

Public Policy and Legislation in Sustainable Fashion



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Abstract The fashion industry is notoriously one of the most polluting and damaging sectors of the worldwide economy, not only is the harm evident in the natural world but also within societies of people. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to this comprehensive set of goals, and with the addition of the Green New Deal and the New Urban Agenda, the international community (with emphasis on governments and the entrepreneurial ecosystem) is presented with several elements and guidelines in order to tackle the issues, problems and, thereafter, identify solutions to adhere to sustainability in fashion. A key constant is to ensure that the circular fashion economy is the mantra when dealing with this global dilemma. However, in order to enable all players to be involved, legislation and policies implemented on a governmental level should always factor the needs of the society and the environment. In addition, the fashion industry itself has to see themselves responsible if the change is to be carried out successfully, starting from production of raw materials to the reuse, recycle, repair and remake of garments and products, as well as the fundamental preservation of the environment and the societies that play their roles within the industry. Finally, fashion users have to play their role as a driving force of sustainable consumerism and sustainable fashion by demanding a higher level of empathy from the government and the fashion industry.

Keywords Legislation · Public policies · Sustainable fashion · Sustainable development goals · Circular fashion economy · Green new deal · New urban agenda · Climate change

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1 Introduction

According to estimates, the total combined consumption by all the human activity around the world is greater than the resources generated by the planet. In other words, every year, the Earth Overshoot Day is being reached earlier, and this overtakes the planet's ability to generate those resources for that year. By November 1, 2000, all the resources of Mother Earth had been consumed. In 2015, it was by August 13, and last year, the Earth Overshoot Day was July 29.¹

Scientists and international agencies have consistently reported on the root causes and consequences of climate change, thus alerting global leaders and the world about this phenomenon.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). It is an action plan in favor of people, the planet and prosperity, universal peace and partnership. The 2030 Agenda proposes 17 SDGs and 169 targets, covering the economic, social and environmental spheres. The global goals for a new world aspire to be more sustainable, inclusive and humane. They are a guide for action to transform the world in a way that no one is left behind.

The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change were two important milestones achieved in 2015, which specified the actions that everyone, from all across the world, must accomplish in order to achieve a more equal and inclusive future, while enjoying economic growth, and strong protection of the environment.

In the context of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic affects human life in the terrestrial ecosystem and impacts all communities, especially large cities or urban concentrations, with greater intensity, and which is estimated to leave millions of people poorer. We ask ourselves as to what are the essential agreements and actions that must be emphasized to avoid inequality, injustice and environmental insecurity. In this sense, the role of the state becomes a preponderant role. In this framework, in particular, the Green New Deal (GND), the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) for the entrepreneurial ecosystem are vital, as is the rethinking of the type of city we need to defeat COVID-19.

- **The City we want: integrated—accessible—resilient**
- **The Humanity we need: responsible—conscious—active**
- **The Opportunity to undertake that we deserve: local—institutional—sustainable**

In terms of the role of the state that is needed at this moment, there is a special emphasis on the relevance of boosting the economy in a conscious and responsible way regarding the impact on the environment. In this sense, the Green New Deal calls on governments to reduce the carbon footprint, generate well-paying jobs, ensure pollution-free air, renewable energy, access to water and food as basic human rights, as well as ending all forms of degradation. The GND is inspired by the New Deal developed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to help the USA overcome the

¹ Global Footprint Network.

Great Depression after his election in 1932. It was an economic stimulus plan. In the twenty-first century, it was proposed to reorient another great economic stimulus, but in those sectors that are responsible for the preservation of the environment because **the Great Depression of this century is the Depression of the Environment**. Both the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, addressed this issue during International Mother Earth Day 2020.

Power generates a space of interpersonal relationships in which the redistribution and appropriation of resources occur. Knowing and controlling these resources are important in order to act upon them in the world. But the question to be analyzed is the way in which each person or area manages their way of being in the world, the way in which they shape their lives with active commitment, and even more so when this commitment consists of integrating a system of social and economic organization, which will have an impact in social recognition and a sense of belonging for the people.

However, this active management of those resources depends, in parts, to a large extent on public policies, which are designed to promote the integration of the individual with a state that promotes access to opportunities for the population. In this article, we propose a model of responsible production and consumption that we need to promote in the context of climate change and COVID-19.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, individual habitat has become a vital space like that of a defensive world in the life of the global population. Everyday life, family, work and localized life as well as free time are reconfigured to that of the area of individual experience, of micro-stories, where the links are created in relation to which political discourse constructs its new narrative for the “new normality” that comes.

History shows that the breakdown of the norms and dominant values has taken place as a consequence of new forms of production and the people’s activities. The transformation of production relations has had an impact on the links between all the parties and has transformed the unspoken and written rules that regulate the social contract as well as the link between the actors. In reality, if one examines the present, it can be seen that a new order will be born. While we still do not know which it will be, here a possible postulate is expressed, **our proposal from and to sustainable fashion consists of legislating to institutionalize the processes that people and civil society organizations are constantly promoting. These must be accompanied by public policies that allow for further deepening of the processes in the medium and long term.**

Combining new ideas and intellectual audacity to strengthen alliances and promote sustainable development, and within it sustainable fashion, becomes essential. It is necessary to analyze the sector from the cultural system in which it coexists and find a group of guiding principles that allow for understanding, expressing and promoting this cultural-economic practice. In this sense, this article postulates recommendations as a conclusion.

Observing and relating sustainable culture from the perspective of the actors are essential to stimulate the world in which they create, create, coexist and produce. Another point is that whoever has something to say on a subject is.

Always positioned from/somewhere, and that socialized space constitutes our being-in-the-world where history, geography and political economy merge [1]: 192.²

The place where we are standing in order to look at the world and to promote an initiative determines the vision that we have of the history in relation to this phenomenon, the prism with which it is currently viewed and the innovation or modification that is recommended.

As such, the questions occur spontaneously: where is the social group? What are the social relationships that define it? What is the social structure that characterizes it? What aspects or goods do both mediate the ways in which people produce sustainable fashion as for those who consume it? What are the ways in which people experience and act on their environment?

Efforts must be made to understand the scope of sustainable fashion. Not only do we take into consideration analysis on wages, markets, investments, taxes, raw materials, exports, economies, prices, credits, subsidies, etc.; but paradoxically enough we also discuss the relations of power, domination, manipulation and control, and much less about everything that describes and defines the social and cultural sphere where this production of sustainable fashion takes place as well as what definitions are set for the actors to be in the world.

A practice requires motivation. It is understood that until the moment prior to the pandemic, it has been produced and over-consumed in a context motivated by the interest of the material, and what is politically useful for its world, its historical context and its cultural matrix.

If interest-motivated actors are always actively engaged in profit, effort-motivated actors are seen as experimenting on the complexities of their situations and trying to solve the problems generated by those situations. We must, therefore, position ourselves as actors motivated by sustainable development, which generate social integration with preservation of the environment and economic growth.

² Wright, Pablo.: El espacio utópico de la antropología. Una visión desde la Cruz del Sur.



2 New Emerging Sector: Sustainable Fashion

Fashion has historically always been exclusively for the rich to show off their wealth and status. Bright colors, delicate fabric, exotic textiles and the latest in designs were used to determine who was ahead in the fashion race. The elite set the trend and that would eventually trickle down to the masses. In the nineteenth century, the Parisian courtiers determined what was considered up to date and in style. Tailors were sought after to the point that those who catered exclusively to the wealthy were regarded as celebrities. However, the Industrial Revolution brought in fast-moving technologies and the ability to increase production. Subsequently, mass production and consumer demands increased, which saw fashion accessible to everyone. It was not until the 60s when the age of environmental consciousness started to have an impact on the trend of fashion. The “hippies” generation, known to be rebellious toward the status quo, opted for natural fabrics and a return to a simpler way of life. This was later followed by the punk (in the 70s) and goth (in the 80s) movements that rejected the norm of fashion and instead preferred second-hand and vintage pieces of clothes, as opposed to new fashion. But this did not last long. By the 1990s, due to globalization and offshore manufacturing, the production of fashion became cheap and easily accessible to everyone. Materialism became the norm and the need to take care of the environment and the people who produced the materials was a mere second thought. It was not until the early twenty-first century that people started seeing the grave impacts that fashion had toward, not only on the environment but also on the economy and the exploited people manufacturing the clothes.

To achieve sustainable development, partnerships and concrete actions are required between governments, the private sectors and civil societies to reflect and define together a direction that promotes and revises the pre-established frameworks. In accordance with that, it is necessary to question if they are adequate and if they serve, in this case, the new emerging sector: sustainable fashion. In that regard, we

recommend that the debate and institutionalization of sustainable fashion be done from the legislative level with the effective participation of the local actors.

As stated in SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals:

Goal 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

As well as SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Goal 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

To look at why sustainable fashion is a crucial sector, we have to see how disastrous it is to the environment. The textile sector is the second most polluting industry in the world, after the oil sector. According to the United Nations (UN), it produces 10% of carbon emissions in the world and 20% of wastewater. Although some companies have taken measures to mitigate the damage, they continue to generate serious impacts on rivers and oceans. To this is added that as a work environment, it presents a strong weakness in the regularization of the labor rights of people who are frequently trafficked by people, this is an acute symptom of this scourge.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the fashion industry is valued at around \$2.4 trillion and employs over 75 million people worldwide [4].³ Of this, in Latin America, the fashion industry is estimated to be around \$160 billion [5]⁴ (almost 10% of the worldwide market). Brazil and Mexico are its biggest markets, with Colombia and Peru having the top growing rates. On the flip side, the industry also loses around \$500 billion of annual value because of lack of recycling as well as products being thrown into landfills before ever being sold. The industry itself uses around 25% of the world's chemical products and accounts for around 8–10% of global carbon emissions (that is more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined!). Part of these emissions comes from pumping water to irrigate crops like cotton, oil-based pesticides, machinery for harvesting and emissions from transport. The fashion industry is responsible for 24% of insecticides and 11% of pesticides.

Sustainable fashion is a growing movement that hopes to change the way actors in the fashion industry regard the industry and its system by placing a higher emphasis on environmental integration and social justice. The fundamental criteria of the sustainable fashion business model include the conservation of natural resources, the low ecological impact of the materials used—which must be capable of later joining the recycling chain, the reduction of the footprint carbon and respect for the economic and labor conditions of the workers who have participated from the raw material to the point of sale [6].⁵

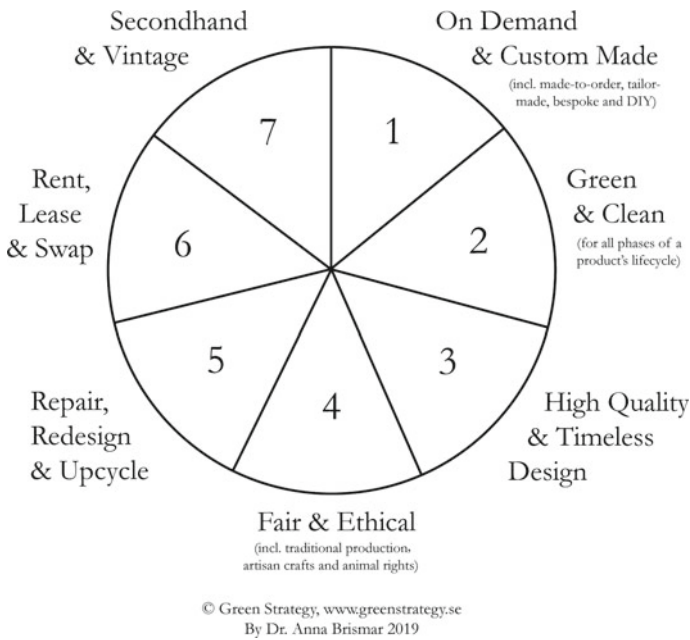
In a gist, sustainable fashion places prominence on the lifecycle of products; including design, raw material production, manufacturing, transport, storage, marketing, sale and the final stages of use. However, this is not a locked-down

³ UN Environment Programme: UN Alliance For Sustainable Fashion addresses damage of “fast fashion”.

⁴ Hecho X Nosotros: How do we incorporate sustainability to the Latin American Textile Industry.

⁵ Sostenibilidad Para Todos: ¿Que Es La Moda Sostenible?

definition. As a matter of fact, there are many forms of sustainable fashion. Green Strategy’s Dr. Anna Brismar has identified seven main forms of more sustainable fashion production and consumption, as seen in the figure given below [7].⁶



⁶ Green Strategy: Seven Forms of Sustainable Fashion.

3 Public Policy and Legislation

From *Smartly Social Entrepreneurship on the SDGs*, we promote the sector to acquire the rank of public policy and legislation because we recognize the challenges that arise in the production of fashion clothing and the incipient sustainable work within it. The 2030 Agenda is the new social contract while the 17 SDGs are the guide of action to “*Legislate the Local thinking about the Global*” and thus contribute to local development.

Localizing the SDGs in public policies and legislation is a local challenge in the global opportunity of optimizing resources and making efforts for a sustainable local development in which the people have the possibility to live, study and produce in their birthplace. The New Urban Agenda guides us to promote the right to the city with people-centered development and is inspired by the SDGs to reach fairer, safer and more resilient cities.

We propose to generate a legal and fiscal framework that allows the promotion of the sustainable value chain in which sustainable fashion, as an emerging industry, as well as the generation of healthy and innovative employment, allows to provide a better quality of life (health) in the workplace as well as professional and personal development.

One area of work is sustainable fashion, in which public policy must promote the entire value chain that this innovation addresses, from the production of sustainable and renewable raw material necessary to carry it out until its sale and commercialization stage. Boosting the development of a sustainable and healthy textile industry both for the user of the garment and including the entire ecosystem that develops, processes and develops the sector is the key. We are interested here to incorporate the healthy concept for those who work with sustainable fashion, since it is observed that it is thought of almost exclusively as sustainable promotion to the consumer, and, in reality, when the raw material that is manipulated in the elaboration of a product is sustainable, it impacts in a way positive in the health of the worker who is in direct or indirect physical contact with said input. That is why we also cite the importance of addressing this aspect and its direct contribution to **SDG 3.9: By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.**

Furthermore, we observe that the consumption paradigm is changing where more and more people are looking for authenticity, transparency and social value in the products and services that they consume, leaving behind patterns of consumerism in favor of responsible consumption (SDG12). Therefore, it is necessary to adapt the production paradigm to the needs of the current times. The implementation of the SDGs offers the opportunity for a new style of sustainable business development: conscious and responsible. For this reason, we have launched the Iberoamerican Platform of Sustainable Entrepreneurs as a space to empower those entrepreneurs who are taking into account the urgency of climate change and risk and are looking to produce sustainably starting from the stage of ideation of their business. A special chapter in this platform stems from sustainable fashion.

To achieve a concrete step toward this proposal, *Smartly* aims to generate indicators targeted toward the sector and thus innovate strategies to lobby and influence the local parliaments on legislation in order to strengthen and institutionalize sustainable entrepreneurship, both locally and institutionally, as indicated at the beginning of this article. To carry forth with this, we invite you to fill in the form, which can be found at <https://www.insmartly.com/emprendedores-sostenibles>.

In addition to the Platform of Sustainable Entrepreneurs, *Smartly* promotes the **Local Parliament Network on the SDGs**, a unique worldwide initiative that seeks to innovate from the legislative field to be able to provide solutions to the challenges that this particular sector presents and promotes partnerships of effective **collaboration between parliamentarians and actors of sustainable fashion so that it is incorporated from the legislation: sustainability and look in SDGs to fashion, as well as to public policies**. It should be noted that promoting sustainable fashion as an innovative and impactful industry that generates employment, production and sustainable consumption is the way to achieve the sustainable development that is so often postponed. Mission that we take as a shared responsibility and based on SDG 8 that refers to innovation and sustainability in two of its targets:

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.

We all have the responsibility and, many times, the possibility of changing the state of things. When both aspects combine, embracing an agenda such as the SDGs and sustainable development drives the meaning of the action in a more noble way, and in a context of urgency of action to mitigate **climate change (SDG 13)**, where we cannot continue doing things as usual, promoting sustainable fashion becomes a necessary condition for good living.

4 Global Actions on Sustainable Fashion

In sustainable fashion, the material footprint is kept to a sustainable limit, where the raw materials meet the economy's final consumption demand. At the same time, the principle of a "circular fashion economy" (the continuous usage of clothes, textiles, and fibers)—as opposed to a "linear fashion economy"—are maintained at their highest value during use and re-entry into the economy to prevent them from becoming trash. Sustainable fashion puts into practice four main components of the materials: reuse, recycle, repair and remake.

The majority of the current fashion industry is still operating on the concept of a linear economy model. The transition toward embracing a circular fashion economy requires governments and consumers to prioritize brands that meet the criteria for sustainability. The market needs products that are designed for long life and for end-of life recyclability, well-functioning and convenient garment collection systems, sorting procedures that can efficiently serve both the reuse and recycling markets, recycling technologies that can recycle textiles into high-quality fabrics and other products, consumer readiness to buy used and recycled products, and brand commitment to uptake recycled fibers in new collections [8].⁷



⁷ Niinimäki K. Sustainable Fashion in a Circular Economy.



Circular fashion economy has many advantages. By reducing the need for imported raw materials, fashion brands will put more emphasis on already existing as well as local products and materials, not only will this support the local market directly but the carbon footprint will be decreased tremendously. The damages caused toward the environment will be greatly reduced, especially with resource extraction minimized. By putting sustainability as a major focus instead of a side note, more eco-friendly industries, businesses and jobs will emerge, thus, creating brands with a better and more welcoming public image and reputation.

An international study on sustainable fashion was co-conducted in 2013 between Copenhagen Business School (CBS) and Growth from Knowledge (GfK). Among others, they concluded that:

- Due to the long, fragmented and complex supply chain, there exists a disconnection in the fashion supply chain between those who benefit from fashion and the many who pay the social and environmental costs.
- The existing “linear economy” created an unhealthy “throwaway” culture that breeds overconsumption and waste. Consumers are accustomed to cheap, poor-quality fashion that they can ultimately throw in the garbage after a few wears.
- “Fast fashion” is repeatedly criticized for creating a level of consumption that is neither socially or environmentally sustainable. There is a need to challenge the dominant “fast fashion” business model, which is based on large quantities of new, low-priced collections.
- In an existing “race to the bottom”, the increasing demand for cheap fashion has a negative impact on social and environmental performances in the fashion supply chain.
- Fashion companies do not have sufficient knowledge and competence to address sustainability; likewise, the curricula at most design schools and universities do

little to bridge this competence gap. A number of fashion companies are introducing innovative materials, manufacturing technologies, management systems and business models that create value for both business and society.

- Sustainability should not be an isolated add-on project—for instance, within the communications department. Workshops, lectures, panels, etc., can be used to inspire employees across departments to work with company-specific sustainability challenges and opportunities.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships are highlighted as an important precondition for bringing about changes toward sustainability in the fashion industry.
- Sustainable consumer behavior can be promoted through an increased focus on repair, customization, communication, campaigns, price mechanisms, labeling, competitions, etc.
- Policymakers can promote sustainable fashion by using a variety of “carrot and stick” mechanisms, including tax incentives, minimum product standards, mandatory reporting requirements and awareness-raising campaigns.

In general, policymakers can use a variety of tools to influence corporate sustainability policies and practices [9],⁸ such as raising awareness, tax incentives, public procurement, etc. A blueprint of policy instruments to implement a circular fashion economy in Latin America should be identified, much of what has been undertaken in similar initiatives in Europe. These measures should include (but not limited to) financial incentives, policies that reward innovation, transparency and accountability framework, evaluating existing and future trade policies as well as to encourage actions voluntarily.

Policy and financial incentives such as procurement, extended producer responsibility, value-added tax (VAT) rewards, support for innovation and a tax shift to drive the market to embrace circular products and services. Fashion companies should consider these incentives as a way to discover new and innovative approaches while, at the same time, recover costs involved with implementing environmentally-friendly investments. They can research into innovative and local materials, manufacturing technologies, management systems, and business models that are valuable for both the business and society as a whole. Consumers can benefit from a return on their spending from sustainable brands. Tax cuts, refund policies on resource use and financial subsidies create a positive stimulation for industry players to embrace the circular fashion economy. On the flip side, penalties could also be enforced on those who do not embrace environmentally friendly products.

Facilitating trade and business ethics policies such as export of semi-finished products and sorted, reusable textile waste to producing countries, labor rights and gender equality, as well as avoiding negative social impacts in producing countries. Governments—with the help of organizations—could put into practice prioritizing sustainable fashion companies when it comes to international trade. Some countries are in the forefront of sustainability and have higher—and more rewarding—standards for fashion companies that wish to undertake business in their respective nations

⁸ European Sustainable Business Federation.

or even in another country. One such case is the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile, which includes industry associations, trade unions, NGOs and the National Government of the Netherlands. Those who have signed the agreement commit themselves to fighting discrimination, child labor and forced labor, support a living wage, health and safety standards for workers, and the right of independent trade unions to negotiate. In addition, they also aim to reduce the negative impact of their activities on the environment, to prevent animal abuse, to reduce the amount of water, energy and chemicals that they use and to produce less chemical waste and wastewater. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has also provided a forum to promote appropriate standards, policies and programs to protect the rights of workers. In addition, the Group of Seven (G7) has formulated due diligence standards for the textile industry to help improve working conditions and enhance workers' rights in the global textile supply chain.

In mid-2019, the French government entrusted Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kering, François-Henri Pinault, to “bring together the leading players in fashion and textile” and reduce the environmental impact of the industry. The “*Fashion Pact*”—which was presented to world leaders at the 45th G7 summit in Biarritz—tackles three major issues: climate, biodiversity and oceans. The fashion and textile companies and brands (many of whom are each other's competitors) signed this pact to contribute in their own way to making the industry more sustainable. The three science-based targets are: stopping global warming (zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 in order to keep global warming below 1.5 °C until 2100), restoring biodiversity (with a focus on restoring natural ecosystems and protecting species) and removing single-use plastics from our oceans as well as reducing the negative impact the industry has on them. The first meeting of the Fashion Pact was held in Paris in October 2019. As of then, the total number of signatories reached 56, involving about 250 brands.

Establishing and enforcing a common regulatory framework for knowledge, competence, transparency and accountability, circular design and improved end-of-waste status across the region. Policymakers can enforce that fashion companies meet minimum product standards, have mandatory reporting requirements, as well as carry out awareness-raising campaigns. Most, if not all, fashion companies do not have sufficient knowledge and competence to address sustainability; likewise, the curricula at most design schools and universities do little to bridge this competence gap. With the current trend towards sustainability shaking the market, more companies are working toward educating not only themselves but also their consumers. It is recommended that smaller organizations and government agencies work together to establish working groups to define sustainability priorities and metrics to uphold accountability.

Encouraging actions on a voluntary basis with the likes of covenants, commitments and standards in order to engage all stakeholders. If this fails, then a sound legislative measure should be enacted to ensure these measures are carried out legally. Companies can take the initiative by carrying out their own sustainable practices on a voluntary basis, whether locally or in their international locations.

An example of rewarding consumers toward their behavior in voluntarily helping can be found in the USA, where consumers that donate clothes to charity organizations, are eligible for tax deductions. This initiative to the public to donate unwanted clothes in order to receive benefits in return is widely embraced. Donated clothes are also resold to low-income communities in other countries in order to recycle textiles and reduce the amount of clothing that ends up in landfill.

The need for a robust and thorough approach toward sustainable fashion has not gone unnoticed by the United Nations. While separate methods have been identified in the past (mostly in tandem with the existing policies and initiatives), the UN Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action was finally launched at the COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018 to identify ways in which the broader textile, clothing and fashion industry can move toward a holistic commitment to climate action. The Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action was created to identify and amplify best practices, strengthen existing efforts, identify and address gaps, facilitate and strengthen the collaboration among relevant stakeholders, as well as to join resources and share tools in enabling the sector to achieve its climate targets. The industry charter specifies the following overarching areas of work to be further developed by specific Working Groups:

- Decarbonization pathway and GHG emission reductions
- Raw material
- Manufacturing/Energy
- Logistics
- Policy engagement
- Leveraging existing tools and initiatives
- Promoting broader climate action
- Brand/Retailer Owned or Operated Emissions

Like most everything aimed at being environmentally friendly and sustainable, the fashion business model should give significance to the need to conserve natural resources, the importance of a low ecological impact of the many materials used (new and reused), which has to be able to later join the recycling cycle, reduction of the carbon footprint, as well as empathy for the economic and labor conditions of the workers involved in production to sale of the goods. The latter includes the justification of a gender-equal opportunity in the fashion industry. In addition, the systematic sharing of knowledge will foster accountability and responsibility throughout the value chain. The fashion industry should also work in tandem with governments and non-governmental organizations in setting up policies, legislations and enforcements. All players in this field have a distinctive role to encourage that the market trend will move toward a sustainable and environmentally friendly economy.

We propose a different and disruptive dynamic to the conventional fashion catwalk, in order not only to question the common spaces, hegemonic and exclusive that represent the "Fashion shows", but also understanding that fashion is part of our daily routine and not just an ephemeral performance.

Analia Pastran, Executive Director of Smartly,

Social Entrepreneurship on the SDGs at the Urban Thinkers Campus: Vibrant and Inclusive Urban Life (Mexico) of the World Urban Campaign of UN Habitat.



5 Recommendations for Introducing Sustainable Fashion in Policies and Legislations

While we acknowledge that there is still a long road ahead of us in order to fully incorporate sustainable fashion as a policy and legislation in itself, there are step sand workable recommendations based on what has been mentioned earlier that could be implemented right now or in the near future to achieve this goal.

1. **Incorporate Sustainability and SDGs in the curricula of design schools and universities.** It is important that sustainability be taught in fashion and business schools as a transversal axis, which must be present from the moment of zero business ideation as well as in all its business strategy (sustainable canvas).
2. **Policy and financial incentives** such as procurement, extended producer responsibility, value-added tax (VAT) rewards, support for innovation and a tax shift to drive the market to embrace circular products and services. It should be noted that the entrepreneur who makes their products in a sustainable method has much more difficulties in obtaining raw materials and in developing the production process. For this reason, having tax incentives that protect the sector and make it competitive is the key.
3. **Facilitating trade and business ethics policies** such as export of semi-finished products and sorted, reusable textile waste to producing countries, labor rights

and gender equality, as well as avoiding negative social impacts in producing countries. **Governments—with the help of organizations—could put into practice prioritizing sustainable fashion companies when it comes to international trade.**

4. Establishing and enforcing a common regulatory **framework for knowledge, competence, transparency and accountability**, circular design and improved end-of-waste status across the region.
5. **It is recommended that smaller organizations and government agencies work together to establish working groups to define sustainability priorities and metrics to uphold accountability.** It is vital to generate a multi-sectorial work table or advisory committee with all the relevant actors to improve production processes, their rules and regulations so that the legislation is not outdated.
6. **Recycling and donating:** consumers are encouraged to donate clothes to charity organizations. To promote this act of recycling, those who donate are eligible for tax deductions. Donated clothes that are still in good condition are also resold to low-income communities, whether in their own societies or in other countries, in order to recycle textiles and reduce the amount of clothing that ends up in landfill.
7. **Encourage the production of raw materials:** preserving the ecosystem and the production of supplies in this sector becomes essential. For the production sectors to be identified, a registry must be carried out to protect the biological species while at the same time fulfilling the necessary stock to satisfy the production demand always guaranteeing the preservation of the environment.
8. **Parliamentary policies and actions to strengthen sustainable fashion and discourage green washing.** Institutionalize their existence in the local value chain in order to guarantee that the voices of the actors are heard without anyone being left behind.
9. **Awareness campaign on responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) in the context of climate change:** sensitizing citizens on responsible consumption and the importance of reusing clothing, as well as donating it, is important in order to generate the virtuous circle that allows for the value of responsible production toward the care for the environment and the people.
10. **Boosting clothing that promotes integration:** sustainable fashion must be increasingly accessible to people in their diversity of bodies and styles, allowing all those who want to contribute to the planet to do so.
11. Sustainable fashion should be understood as a **productive activity that creates clothes with decent jobs**, which begins as an undertaking to achieve economic development with a focus on people and which is guided by innovation using ancient knowledge and its implementation value.
12. **Sustainable fashion as a healthy concept for the planet and the actors, but above all for the worker.** Sustainable fashion must make a difference to the textile industry and give clear signals regarding its strategy to eradicate slave labor and abuse of people in addition to promoting environmental protection and becoming a way out of poverty.

13. It should be applied as a **field of scientific research to the economy of the productive development** of a nation and far beyond the design of the form of clothing: but as a survey of the production of raw material, its cycles of renewal, substitutes and its preservation and generation of seed.
14. **Sustainable fashion is important as a stimulus for rooting communities** for those who produce it as well as for those who consume it. The designer's philosophy could be promoted in the context of its productive corridor and inclusion of local cultural practices toward the use of the raw material and its final destination, the garment itself. Promoting and incorporating cultural integration, local commerce and indigenous knowledge should be seen as an innovation in fashion.
15. **Promote investment and research in a sustainable fashion** to encourage its development as a sustainable production model.

6 Reflections

Boosting and strengthening the sustainable fashion sector in the context of COVID-19 are presented as urgent and, since their importance, have accelerated awareness and adherence to the proposed style of production and consumption. We are going through an unprecedented historical moment that invites us to rethink the institutions, businesses and cities in which we want and need to live in. This has increased the already existing crisis of climate change and has highlighted the great challenges we face in order to achieve sustainable development goals.

Without a doubt, taking into consideration that the fashion industry is the second most polluting industry worldwide, it is an absolute priority to refocus and redesign it so that it is sustainable in its production and consumption SDG 12 as well as toward the preservation of the planet and its people. There are many who identify this as a true revolution in the fashion industry since it would imply redefining consumption and the permanent replacement that occurs in this industry (fast fashion). In that sense, young people are leading this change, as they are looking toward responsible consumption within the context of the environment and people. Furthermore, they are beginning to stop the consumption of brands that are considered premium and "fashionable" because these brands are in the antipodes of responsible production, which is, by using clandestine and low-cost workshops, inadequate labor wages and working conditions, soil contamination and water, to name just a few scourges that these brands carry out in various latitudes worldwide. This is also possible because there are governments that allow this type of situation, and it is there that we fight and propose legislation and public policy in a sustainable fashion. Because it is precisely in these regions where legislation is required to protect and promote the sustainable fashion sector and discourage Green washing.



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