



— SUSTAINABLE —
APPAREL FORUM

ORGANIZED BY



IN COLLABORATION WITH

**Laudes ———
— Foundation**

4th Edition | 16th March 2023 | Radisson Blu Water Garden, Dhaka.



EVENT REPORT

Sustainable Apparel Forum 2023

Promoting the Sustainability Agenda within Textile & Apparel Supply Chain

Sustainable Apparel Forum 2023

The Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) is Bangladesh's pioneering sustainability event orchestrated by the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE), founded and led by Mostafiz Uddin. Since 2017, SAF has been dedicated to driving a shift in the global apparel supply chain by positioning Bangladesh as a value-added product sourcing destination for sustainable and ethical apparel products on the global map.

The Forum promotes Bangladesh's apparel sector and strengthens collaboration among key stakeholders in the industry to tackle systemic issues. Through a curation of annual events, SAF closes the knowledge gap by highlighting meaningful initiatives that raise awareness and standardize sustainability goals.

On March 16, 2023, the 4th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum convened key industry stakeholders to discuss five priority areas of the apparel and textile supply chain: circular economy, climate impact & action, renewable energy & green funding, skill development and green job prospects & challenges. Attendees included garment manufacturers, brands and retailers, development partners, foreign missions and embassies in Bangladesh, impact creating organizations, apparel and textile associations, industry leaders, government officials, secretariats and ministers.



Founder's Message

In the global garment market, sustainability has become a critical component of corporate operations, enabling businesses to establish a long-lasting presence. Bangladesh has taken steps towards sustainable manufacturing, taking into consideration the needs of the environment and the current landscape.

To bring together like-minded stakeholders with a strong desire to advance the sector sustainably, the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) hosted the inaugural Sustainable Apparel Forum (SAF) on May 17, 2017. We were delighted with the enthusiastic response from attendees, particularly presenters, business owners, and professionals, which confirmed the significance of sustainable manufacturing.

We share the SAF's goals of promoting a thriving, sustainable apparel and textile industry that drives our economy forward consistently. We are committed to achieving these objectives and look forward to seeing you all at the fourth edition on March 16, 2023 where fresh perspectives and knowledge sharing will support the industry's progress towards sustainability.

A portrait of Mostafiz Uddin, a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt and a lanyard. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a solid light blue.

Mostafiz Uddin

Founder & CEO

Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE)

Words of Appreciation

Dear All,

I am pleased to share with you that KDS affiliation with the 4th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum. KDS is one of the most renowned businesses and industrial conglomerates in Bangladesh, and as the Managing Director of the company, I am delighted that we took the initiative to sponsor an event that is of global importance for the Apparel and Textile Industry.

As part of the apparel community, I really appreciate the role the Sustainable Apparel Forum is playing as a global platform connecting the key stakeholders of the industry and facilitating the conversation on what should come next on the agenda to make it more sustainable. As KDS proudly stands for innovation, dynamism, untiring effort, and dedication towards sustainability, it was an honor to support an event that aligns with our core beliefs and contribute to the collaborative development of the industry.

The Sustainable Apparel Forum 2023 has once again curated some incredible panel sessions and presentations for collaborative knowledge sharing and opened the ground for imperative discussions to take place to move the apparel industry forward. I look forward to the momentum for sustainability accelerated by this event and look forward to the upcoming editions.

We express our gratitude for your continued support and extend our best wishes.



Salim Rahman

Managing Director,
KDS



SAF 2023

in Numbers

650+

NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

55+

WORLD CLASS
SPEAKERS

11+

GREEN GRWOTH
EXHIBITORS

25+

COUNTRIES

09

PRESENTATIONS

04

SESSIONS

01

ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION

80+

NATIONAL & INT.
MEDIA COVERAGE

Opening Plenary



Opening Plenary

The Speakers

Chief Guest

**Tipu Munshi, MP**

Honorable Minister,
Ministry of Commerce, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

Guest of Honor

**H.E. Peter D. Haas**

Ambassador,
U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh

**H.E. Charles Whiteley**

Ambassador and Head of Delegation,
Delegation of the European Union
in Bangladesh

**Faruque Hassan**

President, BGMEA &
Managing Director, Giant Group

**Salim Rahman**

Managing Director, KDS &
Chairman, Al-Arafah Islami Bank Ltd.

**Ranjan Mahtani**

Executive Chairman,
Epic Group

**Naureen Chowdhury**

Head of Labour Rights Programme,
Laudes Foundation



The Grand Opening

Under the theme Promoting the Sustainability Agenda Within Textile and Apparel Supply Chain, the 4th edition of the Sustainable Apparel Forum was inaugurated by Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi.

The opening session set the tone for the event by bringing together prominent national leaders, international government representatives, as well as industry leaders to highlight pertinent concerns for Bangladesh as it seeks to transition towards a sustainable manufacturing destination. A shared sense of urgency was expressed across all speakers that further collaboration is needed, with key focus on green development and scaling responsible financing to build a prosperous future for all.



This forum is an opportunity to be part of the next chapter of Bangladesh's development journey. We have the knowledge, resources and industry stakeholders within this room to translate our Aspirations into Actions, not just for the betterment of the industry but the country as a whole.

Naureen Chowdhury

Head of Labour Rights Programme
Laudes Foundation

Opening Plenary

The Highlights

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, as Chief guest, extended the support from the government in accelerating towards a more sustainable apparel industry. He urged increased collaboration and coordinated efforts across all stakeholders, including manufacturers and brands, to drive this vision of a greener industry. Thanking the organizers on their commitment to spotlighting Bangladesh and paying attention to green productivity as a means to sustainability. Finally, he emphasized that critical to this transition is focusing on inclusive investment. By putting the needs of people first, we can ensure that none are left behind.

In her speech, **Head of Labour Rights Programme, Laudes Foundation, Naureen Chowdhury** concentrated on investment, actions and discussions to accelerate a transition to a climate-positive and inclusive economy. Millions of workers, particularly women, are engaged in building the apparel industry on the back of the support of the global community, she told the audience. She pledged to continue to invest in the apparel sector in Bangladesh and become a part of its development journey. She suggested intentions and plans need to be translated into actions by working hand in hand.



KDS Managing Director and Al-Arafah Islami Bank Ltd. Chairman, Salim Rahman affirmed that financial institutions could play a vital role in sustaining the apparel sector. Financial support is required to make an investment in sustainability of the apparel industry. The circular economy and creating the tools for maximizing the use of resources are inevitable in this age. Sustainability is not only about production and profitability but attitude and behavior. Mr Rahman urged all to join hands for ensuring sustainable growth of the industry and the economy as well. He recommended the government's support, regulatory reforms, recycled materials, and technology use for boosting productivity and fighting climate change.

Opening Plenary Highlights

Epic Group Executive Chairman Ranjan Mahtani viewed that a huge investment is required in solar power. There are many other forms of sustainability but hard work is very crucial. The key points of his speech included women's empowerment, a better working environment, and sustainable manufacturing and development.

BGMEA President and Giant Group Managing Director Faruque Hassan applauded the SAF for organizing the event that will help the industry grow sustainably. Sustainability is now the top agenda. Several initiatives taken by the BGMEA for the welfare and safety of the workers. Bangladesh has the highest number of green factories. Some 53 out of the world's top 100 green factories are in Bangladesh and 550 more garment factories are in the pipeline to be certified as green factories by the United States Green Building Council, he said. A series of actions are required to realize the sustainability vision by 2030. Regulations are necessary but country-specific legislation is not desirable. Regulations should be accepted by all. Level-playing field across the supply channel is also important. Since new due diligence is coming in, our factories need to build their capacity to comply while maintaining responsible businesses. Every business in the supply chain needs to play its due role in the sustainable apparel industry.



US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter D Haas held workers, factory owners, government and brands responsible to sustain the apparel industry. Sustainability has many aspects like environmental, supply chain, recycling and energy uses. The role of workers is one of the main driving forces in the sustainability of the garment sector. But the workers' protection issue is still left unheeded as many workers are not allowed to exercise their rights and raise their voices. An empowered workforce is directly related to sustainability. Protection of the workers does not just mean the protection in terms of wage, safety and childcare. It gives them a voice, and makes them partners. Other key points of his speech included due diligence, innovation, technology and environmental issues. Mr Haas promised to work together to make the Bangladesh fashion industry successful.



Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh Charles Whlteley outlined his organization's efforts to ensure compliance in the apparel industry and renewable energy in Bangladesh. Confirming labour rights to gain the trade benefit under the new EU GSP scheme was suggested. The new GSP Regulation will be effective from the next January for the next decade as the current GSP Regulation is set to expire by the end of 2023. As Bangladesh is yet to reach the center of excellence in due diligence and compliance, it strictly needs to follow the EU rules. The EU wants the implementation of the National Action Plan to improve the labour rights in the country's apparel industry and to raise the use of renewable energy to 40 per cent by 2041.

Closing Plenary



Opening Plenary

The Speakers

Chief Guest

**Md. Tazul Islam, MP**

Honorable Minister,
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development
and Co-operatives, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

Guest of Honor

**Zunaid Ahmed Palak, MP**

Honorable State Minister for Information
& Communication Technology (ICT),
Government of the People's Republic
of Bangladesh

**Md. Siddiqur Rahman**

Former President,
BGMEA

**Fazlee Shamim Ehsan**

Vice President, BKMEA &
Founder, Fatullah Apparels

**Tuomo Poutiainen**

Country Director,
International Labour Organization (ILO)



The Final Remarks

The closing session reflected on the discussions of the day, emphasising again that to drive sustainability within Bangladesh there will need to be a continued strong collaboration between policy makers, manufactures, brands and others supply chain actors.

Whilst financing is available, there needs to be more accessibility to green finance as well as increased public private partnerships. Bangladesh needs to fortify the awareness amongst manufacturers and the industry as a whole. Underlying these discussions was a sentiment for better pricing strategies as a commitment to secure the return on investments made towards a green industry. Bangladesh is an agile country, but stakeholders need to work together in preparation not only to the changing regulatory landscape such as the upcoming EU legislation but also to address the imminent impact of climate change.



At SAF local entrepreneurs to have the chance to gain more knowledge and be introduced global opportunities and technologies that advance their businesses. Through foreign and national entrepreneurs collaboration, industry stakeholder and government support, garment sector of Bangladesh will remain competitive at the global landscape.

Md. Tazul Islam, MP

Honorable Minister,
Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development
and Co-operatives, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

Closing Plenary

The Highlights

LGRD Minister Tazul Islam brought down the curtain of the daylong event hoping that the RMG industry of Bangladesh will be able to attract global buyers. The country's private sector has been moving forward due to the support given by the government. Bangladesh is a good destination for the global community to invest in. The RMG industry supported by the backward linkage industry is also going forward.

Former BGMEA President Siddiquir Rahman said after the Rana Plaza incident, Bangladesh improved a lot. Some 192 green factories and more than 200 are in the pipeline but the question is if the buyer is paying the prices we deserve. Nobody talks about sustainable pricing. Buyers should pay heed to sustainable pricing. The apparel industry is now better than in any other country. Labor cost in Bangladesh is not cheaper but higher as per the workers' efficiency and the country's economy.



ICT State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak spoke about the digital development of Bangladesh. Bangladesh has huge potential to produce recycled materials-based products, especially for knitwear. Cotton is no more the only source and there are many sources from where we can produce our garment products, especially sportswear. Research and innovation centers should be set up to develop recycled materials for manufacturing the products. He announced plans to set up 10 research and innovation centers in different universities, including BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology and BGMEA of Fashion. Maybe, the government can contribute \$ 1 billion to develop the products.



Speaking at the concluding session, **Bangladesh Country Director of ILO Tuomo Poutiainen** expressed his gratitude to the government of Bangladesh and the private sector for developing and investing so much in creating a sustainable Bangladesh and thanked the organizer for pulling together all the key players for collaboration in the forum to advance Bangladesh's apparel sector forward. He viewed that the discussion reflected the challenges and opportunities related to the industry but also to the transition of Bangladesh from the LDC to the middle-income country after 2026 and also meeting the SDG goals. He appreciated the partnership and commitment of Bangladesh to practicing the international labor standard and fundamentals and principles and promoting quality and skill development of women and men in the RMG sector and beyond. Moving further forward, strengthening governance and holding dialogues are important. The dialogue should be among the government, employers, and workers. The ILO believes in the quality of effectiveness and governance and enforcement and standard institutions. They matter a lot in

ensuring building safety, occupational safety and health safety, disputes and differences, justice and other issues be it big or small. That's why it is vital to strengthen the government's institutions because it allows to make workplaces safer, solve disputes, and modern and effective labor force. Employers and the private sector should continue to lead in this transformation. That's why ILO has been working so closely with BGMEA and BKMEA. The best recipe for going forward is to address the issues of due diligence and expectations of the businesses. He referred to the establishment of the employment injury scheme (EIS) launched last year in the country's readymade garment sector to protect workers against dropping into poverty as a result of workplace accidents and/or occupational diseases. ILO will continue to partner with the government, employers, and workers to sustain the industry in Bangladesh.



BKMEA Vice President Fazlee Shamim Ehsan said the benchmark to reach the standard level has now become a normal thing. The benchmark is always changing. Not only the manufacturing industry but the whole economy should be sustainable. The pricing also needs to be sustainable. Over the past couple of years, we have been facing pricing problems and requirements. The consensus among all buyers and manufacturers is also the key to sustaining the industry.

Plenary Session 01



Climate
Action



Plenary Session

CLIMATE ACTION – A PREREQUISITE TO WORKER WELL-BEING AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY

01

Why It Matters

The fashion industry's impact on the environment and its workers is a matter of great significance, particularly for countries such as Bangladesh, where the industry is a major employer and contributor to the economy. Climate change not only poses significant health risks to factory workers in the fashion industry but can also impact their economic well-being. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events can reduce workers' productivity and efficiency, leading to lower incomes and reduced job security. Additionally, climate change can disrupt supply chains and reduce the availability of raw materials, leading to job losses and decreased job security. In Bangladesh, where the fashion industry accounts for over 80% of exports and employs millions of workers, addressing the impact of climate change on worker well-being is crucial for ensuring the sustainability within the industry as well as economic and social stability of the country.



Plenary Session 01

The Speakers

Speakers


Saber Hossain Chowdhury, MP

Chairman, Parliament Standing Committee on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change


Ziaur Rahman

Regional Country Manager Production (Bangladesh, Pakistan and Africa), H&M


Paul Wright

Group Executive Director – ESG, PDS Group


Bernadette Blom

Director, Good Fashion Fund



Moderator

Morten Lehmann

CEO & Co-Founder, Tailwind


H.E. Alexandra Berg Von Linde

Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh


Dr. Saleemul Huq

Director, ICCCAD & Professor, IUB


Naureen Chowdhury

Head of Labour Rights Programme, Laudes Foundation


Dr. Shahriare Mahmood

Chief Sustainability Officer, Spinnova PLC

Business as usual cannot weather the impact of climate change, but if we can change business as usual towards more sustainable and circular practice we have a chance. We have been talking but now we need to put our words into action and walk the talk. It starts with building knowledge, building knowledge and skills of workers and all key partners

Dr. Saleemul Huq

Director, ICCCAD & Professor, IUB

Plenary Session 01

The Perspectives

The first plenary at the Sustainable Apparel Forum focused on the impacts of climate change, sustainable pricing strategies for garment exporters, technical know-how for reducing carbon emissions, and the importance of sustainability and circularity. Speakers also highlighted the need for policy support, energy sector improvements, sustainable supply chains, workers' participation in policy formulation, and long-term financing for green factories. The discussion emphasized the collective effort required from the government, private sector, and international organizations to ensure sustainability in the industry.

During the first plenary, the impact of climate change on Bangladesh's apparel industry was a major point of discussion. Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges for Bangladesh, and it has already led to severe consequences such as rising sea levels, increasing temperatures, and natural disasters. The speakers emphasized the need for a sustainable pricing strategy that addresses the low rates received by local garment manufacturers due to intermediaries taking up around 80% of the prices. A sustainable pricing strategy would enable local factories to pursue sustainability in their businesses.

Sustainable supply chains were highlighted as necessary for ensuring textile development. The private sector was identified as having a critical role in ensuring sustainability in the industry. The speakers emphasized the need for collective actions, building capacity, and worker participation in negotiations and policy formulations to promote sustainability. Long-term financing to green factories, technological adaptation, and collaborations to improve sustainability were also mentioned as important factors.

Overall, the first plenary highlighted the urgent need for a sustainable pricing strategy, policy reforms, and investments in research and development to reduce carbon emissions and ensure sustainability in the apparel industry in Bangladesh. It also emphasized the critical role of collective actions and worker participation in promoting sustainability.



Plenary Session 01

Key Takeaways

01

Bangladesh RMG industry needs a sustainable pricing strategy to ensure local factories can pursue sustainability in business and reduce carbon emissions.

02

A holistic approach is required to ensure sustainability in the apparel industry, which includes investment in research and development and technical know-how. These need to be supported by policies and regulations that incentivize the transition to renewable energy and impose penalties on polluters.

03

Collaboration and collective actions are necessary for promoting sustainability in the apparel industry. This includes workers' participation in negotiation and policy formulations, building capacity, and promoting long-term financing for green factories.

Plenary Session 02



Circular
Economy



Plenary Session

CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN BANGLADESH'S APPAREL & TEXTILE INDUSTRY: CLOSING THE LOOP

02

Why It Matters

The apparel and textile industry is vital to Bangladesh's economy, but its environmental impact has been significant.

Embracing circular economy principles offers a way to reduce waste and emissions, increase efficiency and productivity, and promote sustainable design. A circular economy involves minimizing waste, keeping materials in use, and using recycled or renewable materials. For a manufacturing country like Bangladesh, circularity offers a way to reduce the industry's environmental impact and increase competitiveness.

With the right policies and support, Bangladesh's industry can lead the way in creating a more sustainable future.



Plenary Session 02

The Speakers

Speakers

**Tapan Kanti Ghosh**

Senior Secretary,
Ministry of Commerce, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

**H.E. Winnie Estrup Petersen**

Ambassador,
Embassy of Denmark in Bangladesh

**Werner Lange**

Coordinator-Textile Cluster, GIZ

**Hilde van Duijn**

Head of Global Value Chains,
Circle Economy

**Micke Magnusson**

Entrepreneur In Residence,
ENVIU

**Helene Smits**

Chief Sustainability Officer,
Recover

**Moderator****Sandra Gonza**

Strategy & Business
Impact Lead, Tailwind

If we want to have circularity and to attract innovations and technologies such as recycling into Bangladesh we need an enabling environment this includes policies, incentive structures, & looking into the informal sector to ensure well-established, steady supply of raw materials that can be compliant to foster textile-to-textile recycling. This need to be established within a working system that benefits all stakeholders, the factories, the waste handlers, the recyclers and the spinners with a win-win-win business case.

Helene Smits

Chief Sustainability Officer
Recover

Plenary Session 02

The Perspectives

The plenary session discussed the challenges and opportunities for promoting circular economy in Bangladesh's apparel and textile industry. There are several circularity projects within Bangladesh, to avoid manufacturer fatigue, there was a call for more alignment. The speakers emphasized the need for local and international collaborations to accelerate the fashion industry while keeping environmental impact in mind. There is a clear economic, environmental and social case for circular economy, but to reap these benefits there needs to be more investment and importance placed on knowledge creation, innovation, technology, and policy support.

Several speakers highlighted the challenges faced by Bangladesh's apparel industry, such as the scarcity of industrial raw materials and the need for a strong supply chain. Highlighting that the circular economy is an opportunity to address these challenges, to increase efficiency and on an economic development level there is potential for creating new jobs for informal workers within the textile waste trading and promoting inclusive business models.

Overall, the sentiment expressed during the session was that Bangladesh once had a tradition of re-use, and circular economy, particularly starting with recycling offers an opportunity for the country to take back this tradition while elevating its impact through new innovations and technologies. While there are challenges to overcome, the speakers were optimistic about the potential for promoting circular economy in Bangladesh's apparel and textile industry with the right policies, collaborations, and investments.



Plenary Session 02

Key Takeaways

01

Collaboration is key: The speakers emphasized the importance of local and international collaborations to accelerate the apparel and textile industry while keeping environmental impact in mind. This includes aligning stakeholders, policy support, and easy access to financing, among other things.

02

Recycling and reuse: Recycling and reuse of materials were highlighted as important solutions for the challenges facing the Bangladesh apparel industry, such as scarcity of raw materials and high import costs. Speakers stressed the need for a circular economy approach, renewable energy, and enabling the environment to strengthen the supply chain. This can only be made possible by focusing on enabling policies and regulations that promote circular economy practices and incentivize sustainable production and consumption.

03

Innovation and investment: Innovation, technology, equipment availability, circular economy knowledge and awareness, win-win business cases, and financial resources were all identified as important issues for improving sustainability and transitioning towards circular economy in the apparel industry. Whilst speakers mentioned the need for investment in innovations and technology to promote a circular economy in Bangladesh's apparel and textile industry, they emphasized focusing on the fundamentals such as increasing awareness and re-skilling to bridge the knowledge gap currently around circular economy practices.

Plenary Session 03



Renewable Energy



Plenary Session

RENEWABLE ENERGY THROUGH GREEN FUNDING: PATHWAY TO NET ZERO FOR APPAREL & TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH

03

Why It Matters

Adopting renewable energy through green funding is crucial for Bangladesh's apparel and textile industry to reduce its environmental impact and improve competitiveness.

Green funding can help businesses transition to more sustainable energy sources, reduce energy costs, and cut greenhouse gas emissions. As a developing country in its transition, Bangladesh has an opportunity to take advantage of its abundant renewable energy resources and lead the way towards a more sustainable energy system.

By embracing renewable energy, Bangladesh's industry can promote a cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous future for all.



Plenary Session 03

The Speakers

Speakers

**Miran Ali**

Vice President, BGMEA
& Managing Director,
Bitopi Group

**Naser Ezaz Bijoy**

CEO, Standard Chartered Bank &
President, FICCI

**Dr. Vidhura Ralapanawe**

Executive Vice President,
Epic Group

**Nawshad Mustafa**

Deputy General Manager,
Bangladesh Bank

**Alamgir Morshed**

Executive Director & CEO,
IDCOL

**Ahmed Shaheen**

Additional Managing Director
& Head of Corporate Banking,
Eastern Bank Ltd.

**Ashish Damle**

Country Director,
Oxfam in Bangladesh

**Moderator****Morten Lehmann**

CEO & Co-Founder,
Tailwind



Decarbonisation of the supply chain is a collective responsibility, it is not just the responsibility of the manufacturers and brands, it is looking at everyone and how can we leverage collective capabilities of brands, manufactures, mills, banks and others. This is where the true opportunity is.

Dr. Vidhura Ralapanawe

Executive Vice President
Epic Group

Plenary Session 03

The Perspectives

During this plenary discussion it was clear that financing is essential for the transition to a low-carbon and sustainable economy. It was noted that all stakeholders must come together, and there is a significant for the private sector in financing sustainable development through innovative financing mechanisms, such as green bonds and impact investing. Through these approaches the sector can mobilize capital for sustainable projects. Looking at initiatives taken by various organizations to promote renewable energy in Bangladesh's apparel and textile industry. IDCOL, the state-owned entity, has been working towards the government's plan to produce 40% electricity from renewable energy by 2041. Bangladesh Bank has created a dedicated department to focus on renewable energy and formed funds to finance green factories. Standard Chartered Bank is providing soft loans to interested parties, and Oxfam is working towards aligning organizations and synchronizing issues with stakeholders. Eastern Bank Ltd. recommended aligning the fund with IDCOL and emphasized more collaboration and alignment as customers come first to the banks.

The speakers emphasized collaboration and alignment among all stakeholders, including brands, buyers, policy makers, and banks, to achieve decarbonization. The private sector has to run first for the decarbonization process. Sustainable funding and easy access to the fund were mentioned as crucial points in this regard. The audience emphasized the need for public-private partnerships to drive sustainable development and generate green funding, along with government national plans and support, integrated partnerships with development partners, consumer demand for sustainable and ethical products, and advancement in innovation and technology.

Overall, the plenary discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration and alignment among all stakeholders to achieve decarbonization in Bangladesh's apparel and textile industry. The speakers presented various initiatives and funding opportunities to promote renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions. Finally, governments have the ability and mandate to provide policy support and incentives to encourage private sector investment in sustainable projects.



Plenary Session 03

Key Takeaways

01

Collective responsibility: Decarbonisation is not the responsibility of manufacturers alone. It is a collective effort from brands, buyers, banks, policymakers, and everybody else. Everyone needs to focus on the whole ecosystem and align their efforts towards a common goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions.

02

Financing for renewable energy: Financial institutions such as IDCOL and Bangladesh Bank have already taken initiatives to promote renewable energy, but more needs to be done. Banks should finance industries that want to invest in renewable energy, provide technical support and create awareness about climate change.

03

Alignment, Collaboration, and Awareness: There is a need for alignment and synchronization of efforts among stakeholders to promote renewable energy in the apparel and textile industry in Bangladesh. Promoting collaboration among industry players, government, private sector, banks, development partners, and policymakers is crucial to effective utilizing of collective know-how and resources to achieve renewable energy targets. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) can play a vital role in driving sustainable development and generating green funding. Additionally, it is crucial to create awareness among entrepreneurs about the impact of climate change and the role of green financing in achieving sustainability goals.

Plenary Session 04



Human
Rights



Plenary Session

MANDATORY HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE

04

Why It Matters

The apparel and textiles industry in Bangladesh employs millions of workers, many of whom are women. However, persistent human rights concerns threaten the industry's sustainability and workers' well-being.

The introduction of mandatory human rights due diligence (HRDD) is crucial for addressing these concerns, improving working conditions, promoting fair wages, and protecting workers' rights. A collective effort from all stakeholders, including the Bangladesh government, international organizations, and companies, is required to ensure its success and promote a more responsible and sustainable industry.



Plenary Session 04

The Speakers

Speakers

**Dr. Bernd Spanier**

Deputy Head of Delegation,
Delegation of The European
Union in Bangladesh

**Faiyaz Murshid Kazi**

Director General (Economic Affairs Wing),
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh

**Leena Khan**

Labor Attaché,
U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh

**Andrew Martin**

Executive Vice President,
Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC)

**Ruairidh McCarthy**

Head of Partnership Development,
WaterAid UK

**Jasmin Malik Chua**

Sourcing and Labor Editor,
Sourcing Journal

**Moderator****Mohamad Anis****Agung Nugroho**

Programme Manager,
Better Work Bangladesh



The post-pandemic environment has
shined a spotlight on the need for all
stakeholders; government, businesses
and trade unions to work together and
work better to address the labor
violations in our globally connected
supply chain.

Leena Khan

Labour Attaché
US Embassy in Bangladesh

Plenary Session 04

The Perspectives

During the plenary 'Mandatory Human Rights and Due Diligence' the key issues discussed included forced labor, child labor, inadequate workplace safety, environmental enhancement, and supply chain. The Bangladesh government and businesses have been successful in addressing emerging challenges, including social and environmental sustainability issues. Bangladesh needs to continuously work to address the enforcement of labor law and inspections to prevent future sanctions and unlock economic opportunities. Speakers echoed that living wage are also a part of human rights, and workers need access to justice and voice.

Representatives from US and EU governing bodies noted that they were jointly working to create a level-playing field in due diligence and strengthen governance. In the context of the EU, new directives were mentioned defining binding rules for everyone namely, brands, buyers, and suppliers will be held accountable for human rights and due diligence, and penalties and legal actions would follow if any company fails to comply with EU rules. In the US has prohibited the import of any products manufactured by engaging enforced labor, and the companies and individuals violating labor law are held accountable. Industry organisations such as WaterAid UK works closely with Bangladesh to ensure rights to water sanitation and advocates for workers about their rights to clean water. Whilst the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) launched a new membership model designed to encourage more in the consumer goods industry to understand their impact and how to introduce and implement initiatives to accelerate their sustainability journey.

In conclusion, the panel emphasized the importance of human rights and due diligence in factories and collaborations among brands, suppliers, and workers to improve the situation. The panelists also discussed the success of the Bangladesh government and businesses in addressing emerging challenges and the need to work on the enforcement of labor law and inspections to prevent future sanctions and unlock economic opportunities. Harmonization among stakeholders emerged as an essential lever for progress in this area.



Plenary Session 04

Key Takeaways

01

Bangladesh has been prioritizing compliance and due diligence in the apparel and textile industry, and there have been very many significant improvements in the industry's reputation and branding since the Rana Plaza tragedy. Bangladesh is now home to the highest number of lead factories, however, this is a continuous process and there is still more work to be done to ensure a safe and fair working environment for all workers in the industry.

02

Brands, buyers, and suppliers need to prioritize human rights and due diligence in their factories. With the new EU directive defining binding rules for everyone, companies can be held accountable for any human rights or due diligence violations. It is important for entrepreneurs to pay attention to these regulations and ensure compliance to avoid penalties and legal actions. Together, Brands and suppliers should conduct regular audits and assessments to identify and address any potential human rights or due diligence violations in their factories.

03

Collaboration among brands, suppliers, workers, and trade unions is key to improving the situation. It is essential to ensure that workers have access to justice and a voice to raise concerns about any violations. Brands and suppliers should establish and maintain open communication channels with their workers and trade unions to address any concerns and ensure that they have access to justice.

04

Harmonization among stakeholders is important when it comes to regulations. The government's responsibility is to ensure that all parties comply with the rules and regulations, and it is crucial to avoid country-specific regulations and ensure a level-playing field in the industry. It was recommended that governments, trade unions, and industry associations work together to establish and harmonize regulations that prioritize human rights and due diligence. This could involve engaging in dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders to develop policies and procedures that are applicable across the industry. Industry associations could also play a crucial role in promoting and ensuring compliance with these regulations among their members.

Roundtable Discussion

THE ROAD TOWARDS CIRCULAR FASHION IN BANGLADESH



Roundtable Discussion

THE ROAD TOWARDS CIRCULAR FASHION IN BANGLADESH

Key Talking Points

The Road towards Circular Fashion in Bangladesh was moderated by **Barrister Vidiya Amrit Khan, the Deputy Managing Director of Desh Garments Limited**, and featured several industry leaders as panelists. The discussion aimed to explore ways in which the garment industry in Bangladesh can become more sustainable and circular, with a focus on reducing carbon emissions, promoting policy changes, and developing long-term partnerships with international organizations.

During the discussion, **Paul Wright, the Group Executive Director of ESG at PDS Group**, highlighted the importance of carbon reduction and the need for brands and customers to set targets for reducing carbon emissions. He also emphasized the need for factories to commit to using green energy and pricing issues faced by local manufacturers.

Abdullah Hil Rakib, the BGMEA Director & Managing Director of Team Group, discussed the challenges and opportunities faced by the industry and suggested the need for time-bound policies to promote circularity.



Abdullah Hil Rakib, a prominent figure in the garment industry as the Director of BGMEA and Managing Director of Team Group, has emphasized the need for policy changes to make the industry more circular. In an effort to reduce waste and promote sustainability, Rakib suggests implementing circular business models and practices, such as extended producer responsibility, product design for recyclability, and closed-loop supply chains.

Roundtable Discussion

THE ROAD TOWARDS CIRCULAR FASHION IN BANGLADESH

Key Talking Points

Ali Mushtaq Butt, the Commercial Counselor at the Embassy of Denmark in Bangladesh, highlighted the importance of collaboration between Bangladesh and Denmark, with a focus on implementing Danish technologies, know-how, and best practices in the Bangladeshi industry.

Mumit Hassan, the Country Operations Head of Reverse Resources, discussed the need for transparency and traceability in the waste handling process and emphasized the importance of building awareness among stakeholders.

Ramona Handel Bajema, the Senior Adviser of Vision Spring and academic at Colombia University, highlighted the need to educate consumers on circular fashion and the tension between those who benefit from circularity and those who do not.

Overall, the discussion highlighted the challenges and opportunities facing the garment industry in Bangladesh as it strives to become more sustainable and circular. The panelists discussed the importance of collaboration, policy changes, and education to promote circularity and reduce waste in the industry.



Sweden's Ambassador to Bangladesh, Alexandra Berg Von Linde, discussed the upcoming EU legislation and its potential impact on circular fashion in Bangladesh.



Presentations



Presentation 01**Bestseller's Environment
Focus in Bangladesh****Felicity Tapsell**

Head of Responsible Sourcing
Bestseller A/S

Felicity Tapsell kicked off the proceedings with a compelling presentation on the company's environment-focused efforts in Bangladesh. Tapsell outlined the company's commitment to tackling climate change, promoting human rights, and optimizing resource usage to effect positive change in the industry. She also highlighted the significant savings the company has achieved by managing energy, water, and chemicals usage, with more than USD 7 million per year being saved.

Presentation 02**Accelerating Climate
Action in Fashion****Lewis Perkins**

President
Apparel Impact Institute

In a video message, Lewis Perkins shed light on the institute's new \$250 million Fashion Climate Fund, designed to unlock up to \$2 billion in blended capital for verified impact solutions and aimed at removing up to 150 million tonnes of CO2 from the apparel supply chain. The fund will be used to grant subsidies to suppliers who aim to decarbonize their factories, and the institute is seeking cooperation from local suppliers to achieve their goal of reducing carbon emissions.

Presentation 03**How SAC Is Mobilising
Collective Action on
Decarbonization?****Joyce Tsoi**

Director, Collective Action Programs
Sustainable Apparel Coalition

Joyce Tsoi presented on the collective action being mobilized to decarbonize the industry. Tsoi stressed the urgency of creating a more sustainable, equitable, and just world for all, highlighting that the apparel and footwear industry accounts for 2-8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. She emphasized that the SAC is working to cut 57.5 megatonnes of carbon per year, recognizing that collective action is necessary to achieve this ambitious goal. Tsoi also pointed out that regulators, investors, and consumers are demanding carbon reduction targets, climate-related risk disclosure, and change from the industry.

Presentation 04

Higher Ground? Fashion's Climate Breakdown and Apparel Production in Asia



Jason Judd

Executive Director, Cornell University
Global Labor Institute in New York

In his keynote paper on "Higher Ground? Fashion's Climate Breakdown and Apparel Production in Asia," Jason Judd described the impact of rising temperatures on the garment industry. Judd highlighted that the climate change scenario in Dhaka sees the average daily temperature climb about 40 degrees Celsius in May, which is unsustainable and poses a significant challenge to workers' productivity, earnings, and well-being. He estimated an annual productivity loss in Dhaka of 8% between 2020 and 2030 and stressed the need for significant investment to boost productivity and improve ventilation.

Presentation 05

Boosting Business: Why Investing in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Pays Off – A Case from Bangladesh



Hasin Jahan

Country Director
WaterAid Bangladesh

Hasin Jahan shared details on how WaterAid works with corporate partners in the RMG sector to improve operational efficiency and profitability by investing in water, sanitation, and hygiene. Jahan explained that investment in water, sanitation, and hygiene helps reduce absenteeism by 15%, improve punctuality by 5%, and generate \$1.33 for every \$1 invested.

Presentation 06

Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh: Human Right Due Diligence



Syed Fazle Niaz

Team Lead, Better Work Bangladesh
International Labour Organization (ILO)

Syed Fazle Niaz presented on advancing decent work in Bangladesh through Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). Niaz emphasized that it is the corporate responsibility of companies to respect human rights and that countries such as France, Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, and Japan, and the EU have framed HRDD laws to ensure human rights in the workplace.

Presentation 07

Increasing Supply Chain Resilience: Why Social Audit Convergence Is Needed More than Ever



Janet Mensink

Executive Director
SLCP

In a video message, Janet Mensink discussed the importance of social audit convergence to increase supply chain resilience. The apparel industry is being driven by sustainable production, and the industry needs to comply with upcoming legislation on human rights and due diligence. One critical element is audit cost reduction, and SLCP is working to eliminate audit fatigue in global supply chains by providing tools and systems for a high-quality comparable dataset on working conditions. Bangladesh is one of the SLCP's focus countries, where they already have a strong foothold.

Presentation 08

YKK's Sustainability Vision –
YKK's Action Plan for
A Sustainable Future



Asako Yoshioka

Vice President, Sustainability Department
YKK Corporation

Asako Yoshioka outlined YKK's Sustainability Vision and Action Plan for a Sustainable Future. YKK is one of 105 companies in the apparel, footwear, and textile sector globally with Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) approved targets to keep global warming to 1.5°. The company aims to reduce water use, increase wastewater recycling, reduce chemical usage, reduce CO2 emissions by 50%, and ensure safe workplaces throughout the supply chain by 2030.

Presentation 09

Building A Sustainable Supply Chain through Innovation



Saatchi Doshi

Analyst Supply Chain
Fashion For Good

Saatchi Doshi presented "Building A Sustainable Supply Chain through Innovation," explaining how to fit the fashion industry technically and get a return on investment (ROI). The platform connects those working on sustainable innovation with brands, retailers, manufacturers, and lenders to bring new ideas and technologies from niche to norm. Material production and processing account for 67% of carbon emissions in the supply chain, according to the presentation paper.

Take Action Now

This section will provide inspiration on how to act on the many topics and discussions at the conference.

There is no doubt anymore that we have established the big 'Why'. The science and very tangible effects of climate change are being felt worldwide, affecting the poorest countries the most and challenging a just transition to a prosperous net zero future.

The opening session by Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi set the tone well in addressing the challenges for Bangladesh as it seeks to transition towards a sustainable middle-income manufacturing destination.



There are no passengers
on spaceship earth...
We are all crew and
all have a responsibility

- Marshall McClughan

Take Action Now

Warning – this is not an easy transition. But NOW is the time to act.

The longer we wait, the harder and more expensive it will get. None of the challenges will be done by talking alone or by waiting for the perfect solution, the silver bullet that through a stroke of magic will solve all our problems. It will require all stakeholders to do their part and a variety of solutions ranging from implementing new technologies, scaling up green financing, innovating new business models, regulatory incentives, and new radical collaborations along the value chain.



IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW: KEY STEPS FOR MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

Take responsibility and act

Don't expect everybody else to solve the climate crisis. Instead take a hard look at what you can do, however little. As an individual, as an employee, as a company, and as a country. Many small streams can make a big river.

Find allies and collaborate

Though individual action is required, so is collaboration. The challenges ahead are so diverse and multifaceted that it requires different and multiple competencies. Understand your own strengths and weaknesses and seek out partners that can fill in for your weaknesses and further develop your strengths.

Evaluate your leadership

Reconsider if your style of leadership is best suited to navigate the unknown and volatile business environment, which could very well be the new 'business as usual'. Do you have an organization that can adapt to rapidly evolving challenges and the skills to match these? Is your organization working in silos each covering one piece of the puzzle without having an understanding of the interconnectedness of the silos?

If you can answer yes to these questions, you might want to consider how you can look at your organization as a whole and how to bridge the silos.

Redefine what success looks like and how to measure it

The metrics we use today to measure success and progress have gotten us to where we are today – for good and for bad.

If we focus only on the short-term business case, sustainability will in many cases be a costs only. Maybe it's time to reverse the question. What is the business case for inaction? Or rather what will be the alternative costs if you continue business as usual?

If you consider future regulation, resource scarcity and geopolitical tension, investing in sustainability can be a means to become a more resilient business and economy.

This, however, requires that we move away from only short terms measures of success and focus on the activities and investments that will lead us into the future.

TAKE ACTION NOW

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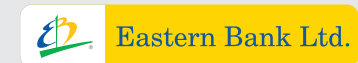
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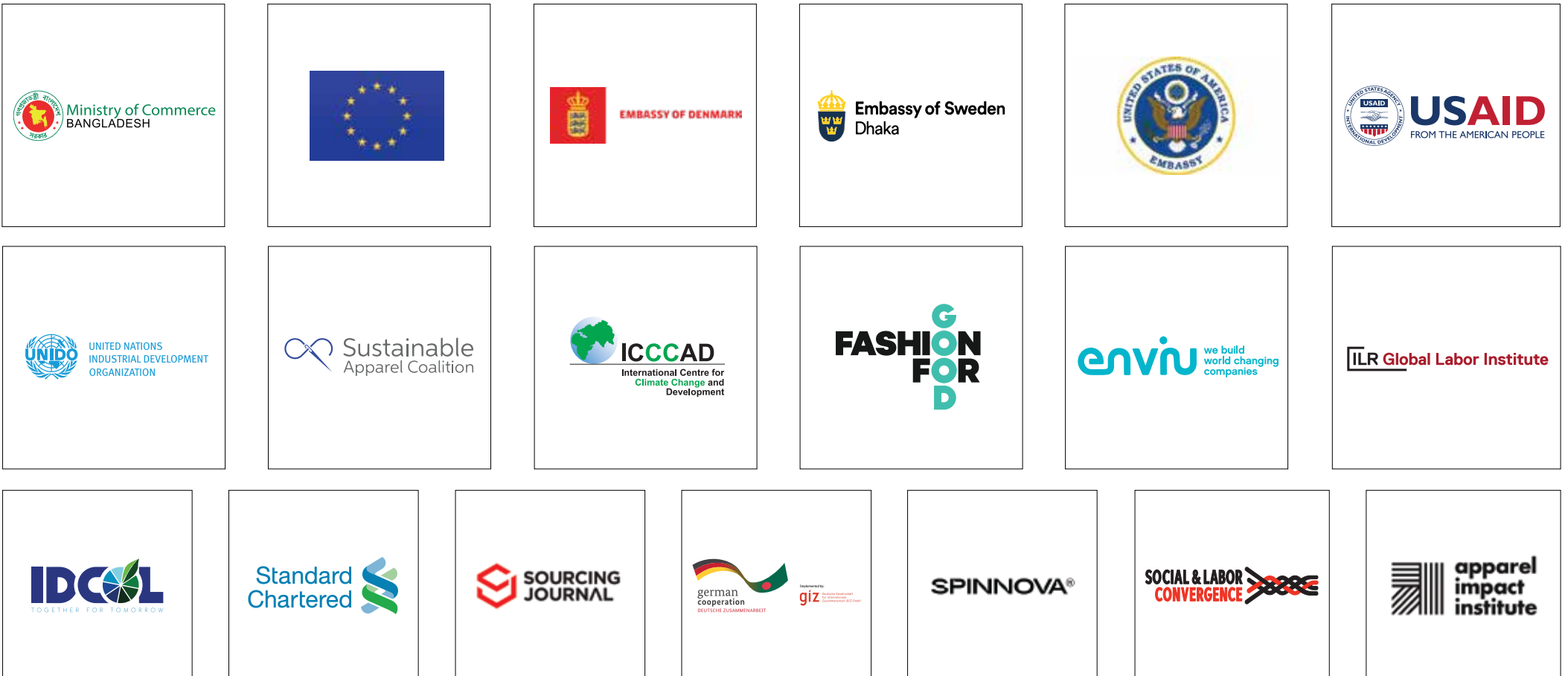
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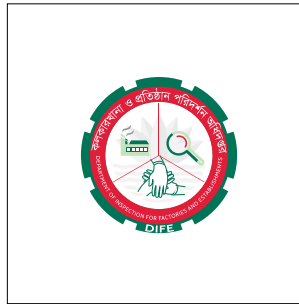
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Green Growth Exhibitors



SAF 2023

Social Media Outreach

2.5K+

mentions of
#SustainableApparelForum2022
#EnablingSustainability
#DrivingChange
#MakeAnImpact

1.2M+

impressions across
Sustainable Apparel Forum
social media channels.



7K+

shares in
Facebook and LinkedIn.



80+

social media content
viewed from
80+ countries.

#SAF2023 was trending in Dhaka during
the conference time.

Print, Electronic & TV Media Outreach

80+

journalists
covered
the Conference.

100+

national and
international
electronic media
engagement.

50+

national
print media
engagement.

10+

TV media
coverage.



and so on...

Print, Electronic & TV Media Outreach

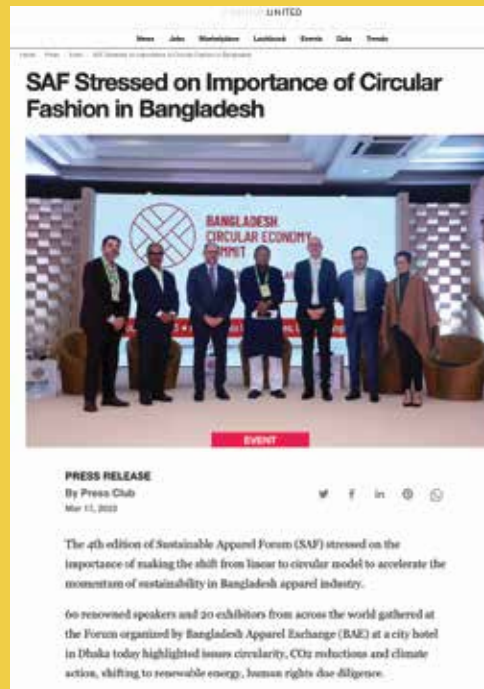


Glimse of Some Media Coverage

Just Style



Fashion United



The Spin Off



Glimse of Some Media Coverage



The Daily Star



The Daily Observer



The Business Standard



Event Highlights (Networking)



Event Highlights (Branding)





| pearls of pride |

Enlightened with the achievements over the years and the beckonings of new challenges, KDS Group is going forward towards untapped frontiers. The journey started in 1983 and today, KDS Group stands tall as one of the flag bearers of Bangladesh's business revolutions and its footprints have travel from national to international arena. Over 30000 employees puts their soul to keep the spirit alive, running.

In the last 39 years, KDS Group has expanded into diverse business segments starting apparels to garments accessories to steel to textiles and most recently into logistics. Success has touched every step of its growth and diversity. Customer satisfaction, unparalleled quality assurance and visionary marks makes it complete. KDS Group aspires for new horizons.





Global | Collaborative | Digital | Ethical

Driven by
VALUES.

Powered by
EXPERIENCE.

Accelerated by
COLLABORATION.



1.4 Billion USD*

Group Turnover

200+ Global Retailers

We cater to over 200 brands and retailers across geographies

20+ Countries

With two decades of rich experience with teams in 20+ countries across the world, we design and deliver sustainable, versatile, and innovative solutions in fashion and retail

* LTM basis December 31*, 2022

150+ designers

Across the globe

7200+

Proud of our team of 7200+ factory associates in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, an integral part of our successful journey

www.pdsfwd.com



Welcome to Green Textile Limited (GTL).

Our state-of-the-art manufacturing facility located in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, housing 48 expertly-crafted sewing and finishing lines, providing unmatched production capacity for 20 million garments per annum for tops and bottoms and 8.7 million garments per annum for washing.

We have two LEED® Platinum certified factories within our facilities. Our new GTL Unit 4 factory has been awarded the prestigious LEED® Platinum certification, setting a new global benchmark for sustainable design and construction with the highest ever LEED® rating of 104 points out of 110, in the world. Our GTL Unit 3 factory is also recognized as one of Bangladesh's top 10 green factories.

HOW SUSTAINABLE WE ARE?



Sustainable Fibers



People Initiatives



Less Water



Less Energy



CO2 Emissions



Non-toxic Chemicals



PRODUCTION/MONTH
1.8 Million



OUR FACTORIES
Denim Asia Ltd,
Ultimate Fashion Ltd



DESIGN STUDIO
New York, Barcelona
Dubai, Mumbai, Dhaka



ANNUAL TURNOVER
\$150 Million +



SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION



NOIZEJEANS.COM





SUSTAINABLE
APPAREL FORUM

For any inquiries please contact:

Mostafiz Uddin

Bangladesh Apparel Exchange
muddin@mostafiz.org

SAVE THE DATE

5th & 6th March, 2024

Radisson Blu Water Garden, Dhaka, Bangladesh