



G20 Online Workshop

Circular Fashion

Monday 7 June 2021

Report

Executive Summary

To inform the G20's discussions on making economies more resource efficient and circular, the Italian G20 Presidency and the European Union (EU) hosted an online workshop on circular fashion on 7 June 2021. It identified the opportunities for a faster transition towards a circular fashion industry, and discussed the national and international actions which would enable the global fashion industry to make the change.

Speakers from the fashion sector from around the world swapped perspectives with some of the international organisations working with the industry on the circular business models they already use or are developing – and the benefits they bring for economic growth, climate change, biodiversity and social aspects, by maintaining the value of products and materials, rather than seeing them too quickly wasted.

A senior advisor to McKinsey highlighted the global significance of the fashion industry: an annual turnover of more than 2 trillion euros, with 60 million employees. The fashion industry produces 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions (some estimate even more), and that is rising. Some 40% of the greenhouse gas emissions stem from raw materials.

Clothing production has doubled in the last 15 years, and the number of times a garment is worn before being thrown away has decreased by 36%. The workshop heard how the COVID-19 pandemic had strong negative economic and social repercussions on the industry and has increased the need to transition to a more sustainable and circular fashion industry.

The United Nations Environment Programme pointed to the essential connection between consumption choices and the impacts of production and waste, including negative social impacts – with the industry's choice of business model as the intermediary. Value chains will need to transition together towards circularity, and this requires collaboration.

Five speakers from the Youth20 eloquently made a call for change – for a future of fashion which meets their values and enhances the lives of future generations.

Opportunities for implementing circular solutions along the fashion value chain were presented by the Jeans Redesign Project, the Circular Fashion Partnership. Brands (H&M Group, OTB); suppliers (Yee Chain); and end-of-first use solution providers (i:Co) elaborated on how they can deliver circular fashion, including by using more sustainable and durable materials, implementing eco-design and promoting customer awareness.

In a chaired discussion on how firms and consumers can mainstream circular fashion, speakers from: e-retail (Zalando); a sustainable fashion start-up (Riley Studios); design consultancy (IDEO); and organisations working on collaborative solutions (Italian standards body - UNI, Ellen MacArthur Foundation and Indonesian NGO Greeneration) identified two key areas of action:

- Public-private collaboration – so that brands, suppliers and policy makers can align investment; and
- Better data at every stage of a product's life – so that circular, sustainable products and materials can be rewarded.

Policy makers, private firms and international organisations all have key roles to play. The CEO of the Global Fashion Agenda described how the great asset of the G20 is its ability to convene key actors on the global scale to co-ordinate change in the fashion industry's global value chains.

Three principles were highlighted to increase circularity in the sector: use clothes more (design to last) and resell them; make products to be made again; and rethink materials so that they are safe from chemicals and toxicity and sourced from renewable or recycled feedstock.

The EU is committed to a circular economy transition and pointed to the importance of working upstream and downstream along the whole value chain to this end. In its forthcoming textile strategy, the EU will support a more sustainable, resilient and competitive model for the textile ecosystem. The EU proposed to build on the G20 Resource Efficiency Roadmap to initiate dedicated work on textiles, in support of the development and implementation of a G20 Circular Economy Vision.

The Italian G20 Presidency will step up to the challenge and host a workshop in September 2021 to crystallise collaboration and sharing of best practices between the G20 stakeholders and governments.

The full report of the workshop is available [here](#).