

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION



Building Back Better
Unlocking the potential of advanced technologies for circular and sustainable value chains in the garment and footwear sector



[Register](#)

Tuesday 16 March 2021

12:15 - 13:45 CET

- What role can innovation and new technologies play in transitioning to more sustainable and circular value chains as part of the industry's post-COVID recovery?
- What are the challenges to finding scalable solutions and how can they be addressed? How do we ensure solutions support responsible business conduct and decent work throughout the industry's complex and fragmented value chains?
- How can policy makers help the industry to take action while ensuring inclusivity for SMEs and small-scale producers in emerging economies?

Opening

Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation & Trade Division, UNECE

Moderator

Cyril Sayag, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission

Speakers

Leanne Kemp, Founder & CEO, Everledger

Michela Puddu, Co-Founder & CEO, Haelixa Ltd

Giorgio Ravasio, Country Manager, Italy, Vivienne Westwood

Andrea Redaelli, Project & Portfolio Manager, UNECE-UN/CEFACT project

David Rogers, Head of International Resource Management, WRAP Global

Oksana Varodi, Senior Operations Officer, IFC, World Bank Group

Joseph Wozniak, Head, Trade for Sustainable Development – T4SD, ITC



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Side event

Building back better post COVID

Unlocking the potential of advanced technologies for circular and sustainable value chains in the garment and footwear sector

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About the session

Join industry insiders, campaigners and policy specialists for 90 mins of discussion about the role that advanced technologies can play to enhance sustainability and circularity in the garment and footwear industry, which is a critical sector for the green transition. What can the sector do better, differently, or not do at all? How can that change come about? And how can the sector build back better post-COVID?

This side event at the UNECE Regional Forum for Sustainable Development aims to review progress made under the UNECE-ITC joint initiative for 'Enhancing Transparency and Traceability of Sustainable Value Chains in the Garment and Footwear Industry', with funding from the European Union, including on the implementation of its blockchain pilots for due diligence in key industry value chains.

Background

The garment and footwear industry is a resource-intensive sector with important climate and environmental impacts. Textile consumption is the fourth highest pressure category in the EU in terms of use of primary raw materials and water (after food, housing and transport), and fifth for GHG emissions (European Environmental Agency). Moreover, it is estimated that less than 1% of all textiles worldwide are recycled into new textile (Ellen MacArthur Foundation). The annual amount of loss due to clothing underutilization and lack of recycling amounts to 500 billion of value, while 71% of customers are expressing a greater interest in circular business models, such as rental, resale, and refurbishment after the pandemic (Ellen MacArthur Foundation). Abuses and exploitation of workers, many of whom are women in developing or least developed countries, is also a major problem in a sector where a complex international web of factories and suppliers makes it difficult for companies to keep oversight of their value chain. But, the pandemic could be a game-changer to reverse current unsustainable trends and build back better towards a more responsible future. It can push more consumers to turn their back on unsustainable production and consumption practices. Moving towards sustainable and circular patterns also need to be made faster. Innovation and advanced technologies can turn challenges into new opportunities supporting traceability, systems' interoperability, accelerating the transition towards due diligence and transparency by connecting value chain actors. The 4.0 technologies (IoT, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain) have potential to foster sustainable business models and lifestyles, policy approaches to scale-up innovative solutions and partnerships for a circular, climate neutral and inclusive industry of the future.



Guiding questions for round table

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Organizers

Lead

UNECE, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division
ITC, Trade for Sustainable Development

Contributors

UNEP
European Commission

Practical information

Registration

<https://indico.un.org/event/34866/>

Focal point

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