Sustainability and circularity in the textile value chain

Sustainable Recovery through Sustainable Fashion Nexus Dialogue
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Sustainability and Circularity in the Textile Value Chain
Pollution and Health
Chemicals of concern

UNEP Offices working on fashion

Sustainable Fashion Communications Strategy
UNEP’s value chain approach

Understand the value chain & identify key hotspots:
1.a. Define the value chain
1.b. Map data on natural resources
1.c. Apply a systems analysis
1.d. Identify key hotspots

Consolidate existing action & identify:
2.a. Map initiatives of all actors
2.b. Identify gaps and opportunities

Textile value chain

• Comprises actors and stakeholders
• Often represented as linear albeit possible loops
• Aspiration to shift to **circular system** while keeping materials at highest possible value

Source: UNEP, 2020
Environmental hotspots

Cotton cultivation
- fertiliser, herbicides, pesticides
- land use (biodiversity & habitat loss)
- high water usage

Wet finishing process
- coal-based energy
- chemicals & water pollution

Synthetic fibre
- fossil fuel

Washing & drying
- electricity
- water
- detergent
- microfibres

End-of-life
impact relatively low, but significant resource and economic loss (only 13% recycled)
→ loss of potential to decrease impacts across all stages

Source: UNEP, 2020
Key needs and priority actions

1. **Stronger governance & policies**
   - Provide education, skills and support for scaling of circular and sustainable business models and sustainable solutions and technologies (e.g. through new or strengthened collaboration platforms); leverage funding from financial institutions; provide spaces for government collaboration.

2. **Collaboration & finance**
   - Incentivize new innovative business models that increase textile utilization and reduce consumption (e.g. fiscal policy, sustainable public procurement, regulations); implement eco-design requirements and production standards to level the playing field; enable an inclusive and just transition.

3. **Changes in consumption habits**
   - Change consumer attitudes through campaigns (e.g. using social media influencers & UN ambassadors), improve advertising and consumer information tools such as labels; build acceptance for product longevity that reduces consumption; instill habits to reduce climate impacts of garment care.

Need for real accountability across the value chain (e.g. through due diligence, transparency & traceability efforts, collective programmes).

UNEP aims to provide leadership and convene partners to develop knowledge and solutions to advance towards a sustainable and circular textile value chain, while supporting sound management of chemicals.
Upcoming work at global level

Roadmap to sustainability and circularity in the textile value chain

Following consultation workshops in May, our roadmap report is about to undergo peer review and will be launched by the end of 2021.

Sustainable Fashion Communications Strategy

The strategy is under development and is focusing on the role of consumer-facing storytellers and the power of shifting the narrative to strengthen demand for a positive fashion future.
Intex Project
(September 2020 – August 2023)

➢ Provides support to governments and SMEs in Kenya, South Africa and Tunisia, to implement a more sustainable business model (eco-innovation) and assess their product environment footprints

➢ Assessments on the potential of sustainable economic models to support the transition to SCP in the textile value chain, in support of the implementation of the UNEA-4 resolution on SCP

➢ Increase among SMEs and governments the knowledge on resource efficiency, life cycle thinking, circularity and eco-innovation in the textile value chain

Visit the project website for more info:

www.unep.org/intex
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Check out our Website!

https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/unep-textile-value-chain

Visit the UNEP Circularity Platform:
https://buildingcircularity.org/textiles/

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THANK YOU!