

***Panel Session VIII: Accelerating Circularity Actions for a Sustainable Textile Value Chain***

**Short description:**

The Panel will explore the way forward and concrete actions in achieving a more sustainable and circular textile value chain.

**Overview:**

The textiles industry has grown to become one of the largest global industries, with a sales value estimated at over \$2.5 trillion in 2016. A significant and growing portion of this amount is consumed and produced in Asia Pacific and South Asia. Annually, the industry produces approximately 80 billion garments and directly employs 60 to 75 million people worldwide, of which 75% are women. Environmental and social impacts associated with the textile value chain are significant and therefore of increasing concern to the global community. In the current, mostly linear, system for producing, distributing, and using clothing more than \$500 billion in value is lost from the system every year due to under-utilized clothes and the lack of recycling.

Deeper knowledge to lever action in the value chain – about its actors, the environmental and social impacts, and associated intervention strategies for a more sustainable and circular value chain - is required. Generally, sustainability considerations in the production of textiles have gained traction, particularly for labour issues. However, the global textile value chain is still far from closing loops and reducing its impacts. With sales expected to grow further, accelerated through ever increasing demand for fast fashion, actions for a sustainable textile value chain, including new business models, are indispensable. The global growing fashion appetite has also a potential to be a highly visible engine for lifestyle change and consumer education.

Consumers should be able to recognize the ‘true cost’ of the textile products they buy. Companies communicate their efforts in this sphere through eco-labels, certifications, or marketing claims. In a time where many consumers feel confused and no longer trust or know how to act upon the information they receive, and where mainstream marketing promotes ‘fast fashion’, ensuring that messages favoring a circular approach are sent, and that these are reliable, trustworthy and substantiated becomes ever more important.

**Possible outcome/impact:**

Outcomes of the discussions will build on the ongoing engagement of UN Environment with relevant stakeholders in the textile and fashion community and will contribute to the definition of key focus areas to deliver impact and concrete results in countries along the textile and fashion value chain by providing (ii) policy solutions, (iii) concrete business solutions, (iv) education and advocacy targeted at consumers, and

(v) financing solutions. The discussion will also convene partners to jointly develop solutions to advance on a sustainable textile value chain within a broader Circular Economy. Partners to be involved include governments, the private sector, consumers, research institutions, the finance sector, NGOs, non-commercial standard setting organizations, trade unions & associations as well as media and marketing organisations. \*Please note that these outcomes should contribute to Priorities 1(e), 2(a), 2(i), and 3(c) of the Draft Ministerial Declaration.

**Moderator:** UN Environment

**Panellists Invited:**

1. Dame Ellen Mac Arthur  
Founder and Chair of Trustees  
Ellen Mac Arthur Foundation
2. Stella Nina McCartney, OBE  
Designer  
Stella McCartney
3. Heinz Zeller  
Head of Sustainability and Logistics  
Hugo Boss
4. Representative from Germany (consumer information)
5. Representative from India

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