

**HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (HLPF)**  
**10-19 July 2017, New York**  
**Concept note for a high-level side event**

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**Date, time and venue:** Monday, 17 July 2017, 1:15 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

**UN Headquarters, Conference Room A**

**Main organizer:** Mission of Estonia to the United Nations with the Ministry of Environment of Estonia

**Collaborating partners:**

- Mission of Denmark to the United Nations
  - Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations
  - UNEP New York Office
  - European Parliament
  - Global Fashion Agenda / Youth Fashion Summit (YFS)
  - UPMADÉ LLC, Estonia
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**TITLE:**

**“Innovation and collaboration – a way forward in implementing SDGs in the global textile value chains”**

**SUMMARY:**

Garment and textile are among the most polluting and resource intensive industries in the world. **The main objective** of the side-event is to highlight the importance of making use of innovative solutions throughout global production value chains and cross-sectoral collaboration in implementing sustainable solutions and SDGs using the example of global textile value chains.

**Key measures** to address the sustainability challenges of textiles are to increase the transparency, collaboration between different stakeholders and to foster innovative solutions throughout the full life cycle of garments. This event will showcase the opportunities for innovative and collaborative changes throughout the value chain for delivering sustainable consumption and production patterns.

**Addressing** the urgent need to mobilize industry stakeholders all over the world to share know-how and innovative solutions and bring the textile industry into the global political agenda. The event will be engaging high-level representatives of countries, relevant stakeholder groups and will feature keynote speakers from public, private and civil society.

**Background:** Garment and textile industry is among the most polluting and resource intensive industries in the world with several negative environmental and social impacts along the value chain. There is a need to look at garments, textiles, and the

related negative social and environmental impacts from a global perspective. A T-shirt travels across continents and countries throughout its lifetime by leaving behind polluted environments, poverty and waste. Recent research shows that textiles are also contributing to the increasing problem of marine waste, in the form of microfibers (also known as microplastics) that enter waterways when textiles are washed.

## **RELEVANCE TO THE HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM AND RELATIONS TO THE SDGs**

The theme for 2017 HLPF is “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”, focus SDGs are: 1; 2; 3; 5; 9; 14. Achieving these goals is a global effort and it includes reducing the impacts of environmental use to health, creating more value from natural resources and increasing the use and benefit from materials already in the consumption and production cycles. The changes in actions needed lay in different parts of global consumption and production patterns.

We aim to show innovative solutions for the various roles of actors and parts of the chain that can bring about change towards sustainability. Major social issues connected with fashion and textile production are use of child labor, unfair pay (SDG 1, 2, 8), forced labor, unhealthy working conditions and exposure to hazardous chemicals (SDG 3, 8 and 12).

The main environmental issues that appear up and downstream the value chain are the extensive use of water, energy, toxic chemicals and waste (SDG 3, 9, 12, 14). In addition, consumption of clothes have increased vastly over the last decades due to the decrease in prices and quality, which has brought along a throw-away fashion culture that consumes vast amounts of resources and creates waste and pollution. Hence, garments and textiles provide a relevant and tangible topic for a HLPF side-event to address the implementation of SDGs.

The side event will focus primarily on the following SDGs:

- **Goal 8: Promote sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**  
*Target 8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead*
- **Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**  
*Target 9.4: By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities*
- **Goal 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**  
*Target 12.2 By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources*  
*Target 12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle*

*Target 12.a Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production*

- **Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

*Target: 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution*

- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

*Target: 17.16: Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries*

*Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships*

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## PROGRAMME AND SPEAKERS:

- **Mr Ado Lõhmus, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of the Environment of Estonia, Welcome and opening remarks**

What is the role of innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration in implementing SDG's in different parts of global value chains? How to increase the resource efficiency and promote circular economy? What political interventions would scale up the necessary innovations and new ways for acting?

- **Mr Kristian Jensen, Minister for Finance of Denmark, Innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration as drivers to implement the SDGs**

Driving sustainability in the textile industry can be a challenging undertaking, oftentimes dominated by auditing and assessment standards. Innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration can help bring important change to boost productivity and profitability while at the same time improving working conditions and environmental standards.

What are good examples of innovative solutions and multi-stakeholder from global textile value chains that can lead to sustainable production and economic growth? What action is needed from the industry and civil society?

- **Mr N.M. Zeaul Alam, Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Division, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Managing a sustainable environment in readymade garments industries**

What is the experience of Bangladesh on challenges, successes and ways forward in managing vulnerability towards sustainability (including environmental) caused by the readymade garments industries, the main export item of the country?

- **Mr Elliot Harris, *UN Assistant Secretary General and Director of the UN Environment New York Office, The global view to value chains, innovation and environmental impacts and opportunities***

Separate actors can influence the whole impact of a sector in different ways and volumes. A global view on the priority areas of change, within the 2030 Agenda, that could create the most impact both for the environment and social challenges is needed to fully comprehend the different potential of governments, consumers, producers and civil society. What are the priority areas of value chain and solutions needed for an impactful change? What political interventions would scale up the necessary changes and innovations?

- **Ms Linda McAvan, *Chair, Committee on Development, European Parliament, MEP, The EU Flagship Initiative on the Garment Sector***

In April 2017, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on a EU flagship initiative on the garment sector. The aim of this initiative is an EU-wide agreement on labour and environmental standards that apply to the entire production process as well as in the supply chain in the garment sector. MEP McAvan will introduce the initiative in more detail.

- **Mr Marko Kiisa, *UPMADE LLC, CEO, Estonia, Innovation in action – production patterns and change***

Whether the changes are required by the consumer demand or by imposed regulations, the actors of change are from the private sector. There is a need to look at how the value chain operates and what the main drivers of change from the private sector perspective are.

What innovative solutions are used to increase the resource efficiency and promote circular economy? What are the opportunities in turning waste into value for the textile industry and for the end consumer?

- **Ms Mette Harrestrup, *Programme Director, PhD, KEA Design, Copenhagen School of Design and Technology; Global Fashion Agenda/Youth Fashion Summit (YFS), A voice of the future***

The 5th Copenhagen Fashion Summit held in May 2017 is the meeting platform for fashion and textile industry's decision-makers, leading NGOs, experts, policy-makers and academia. It forges a common understanding and leads industry-wide commitments towards a more sustainable and circular fashion industry. Youth Fashion Summit (YFS) is part of the Copenhagen Fashion Summit which brings together 100 top students from 40 countries across 5 continents to share a next-generation vision for the industry and to develop concrete recommendations on how the textiles and fashion industry should work with the UN's SDGs. The students conducted a proposal for the first ever UN resolution on sustainable fashion based on each SDG, which will be presented on the mainstage at Copenhagen Fashion Summit to inspire the industry and politicians to take action.