

The ICAC's 80th Plenary Meeting



80th Plenary Meeting – Virtual

MINUTES

Fourth Open Session Rethinking Fashion and Textiles for 2030

09:10 – 11:00 am (GMT-5); Australia (Perth, AW): 10:10 am – 00:00 am; Europe: 14:10 – 16:00 (GMT)
Chairman/ Moderator: Mr Kanwar Usman, Head of Textiles, ICAC

The Chair of the session, Mr Kanwar Usman, highlighted that the ICAC Executive Director, Mr Kai Hughes, in his opening remarks had said that 2021 was a remarkable year for textiles. For the very first time in history, global textile exports crossed \$900 billion. Realising the potential of textiles for the member governments, he had introduced textiles as a full-time subject and hired first-ever head of textiles at International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), Mr Kanwar Usman. Mr Hughes said that this is the first dedicated session on textiles and next year it was planned to hold parallel textiles Plenary sessions along with textile exhibitions and a fashion show.

The Chair, Mr Kanwar Usman, welcomed the audience and introduced the first speaker of the session, Mr Suresh Kotak who has been serving the cotton and textiles value chain for 65 years and the title of his presentation was, 'Versatile Cotton Fibre, a Composite Economics'.

Mr Kotak highlighted the importance of cotton and noted that cotton has a complete upstream and downstream value chain. Moreover, cotton has unlimited environmental advantages and while there are some critiques mentioning the downside of cotton due to use of pesticides and fertilisers, cotton sector has been successfully addressing all these issues. Moreover, manmade fibres have a greater negative impact. He also pointed out that cotton is biodegradable and explained the circularity associated with the cotton.

The Chair then introduced the second speaker of the session, Mr Ilkhom Khaydarov, Chairman of Uzbekistan Association of Textile and Garment Industry, whose presentation was entitled, 'Uzbekistan's Textile Industry Strategy for 2030'.

Mr Khaydarov said that Uzbekistan has a strong history in cotton and textiles dating back to the early 19th century and informed that the country's first cotton ginning factory was functional in 1922. Mr Khaydarov then mentioned a few of the important milestones achieved from 2017-22, including becoming an exporter of finished products, achieving the status of GSP+ from the European Union, the lifting of cotton restrictions and the textile exports increase to \$3 billion.

The Chair thanked Mr Ilkhom Khaydarov and introduced third speaker of the session, Ms Natalia Isaeva, Executive Director of Cotton Way. The topic of her presentation was, 'How to Transform Industrial Laundries into a Sustainable Business Model'.

Ms Isaeva said that as a large-scale business, investments have had an impact on overall sustainability by reducing the consumption of water by half, energy by 90%, CO₂ emissions by 88%

and temperatures by an average of 25 degrees, thus providing a quality product and service and tremendous savings.

The Chair then introduced the fourth speaker, Dr Tanveer Hussain, a Professor of Textile Engineering and Rector at National Textile University Faisalabad, Pakistan. The topic of his presentation was, 'Sustainable Development Goals and Textile Circular Economy'.

Dr Tanveer said we need to take care of people, planet and profits. He noted that there are 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and 159 targets. He discussed all 17 SDGs and their relationship to the textiles value chain. Furthermore, Dr Hussain explained the options to address circularity in textiles value chain, adding that we can combat sustainability challenges at different stages of value chain, starting right with raw materials by using renewable, biodegradable, recycled and organic materials.

The Chair then introduced the fifth speaker, Dr Lilac Osanjo, a Professor at the University of Nairobi who holds a PhD in Design and an MSc in Entrepreneurship. The topic of her presentation was, 'Capacity Building for the Growth of African Fashion and Textiles Entrepreneurs'.

Dr Osanjo noted that in order to increase exports and address domestic challenges, the African narrative needs to be changed, redefining African fashion and textile products, re-examining the business processes so profitability can be increased, and undertaking value addition. Dr Osanjo shared case studies on Kitui County Textile Center (KICOTEC) and on the Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency (KEPROBA), a small and medium enterprise program.

The Chair then introduced the next speaker, Dr Olivier Zieschank, a director at the International Textiles Manufacturers Federation (ITMF). He got his PhD in Economics from the University of Freiberg and the topic of his presentation was, 'Key Sustainability Challenges in Textiles Manufacturing'.

Dr Zieschank noted that sustainability has enormous potential for value creation but is difficult to implement because it requires people, companies and governments to work together. He said that it is important to understand the current recycling trends in order to calculate the future demand of virgin fibres for cotton, polyester and cellulosic fibres. He shared data of Wood McKenzie and mentioned that consumption of all fibres is expected to grow through 2030.

The Chair then introduced the seventh and last speaker of the textiles session, Ms Belinda Edmonds, who has worked in almost all sectors of the African Textile and Apparel Industries over the past 30 years, and in 2018 joined the African Cotton Foundation as its Managing Director.

Ms Edmonds said that the private sector needs guaranteed protection of its investments; repatriation of forex; investment incentives and ease of doing business; reliable energy at lower prices; development of industrial zones; access to land; and duty free imports of textiles machinery. Foreign investors, she said, are wary of dumped imports and require long-term, duty-free trade concessions.

The Chair then opened the floor for questions. Professor Ramkumar from Texas Tech University pointed out that sustainability has a cost and asked whether buyers are willing to pay that cost. Mr Kotak replied that costs can be offset in number of ways, including by increasing productivity, adopting new technologies and implementing better production practices. Mr Hama Kwajaffa from Nigeria asked about a solution for counterfeiters, smugglers and second-hand clothing? Ms Edmonds said the issue of used clothing should be looked by international trade bodies such as ICAC and WTO. Further, on the subject of counterfeiting, robust legislation has already been passed across world and it depends on individual countries to implement the laws to protect their own goods. The Chair thanked the speakers, delegates and the audience and ended the session.