

"TAFF CAN PLAY THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF BRINGING BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, WITH A CLEAR COMMON PURPOSE ON SUSTAINABILITY".



PERSPECTIVES FROM MR WILSON TEO, PRESIDENT OF TAFF

Q1: It was only a short time ago - 30 November last year - that TaFF announced the launch of its fashion sustainability programme. This has obviously been brewing for some time. What really prompted TaFF to get started on the sustainability journey?

Sustainability is one of the three important themes which TaFF has identified as strategic thrusts to uplift our industry and community. We recognize that sustainability is a topic we can't ignore whether for the industry or our businesses, as well as for each of us as responsible individuals.

Q2: Besides the obvious sustainability issues in Singapore - for example, that fashion and textile products account for 137,000 tonnes of waste annually, of which a mere 4% is being recycled - did you also take into account that globally the sector is regarded as the second biggest polluter in the world?

We are mindful of the negative impact of our sector on the environment and climate change, and it is a reminder to appreciate the significance and urgency of taking the first steps as a trade association to lead our industry towards sustainability.

Q3: As you've obviously been influenced by local, regional and global issues - and opportunities - I imagine you are also getting some encouraging signs from some of your own members and from their own attempts to move in a more sustainable direction?

We have indeed witnessed more interest, efforts, capability development and innovations by companies in the area of sustainability so it's exciting and encouraging at the same time.

Q4: It's a bold and ambitious move to commit the sector to sustainability and to join the circular economy, so nothing goes to waste. You said at the launch that it was time "to redefine the scope of the fashion industry to include its entire value chain". What challenges do you see as TaFF takes a whole ecosystem approach in tackling sustainability at home and abroad?

It may be ambitious, especially for a topic like sustainability which is still evolving. However, we felt that in order to be impactful, we need a holistic approach. There are many parts that need to be fixed. It's a wide scope encompassing various stakeholders, but there are always connections and relevance for the different ecosystem players. TaFF can play the strategic role of bringing businesses and communities together, with a clear common purpose on sustainability.

Q5: Are you seeing positive early signs that you're getting the necessary buy-in from all members - from the entire value chain - for the fashion sustainability programme? Does it help that there are consumer pressures coming on, locally and globally, for the fashion industry to change?

There is definitely traction and we hope to build on this momentum. I think that the pressure from the expectations of consumers is healthy and positive. More consumers are expecting businesses to play a greater role in sustainability, by offering planet-friendly products. This motivates businesses to act, move faster and to do more in sustainability.

