

SUSTAINABLE MATERIAL TRENDS FOR THE FASHION INDUSTRY

In an important webinar organised this month by the Textile and Fashion Federation (TaFF), industry experts spoke about sustainable material trends and what lies ahead.

Tingzhi Liu, Head of Design at Love, Bonito and a member of the TaFF Sustainability Steering Committee, introduced the webinar topic: Sustainable Material Trends for the Global Fashion Industry.

She pointed out that as the textile and fashion industry globally does have an impact on the environment, it is becoming increasingly important to recognise and use materials that are responsibly-sourced, have a lower environmental impact and are more sustainable throughout their life cycle.

TaFF's Director of Sustainability Carolyn Poon was the webinar moderator, asking the four panellists to set out their position as different actors of the fashion value chain, on the selection and use of different materials. The broad perspectives can help take the industry further on its sustainability journey and towards the circular economy.

The webinar included a spokesperson for a global brand on its story of adoption of sustainable and innovative materials.

Marian Dang, Sustainability Manager for H&M in South East Asia explained how the fashion retailer stays close to the consumer. Material choice and sourcing of raw materials, including the use of safe, sustainably sourced or recycled materials is key to H&M's commitment to becoming fully circular. It works closely with manufacturers and suppliers to make sure materials used in garments are safe for people and the planet.

Besides selling fashion products made from plastic waste -called "bottle2fashion"- Ms Dang also mentioned that it provides "leather" products from pineapple waste.

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-Marian Dang, Sustainability Manager for H&M in South East Asia-

H&M is committed to a future that looks circular, offering “a party collection like no other – designed to be treasured, shared, repaired and recycled”.

Ms Dang said H&M is setting clear goals and targets. For example, by 2030 all products sold will clearly show they are responsibly-sourced and also incorporate recycled materials.

She also pointed out that it's important to take a stand against deforestation and make sure forest fibres, for example, are not from “ancient sources” or from places where flora and fauna are endangered in any way.

She also drew attention to the adoption of what’s called “Circulose” – cellulose that’s extracted by recycling used garments and turning it into a material that can be used time and time again.

Panellist Susan Slabbert is the acting sustainability head of Asia Pacific Rayon (APR), the Indonesian based company which is leading the way in Asia with its viscose textiles, produced sustainably from forest fibres.

She stressed how important it is to not only use forest fibre, which is a renewable resource, but to apply traceability standards every step of the way from source to shop.

“For us, technology, innovation and sustainability together make business sense and it’s also what our customers expect of us”

-Susan Slabbert, acting sustainability head of Asia Pacific Rayon (APR)-

“For us, technology, innovation and sustainability together make business sense and it’s also what our customers expect of us”, Ms Slabbert told the webinar audience.

She also said that APR is joining the circular economy and aims to incorporate 20% recycled content in its textiles by 2030.

The webinar also heard from Ashley Gill, the standards and stakeholder engagement senior director for the US-based Textile Exchange, a global non-profit organisation that advocates and promotes preferred fibre and materials through clear and actionable guidance.

She pointed out that the Exchange enables an increased level of scrutiny for consumers, to make sure purchases align with their values, but also help textile and fashion producers to be more responsible in their sourcing of materials.

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-Ashley Gill, standards and stakeholder engagement senior director at Textile Exchange-

Textile Exchange develops and manages a suite of standards – including a Global Recycled Standard – to provide industry with a way to verify sustainability claims from the raw material to the final product. All Exchange standards are developed through a multi-stakeholder approach to address any gaps in available verification tools.

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The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) was represented in the webinar by Deepa Hingorani, a fashion industry veteran. She explained to the online audience that PEFC's Chain of Custody (CoC) is a mechanism to trace certified material from sustainable forests until the finished product.

By eliminating raw materials linked to deforestation, biodiversity loss, exploitation of endangered species, as well as human rights and labour rights, fashion brands can adopt PEFC certified materials to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and win consumer support in the process.

There is a definite move, Ms Hingorani insists, towards greater use of Man-Made Cellulosic Fibres (MMCF), such as Viscose/Rayon, Lyocell, Modal and Cupro. as these form the second biggest cellulosic fibre group after cotton.



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-Deepa Hingorani, representing The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)

"This means that 60 plus leading fashion brands, who signed the Fashion Pact, can now use PEFC certified materials to advance on their collective climate target: transition 25% of their key materials to lower climate impact sources by 2025."

She mentioned the PEFC brand collaboration with Salvatore Ferragamo, as well as working on brand procurement policies with many others, including Karl Lagerfeld, Guess, River Island and Farfetch.




The webinar organised by TaFF is in the Industry Insights series and part of the organisation's Sustainability Programme which was launched in November 2021.

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A Call to Action

TaFF recognises that there are solutions and alternatives to reduce the environmental damage, and these can start with building awareness and with the willingness to change. No single individual or organisation can do this alone, and therefore TaFF invites all members and stakeholders to collaborate and drive systemic changes to build a sustainable future in the world of fashion and lifestyle.

We invite individuals, corporations, businesses and organizations to join us in a journey to make a positive change to the environment. **Make your pledge here.** 

If members are looking to make a practical start, consider **Towards Zero Fashion Waste**, where we set out the five essential Rs to work on: Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recovery and Resource.