

Organised by: UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Session Type: Panel Discussions

Session Title

Decarbonizing the global textile value chains: Trade policy & practical experiences

Session Description

The textile industry, valued at US\$1.6 trillion in 2023, is projected to reach US\$3.3 trillion in 2030. This labor-intensive sector provides huge employment opportunities, with women constituting around 75% of the global workforce. However, this energy-intensive industry also has significant environmental and social impacts. It contributes to 2-8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, consumes 215 trillion liters of water usage annually, and accounts for 9% of annual synthetic microfiber pollution. While purchasing textiles and clothing has become more affordable with production approximately doubling between 2000 and 2015, consumer usage has decreased. Garments are worn 36% less than 15 years ago, used 7-10 times before disposal. This results in US\$500 billion in lost value each year due to insufficient reuse and recycling. However, doubling the average use of a garment could reduce GHG emissions by 44%. Global greenhouse emissions are also exacerbated due to international trade of two important aspects of new and second hand clothing markets. First, trade of secondhand textiles poses environmental and social challenges that threaten this important reuse market, especially in the global south. Second, the lack of transparency about how textiles are produced, including whether renewable energy or low-emission methods are used. This session will explore trade policy solutions to decarbonize textile value chains, addressing both new and second-hand garments, and how governments are responding to the fast fashion trend with policies aimed at reducing environmental harm while promoting sustainable development in this industry.

Proposed Speakers and Moderator

- Ms. Chantal Line Carpentier, Head, Trade, Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainable Development, Division on International Trade and Commodities, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy (SDPI) Pakistan
- Mr. Jesper Wohler, Director European Partnerships, Humana People to People
- Ms. Yasmin Ismail, Senior Policy Advisor, Trade, Climate & SDGs, Forum on Trade, Environment & the SDGs (TESS)