goals often place on suppliers, leading to challenges like poor product design and manufacturing issues. She also mentions how financial limitations impact companies' ability to invest in marketing and technology, which is further exacerbated by the evolving payment terms, now extending to 120 days for some brands.

Supply Chain Dynamics and Near-Shoring

Ms Aytuğ emphasizes the importance of lead times in the supply chain and how near-shoring is gaining traction. Regions like Türkiye, the Middle East, and North Africa are seeing increased interest for their ability to reduce lead times, especially as U.S. apparel companies seek alternatives to China due to regulatory pressures and ethical concerns.

Brand Acquisition and Market Lifespan

The presentation notes the shift in brand ownership, with many aging brands being acquired by private funds or even their suppliers. She highlights that the average lifespan of a brand is now shorter, around 15 to 20 years, although newer, agile brands are expected to have longer sustainability. Ms Aytuğ points out that despite the rise of e-commerce, 58% of U.S. consumers still prefer in-store shopping for apparel.

Retail Distribution Channels

There are various retail channels, from traditional department stores and off-price outlets to fast fashion and direct-to-consumer brands. The lines between these categories are becoming blurred, with brands leveraging multiple channels. The rise of off-price markets is also noted as a growing trend, where products are designed specifically for discount retail.

Global Trade Opportunities

Emerging regions like the Middle East, North Africa, and Egypt are identified as areas of opportunity, with shifts in global investment dynamics, particularly from China. Ms Aytuğ emphasizes the need for credible local partnerships to navigate these evolving markets successfully.

Conclusion

Ms Aytuğ provides a comprehensive overview of the fashion industry's challenges and opportunities, underscoring the importance of innovation, sustainability, and strategic adaptation in navigating the complexities of the U.S. market.

WHAT'S CURRENT IN US COTTON?



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17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI 17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE
16-17 Ekim / October 2024
Çırağan Palace Kempinski 

Speaker: Nezihi Aslankeser, Cotton Council International Director - EMEA Region (Inc. Central Asia)

Topic: This session highlights several key challenges and trends affecting the global cotton market industry, particularly in the context of U.S. cotton.

Key Highlights

Economic Challenges:

The speaker highlights how macroeconomic factors such as high input costs, inflation, and rising interest rates are impacting the cotton market. High credit utilization and default rates post-COVID are also adding pressure to industrial operations, especially in smaller markets where cotton demand has decreased due to global economic uncertainties. The strong U.S. dollar is compounding this, making U.S. cotton less attractive to international buyers.

Global Cotton Consumption:

Global cotton consumption growth has slowed, with an estimated consumption of 116 million bales, lower than previous peaks. Large consumers such as China, India, Pakistan, and Turkey continue to dominate the market, but there is a shift in consumption patterns, with some markets such as Vietnam and North Africa becoming more important.

Changing Cotton Trade Dynamics:

Geopolitical tensions such as the U.S.-China trade war and instability in Bangladesh are reshaping cotton trade patterns. As a result, markets like Türkiye are becoming more important in the global cotton supply chain.

Inflation's Impact on Textile Purchases: Rising prices, particularly for clothing, reduce consumers' purchasing power as inflation makes it harder for people to buy cotton-based products like shirts.

U.S. Cotton Production and Exports:

The debate highlights the importance of U.S. cotton exports, particularly to China, but there is potential for growth if U.S. cotton can capture a larger share of the global market, including in countries like Türkiye.

Stock-to-Use Ratios and Price Movements:

Lower stock-to-use ratios generally lead to higher prices for cotton. This dynamic, along with climate events and market speculation, is a major factor in cotton price fluctuations.

Sustainability

In terms of Sustainability, Mr Aslankeser highlighted several developments in the U.S. cotton industry:

- **Unique Identification of Cotton Bales:** Digital tracking of each cotton bale allows brands to track environmental impacts such as water use and carbon emissions, and is a major innovation in transparency and sustainability.
- **Sustainability Data:** Since 2020, more than 2,000 suppliers from more than 40 countries have participated in a program to track and verify sustainability claims, providing concrete data to support those claims.
- **Regenerative Practices:** The U.S. cotton industry has adopted regenerative farming practices, including no-till practices and crop rotation, that significantly improve soil health, reduce water use and mitigate land loss.
- **Technical Expertise and Efficiency:** A technical team worked with cotton mills to optimize operations, achieving a 6.9% improvement in operational efficiency, resulting in cost savings.
- **Performance Index:** A new global platform is being developed to help companies benchmark their cotton sourcing and productivity practices and further promote sustainability.

Conclusion

Overall, advances in U.S. cotton sourcing, combined with its focus on sustainability, position it as a leader in the cotton industry, and a more sustainable and productive alternative to traditional practices. These efforts aim to make a significant impact on global cotton production and consumption, driven by data and technological advances.

VALUE CHAIN BY DESIGN AND INVESTING IN PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

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Çırağan Palace Kempinski



Moderator/Speaker: Ahmet Nakkaş, TGSD President, 16th Term

**Speakers: Michele DiGenova, Ralph Lauren Head of Product Management
Şükran Alot, Ralph Lauren Head of Sourcing Türkiye & MEA
Ali Yayla, Yeşim Group Supply Chain and Purchasing Vice President**

Topic: The session provides a comprehensive analysis of an international cooperation between Turkish apparel and textile manufacturers, and a global brand in the context of sustainability, innovation, and the Turkish cotton production.

Main Themes and Highlights

Value Chain and Cooperation

- Global brands, especially companies such as Ralph Lauren, focus on developing their value chains through local collaborations and strategic partnerships.
- The importance of projects based on transparency, sustainability and traceability is emphasized.

Strategic Importance of Turkish Cotton

- Türkiye's natural cotton production has great potential for quality and sustainable textile products.
- It is stated that Turkish cotton should be better positioned in the international arena.
- It is aimed to increase local production capacities and bring them into line with world standards.

Sustainability and Innovation

- Traceability is ensured in cotton production with the "farm to product" concept.
- Emphasis is placed on innovative approaches such as eliminating contamination problems and reducing costs through automation.

Strengths and Opportunities of the Turkish Textile Sector

- Proximity to Europe and fast production capacity advantages.
- Product diversity and flexible production capability.
- It is emphasized that visionary investments made in the past such as the Nazilli Cotton Research Institute should be refocused.

Challenges Encountered and Solutions

- Increasing competitive pressure and costs.
- Investments required to comply with sustainability standards.
- The need for R&D and innovation to reach a stronger position in export markets.

Conclusion

This speech focuses on strategies that will increase the competitiveness of the sector, sustainable development goals and cooperation opportunities. Effectively utilizing the potential of Turkish cotton is of great importance in terms of both economic and environmental sustainability. Therefore, a transformation focused on sustainability and innovation is needed for the Turkish textile sector and cotton production to become more competitive internationally. In this context, short-term goals is set to increase local and sustainable cotton production rates above the world average. Long-term vision is that Turkish cotton and textile products to become a leader in the global arena with high quality and sustainability standards.

LEVERAGING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE FUTURE OF APPAREL MANUFACTURING



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17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

16-17 Ekim / October 2024
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Speaker: Samantha Taylor, The Good Factory, Founder

Topic: This session provides a comprehensive exploration of how digital technologies, especially AI, are influencing sustainable fashion manufacturing. The speaker emphasizes the need to leverage technology to reduce waste and improve environmental impact.

Key points

Technological Evolution

Over the past 15 years, the fashion industry has witnessed rapid technological advancements, particularly in software. The shift in retail, with the rise of companies like Primark, has introduced new ways of designing and prototyping.

AI's Role in Textile and Fabric Industries

AI is highlighted as a tool for processing large datasets, which can optimize production processes. AI can assist in improving operational efficiency, reducing costs, and contributing to sustainability goals, such as decarbonization. It also holds potential in training workers and improving decision-making across industries.

AI and Human Collaboration

While there are concerns about AI taking jobs, the speaker stresses that AI requires human input to function effectively, especially in areas like data quality. Training and maintaining skilled human workers in roles such as sewing remain crucial, ensuring the data provided to AI systems is accurate and meaningful.

Data and Financial Implications

The importance of data management and the value of keeping data with its creators is discussed. By ensuring that individuals and organizations retain control over their data, they can unlock its financial potential and drive business value.

Democratic Technologies and Social Good

The speaker points to emerging technologies which started in the video game industry and now creates AI-generated fabric for virtual reality, as an example of how technology can bridge the digital and physical worlds for social good.

Future Trends and Industry Challenges

The fashion industry must prepare for demographic shifts, societal challenges like climate displacement, and the evolving impact of companies like Shein, which use technology to influence consumer behaviour and optimize production. The speaker advocates for collaboration across industries to address bottlenecks and foster sustainable growth.

AI's Impact on Developing Countries:

The need for innovation and pilot projects in developing countries is highlighted, with a focus on how industry organizations can manage these initiatives to align with broader societal needs, including those related to demographic changes.

Ultimately, Ms Taylor advocates for a future where AI, data sharing, and human skills are combined to drive sustainable, innovative change across industries.

FROM CARBON TO SILICON – MOLDING THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRY 4.0



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

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Speaker: Joachim Hensch, Joachim Hensch Consulting Founder and Senior Adviser

Topic: The speaker highlights critical trends and insights that shape the future of industries, particularly in the context of technological transformation, digitalization, and consumer behaviour.

Key takeaways

Economic Challenges and Shifting Production Strategies

The emphasis on high costs and economic difficulties leading businesses to consider offshoring production underscores the need for strategic decision-making. Instead of just relocating, optimizing existing operations through digital tools and AI can often provide significant efficiency improvements without the overhead of moving production.

Role of Digital Transformation and AI

The integration of digital twins and AI into production systems offers immense potential for efficiency. AI and machine learning can help companies create predictive models to optimize processes, while digital twins allow for real-time monitoring and continuous improvement. Emphasizing these technologies in manufacturing can help companies stay competitive.

Adapting to Consumer Behaviour

Businesses must be agile enough to respond to changing consumer demands, particularly with the rise of platforms like Shein and Temu, which leverage data to offer hyper-personalized, rapidly produced goods. The ability to deliver customized products at scale could become a key differentiator for many industries.

Automation and Human Roles

The balance between automation and human roles is essential. While automation is designed to take over repetitive tasks, it also creates opportunities for workers to upskill and contribute to more complex, value-added processes. Ensuring a seamless transition from manual to automated processes will require continuous investment in training and technology.

Data-Driven Decision Making

Encouraging a culture of data-driven decision-making and ensuring that employees have access to relevant, actionable data can significantly enhance efficiency and innovation. However, there must be a careful balance between gathering useful data and avoiding data overload.

Sustainability and Agility

The discussion on sustainability versus agility highlights the challenge of balancing speed with ethical considerations. For companies looking to lead in both innovation and sustainability, adopting circular practices, reusing resources, and minimizing waste will be crucial.

Organizational Agility

Flattening organizational hierarchies to speed up decision-making and encourage innovation is a practical step for many companies. By fostering open communication, businesses can adapt more quickly to market changes and technological advancements.

Experimentation and Adaptability:

The importance of a continuous learning mindset and experimentation cannot be overstated. Encouraging a culture of trial, error, and iteration—where failures are seen as stepping stones to success—will enable businesses to innovate and stay ahead of the curve.

Actionable Steps

- **Assess Current Operations:** Before jumping into digital transformation, evaluate your existing processes to identify areas of inefficiency. This can help in deciding where to implement automation or AI for the greatest impact.
- **Embrace a Digital Twin Strategy:** Implement digital twins for key operations to simulate and optimize processes, reducing waste and improving decision-making.
- **Rebuild the Supply Chain for Agility:** Invest in technologies that allow for rapid production cycles, real-time data integration, and customer personalization to meet modern demands.
- **Foster Continuous Learning:** Build a culture that values ongoing education, particularly in areas like AI, automation, and data science, so your team can adapt as technology evolves.
- **Focus on Sustainability:** Find ways to integrate sustainability into your business model, considering both environmental impact and ethical practices in production and product lifecycle.

These insights and steps can guide organizations toward a future where agility, innovation, and sustainability are at the core of their operations.

EVOLVING AI: EXPONENTIAL CHANGE | NEW SOLUTIONS | NEW CHALLENGES



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

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Speaker: Barry McGeough, AmeriCo. Group, Group Vice President Innovation

Topic: AI is accelerating at an exponential rate and will soon be ubiquitous in our work and daily lives. This poses both challenges and opportunities, particularly in the context of job displacement, upskilling, and ensuring ethical deployment. This talk discusses the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) with plenty examples from various disciplines, and how they are transforming industries.

Key points

AI's Ubiquity in Everyday Life

AI is already integrated into everyday consumer products, such as Amazon's robots, Alexa, and AI assistants in shopping and customer service. In a year, advancements like text-to-video generation have made impressive strides, with AI tools being embedded in everything we do, from entertainment to business operations.

Impact on Jobs and Work

There is concern about AI replacing jobs, with some industries like call centers seeing automation taking over human roles. However, AI is also expected to create new jobs, especially in upskilling and the creation of digital capabilities.

AI in Retail and Supply Chains

Retailers are investing in AI to improve demand planning, inventory management, and supply chains, using ambient data like social media trends, weather patterns, and economic indicators to predict consumer behaviour and optimize stock levels.

Ethical AI

As AI becomes more embedded in industries, issues like data privacy, bias, and accountability need to be addressed. The EU AI Act is an effort to regulate these concerns, setting standards for transparency, fairness, and cybersecurity.

CRAFTING TOMORROW'S TRENDS: THE FUSION OF AI AND FASHION



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TGSD



Moderator/Speaker: Arzu Kaprol, Human Innovation Designer

**Speakers: Yiğit Alp Elmas, T-Fashion Co-Founder and CEO
Seda Domaniç, Refabric Co-Founder**

Topic: This session explores the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and the fashion industry, highlighting its transformative potential in trend forecasting, design, and sustainability.

Key themes

AI in Fashion Design

Seda Domaniç, Co-Founder of Refabric, discusses the application of AI in the textile industry, which could significantly reshape the fashion value chain from design to production and marketing. Virtual environments allow designers to test collections before actual production. Refabric's platform allows designers to create virtual samples, apply fabrics, colours, and stitches, and preview designs before production. Such AI tools streamline design and manufacturing processes already used by major brands.

AI helps increase sustainability by reducing the need for physical samples, optimizing production, and minimizing waste in the design and manufacturing process.

AI in Trend Forecasting

Yiğit Alp Elmas, Co-Founder of T-Fashion, highlights the role of AI in addressing the environmental impact of the fashion industry, where approximately 30% of garments produced go unsold and go to waste. T-Fashion uses AI to analyze trends by monitoring social media, influencers, and fashion events, guiding manufacturers toward products that are likely to sell, thus minimizing waste.

T-Fashion helps predict fashion trends by analyzing large datasets of social media images, demographic information, and other cultural indicators. This reduces the time required to analyze trends from months to just days, allowing for faster and more accurate trend predictions.

AI tools can predict demand, reducing overproduction and waste, a critical problem in fashion.

Industry Adoption and Challenges

Despite the potential of AI, the speakers noted that widespread adoption faces barriers such as technological complexity and cost. They emphasize the importance of collaboration between AI developers and fashion professionals to create solutions tailored to the needs of the industry.

Case Study

T-Fashion used Arzu Kaprol's brand as an example of a practical use of AI. AI analyzes customer preferences and the brand's identity to identify trending products and generates design ideas based on these trends, which can be quickly translated into design concepts.

The Future of AI in Fashion

Speakers are optimistic about the future of AI in fashion, believing it will facilitate the transition from ideas to products, increase creativity, reduce waste, and improve response to consumer demand.

Conclusion

Effective collaboration between designers and AI is crucial. Designers must adapt to new AI tools, while AI systems must understand the nuances of fashion, leading to advancements in the industry.

Speakers agreed that AI is not a threat to designers, but rather an empowering tool for increasing creativity and productivity. AI helps designers understand customer preferences and market trends, enabling data-driven design.

Ultimately, the role of AI in the fashion industry is seen as a transformational one, increasing efficiency, promoting sustainability, and enabling creative breakthroughs. The integration of AI with human creativity promises a more data-driven, sustainable future for fashion.

FORGING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT SUPPLY CHAINS



17. İSTANBUL HAZIR GIYİM KONFERANSI **17th ISTANBUL APPAREL CONFERENCE**

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Moderator: Matthijs Crietee, IAF Secretary General

Speakers: Janet Mensink, Social & Labor Convergence Program (SLCP) CEO
Verónica Casado Paredeso, Global Lead of Sustainable Action and Transformation in Inditex Value Chain
Nikhil Hirdaramani, Partner of the Hirdaramani Group

Topic: The discussion underscores the importance of collaboration, efficiency, and data transparency in improving social compliance and sustainability within global supply chains.

Key themes

Audit Fatigue and Overlap

- **Challenge:** Audit fatigue is a major issue in supply chains. Companies are burdened by multiple, redundant audits that focus on similar compliance standards. These audits often overlap, resulting in wasted resources and increased costs for businesses.
- **Solution:** The call for greater efficiency involves reducing the number of redundant audits by adopting standardized processes. Collaboration among stakeholders—such as brands, manufacturers, and third-party auditors—can streamline efforts and focus on impact rather than duplicating assessments.

Collaboration and Transparency

- **Communication and Trust:** The panel highlights that addressing human rights and sustainability challenges requires deep collaboration and transparency. By communicating openly and building trust, stakeholders can create more effective solutions to shared problems.
- **Responsibility:** Companies are encouraged to take collective responsibility for improving labour conditions, rather than merely focusing on compliance. Transparent, cooperative efforts are essential for driving long-term, systemic change.

Role of the Social Labour Convergence Programme (SLCP)

- **SLCP's Goal:** SLCP aims to create a unified framework for social audits, promoting collaboration between brands, manufacturers, and other stakeholders.
- **Self-Assessment and Verification:** SLCP encourages manufacturers to carry out their own assessments, verified by third parties, which prevents the need for multiple brand-specific audits. This allows for more sustainable, cost-effective approaches to social compliance.
- **Growth and Impact:** Janet Mensink of SLCP stated that over 9,500 factories in 52 countries have adopted SLCP's tools. This growth shows that the program is becoming an effective model for improving social compliance, with the data generated by factories being owned by them, further empowering local stakeholders.

Encouraging More Brand Participation

- **From Compliance to Transformation:** Veronica Casado Paradiso of Inditex discussed the company's transition from simply ensuring compliance to driving transformation in supply chain practices. Inditex's participation in initiatives like SLCP reflects this shift towards more proactive, transformational goals.
- **Call to Brands for More Involvement:** Nikhil Hirdaramani points out that encouraging more brands to join the program is crucial. With more brands participating, the SLCP's efficiency and impact would grow, reducing audit fatigue across the supply chain.
- **Reduced Burden for Suppliers:** The SLCP's standardized assessment system allows for a more cohesive approach that benefits both manufacturers and brands. Thus, suppliers are less overwhelmed by conflicting audits and different compliance requirements.

The Need for Credible Data

- **Legislation and Compliance:** With the rise of new regulations like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), there is increasing pressure on companies to provide credible and actionable data regarding their supply chain practices.
- **Actionable Data for Change:** Without a unified system, companies may face an increase in audits and questionnaires that fail to produce meaningful results. Data must be actionable and focused on driving improvements, rather than just serving as a compliance checkbox.

Conclusion

By adopting initiatives like the SLCP, stakeholders can reduce redundancies, foster trust, and ultimately create more sustainable practices that focus on long-term impact rather than short-term compliance. The SLCP offers a solution by creating reliable, verified data from self-assessments, avoiding the chaos of multiple uncoordinated audits.

Cocktail Reception



Networking at the Foyer on the Conference Day



B2B Speed Network Meetings





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