

PRESS RELEASE

First Joint Trade & Sustainability Summit

HELD BY:

ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries (AFTEX)

AND

Sustainable Textiles of the Asian Region (STAR)
Network

SUPPORTED BY

GIZ FABRIC

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Contact: [SEE DETAILS BELOW]

AFTEX-STAR Joint Trade & Sustainability Summit Fosters Collaboration for Industry Transformation

Bangkok, Thailand - The STAR Network and the ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries (AFTEX) convened in Bangkok for the inaugural AFTEX-STAR Joint Trade & Sustainability Summit on Thursday, June 6th, 2024. The summit, held at the Bangkok Movenpick BDMS, brought together over 100 industry delegates from across Asia and beyond, with around 19 nationalities taking part.

The summit commenced with welcome remarks from dignitaries including Mr. Jumnonng Nawasmittawong, Chairman Emeritus of AFTEX and the National Federation of Thai Textile Industries (NFTTI), Mr. Marc Beckmann, GIZ FABRIC Project Director, and Mr. Albert Tan, Chairman of AFTEX.

AFTEX, founded in 1977 and incorporated as a non-profit in 2011, is a key player in the ASEAN textile and garment sector, representing associations from all 10 ASEAN countries. Its core objectives include promoting regional industry globally, facilitating cooperation among ASEAN players, and harmonizing standards to amplify the industry's collective voice on the global stage.

Mr. Miran Ali, Vice-President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Today's Spokesperson for the STAR Network, delivered opening remarks on behalf of the STAR Network, highlighting the collaborative efforts aimed at shaping a sustainable future for the textile and apparel industry.

The STAR Network, established in 2016 with support from the FABRIC project by GIZ, is an inter-Asian network comprising nine leading garment-producing associations from six nations. It represents over 35,000 manufacturers and advocates for sustainable textile and garment production, fostering dialogue, building trust, and promoting renewable energy use across the region.

The summit agenda featured keynote sessions on topics ranging from Least Developed Country (LDC) Status Graduation & Changing Trade Patterns to Trends in Due Diligence, highlighting the importance of sustainability and regional cooperation in driving industry growth and innovation.

Mr. Paul Baker, in his keynote address on LDC Graduation & Changing Trade Patterns, underscored the evolving landscape of the textile and apparel industry, emphasizing the need for adaptation and resilience in the face of changing trade dynamics and increased industry automation. Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, and Cambodia are all approaching the significant milestone and graduation to Lower-Middle-Income Country Status.

Country	LDC Status	Graduation Year	Scheduled to Graduate
Bangladesh	Graduating LDCs	2021	2026
Laos	Graduating LDCs	2021	2026
Nepal	Graduating LDCs	2021	2026
Cambodia	Recommended	2024	2029
Myanmar	Deferred	-	-

Ms. Archana Kotecha, in her presentation on Trends in Due Diligence, addressed the industry's response to new legislation such as the HREDD legislation. She stressed the importance of ensuring all associations from both STAR and AFTEX are informed, prepared, and ready to raise their voice in helping make the implementation of new HREDD legislation, such as the EU CSDDD legislation, smoother.

Mr. Thomas Hesketh, Head of STAR Secretariat shared insights into STAR's ongoing initiatives, including the development of position papers addressing industry wide issues such as audit fatigue and renewable energy adoption. On the theme of “Supplier Joining Together with Impact”, Ms. Lisa Ramershoven presented the award-winning Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative, calling for fairer contract terms between brands and suppliers.

Dr. Chanchai Sirikasemlert, Executive Director of the Thailand Textile Institute, presented sustainable solutions in the textile industry, emphasizing the role of innovation and biotechnology in achieving environmental goals.

The AFTEX and STAR Members together represent well over 60% of global garment exports. The summit was the first time the two regional bodies have come together to co-organise an event, and it is hoped the summit will lead to further collaboration in the future.

The summit concluded with a call to action, highlighting the collective impact suppliers can have by raising their voices together. There was renewed optimism that moving forward, a more collaborative approach can be achieved between buying nations, international brands, and the factory suppliers producing the garments that fill the worlds retail stores.

For further information or media inquiries, please contact the representatives of AFTEX and the STAR Network listed below.

End of Press Release

To: AFTEX

Attn: Ms. Regina Leong

ASEAN Federation of Textile Industries

C-9-4, Megan Avenue 1

No. 189, Jalan Tun Razak

50400 Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia

Email: regina@aftex.org

To: STAR Network

Attn: Mr. Miran Ali

Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone, NR4, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Email:

STAR Board Member: miran@bitopibd.com

Secretariat: Thomas.hesketh@cimonline.de

To: GIZ FABRIC

Attn: Mr. Marc Beckmann

No. 27, Street 302, Boeung Keng Kang 1. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Email: giz-kambodscha@giz.de