



Study Guide

for

Our Planet Summit

Topic Area : Addressing the initiative of The Fashion Pact and its beneficial impact on environmental sustainability

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1. Welcoming Message

Distinguished Delegates,

The Board of Our Planet Summit is honored to officially welcome you to the 12th University Edition of RhodesMRC! We are really happy to consider you as a member of our committee and that we now have the chance to create some wonderful memories together. Please note that as your Board members we remain always at your disposal to guide you and answer any kinds of questions. It is an utmost priority for us to make this conference an unforgettable experience for everyone. The topic that we are going to discuss extensively throughout our sessions is “Addressing the initiative of The Fashion Pact and its beneficial impact on environmental sustainability”. It is a topic of utmost importance, seeing as the fashion industry is one of the largest in the world, driving a really significant part of the global economy, reaching a staggering 1.7 trillion dollars in revenue in the past year. We have drafted this Study Guide with the purpose of aiding you with your research and preparation before and during the conference. We highly anticipate meeting you in person, having fruitful debates, and most importantly having fun all together!

The Board of Our Planet Summit,

Konstantinos Oikonomou (President)

Katerina Katsina (Secretary General)

2. Introduction to the Committee

Our Planet Summit is a forum for mobilization and action that brings together State and non-State stakeholders on all continents, who work together towards the common goal of combating the phenomenon of climate change. The Summit was created with the signing of the Paris Agreement¹ and it established 12 commitments, which consist of the coalition's common initiatives, that are strictly made to be respected. For this reason, the commitments are of high importance and have great potential to massively impact on climate change once they are fully developed from the members.²

One Planet Summit was launched in 2017 with the innovative vision to unite public and private stakeholders for the achievement of the twelve commitments.³ The second One Planet Summit was launched in 2018 aiming to accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement whilst putting finance in service of climate action. In 2019, the third One Planet Summit took place in Nairobi on a regional level and addressed the unique role of Africa as a global partner in the field of adaptation and resilience.⁴

3. Introduction to the Topic

Until the recent past, nobody could even fathom how detrimental the fashion industry is for the environment. After thorough research and studies, it became ever-clearer that the situation was critical. Until 2019 the fashion industry was producing approximately 10% of all humanity's carbon emissions but also was the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply, while, simultaneously, being a top-tier contributor to the oceans' pollution with microplastics and all sorts of debris.

Seeing how this situation has rapidly spiraled out of control, in 2019, a Fashion Pact was launched during the G7 Summit in Biarritz by French President Emmanuel Macron and François- Henri Pinault, Chairman, and CEO of Kering. The Fashion Pact was born out of the recognition that only collective

¹ Oneplanetsummit.fr. 2018. https://www.oneplanetsummit.fr/sites/default/files/2018-09/OneplanetSummit_ReviewOfTheCommitments_VGB_1.pdf.

² ibi

³ Bloomberg, M. 2019. "Six Things You Should Know About the One Planet Summit in Nairobi.". Afd.fr.. <https://www.afd.fr/en/actualites/six-things-you-should-know-about-one-planet-summit-nairob> .

⁴ Oneplanetsummit.fr. 2019 "3rd One Planet Summit in Nairobi". Oneplanetsummit.fr. <https://www.oneplanetsummit.fr/en/events-16/3rd-one-planet-summit-nairobi-67>.

action can change the environmentally harmful impact of the fashion industry. The goal of this global coalition of companies in the fashion and textile industry was to stop global warming, restore biodiversity and protect the oceans.

Quite astonishingly, it is the first time that leaders of over 70 global companies in the fashion and textile industry, as well as their suppliers and distributors, have committed to a common core of environmental goals in three areas: halting global warming, restoring biodiversity, and protecting the oceans.

It is the goal of the Fashion Pact to serve as a catalyst for enormous investment in and adoption of environmentally friendly business practices across the fashion industry, with a view, at the same time, to vastly mitigate the use of plastic packaging and wrapping by replacing it with recycled content by 2030. The eco-friendly choice of materials is the first necessary step to be made towards the right direction.

It is our duty, as one of the wardens of environmental protection, as the Planet Summit, to take initiative and further build upon the honorable project that has already started to instantiate the willingness of the fashion industry to become a part of the solution to the enormous environmental issues, ensuring that more signatories will be attracted, while, simultaneously, offering companies the necessary means to achieve the aforementioned goal.

4. Key – Terms and Definitions

- **Retail Store:** *“A place of business usually owned and operated by a retailer but sometimes owned and operated by a manufacturer or by someone other than a retailer in which merchandise is sold primarily to ultimate consumers”⁵*
- **e-commerce:** *“E-commerce is the buying and selling of goods or services via the internet, and the transfer of money and data to complete the sales. It’s also known as electronic commerce or internet commerce”⁶*

⁵ Merriam Webster. 2018. "s.v. "retail store"". Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/retail%20store> .

⁶ Zande, J. 2022. "What is e-commerce? Definition, benefits, examples.". The Future of Customer Engagement and Experience.. <https://www.the-future-of-commerce.com/2020/01/19/what-is-e-commerce-definition-examples/>.

- **Circular Economy:** *“The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible. These can be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value. This is a departure from the traditional, linear economic model, which is based on a take-make-consume-throw away pattern. This model relies on large quantities of cheap, easily accessible materials and energy”*⁷
- **Fast Fashion:** *“Fast fashion is the term used to describe clothing designs that move quickly from the catwalk to stores to take advantage of trends. The collections are often based on styles presented at Fashion Week runway shows or worn by celebrities. Fast Fashion allows mainstream consumers to purchase the hot new look or the next big thing at an affordable price. It became common because of cheaper, speedier manufacturing and shipping methods, an increase in consumers' appetite for up-to-the-minute styles, and the increase in consumer purchasing power—especially among young people—to indulge these instant-gratification desires”*⁸
- **Ethical Fashion:** *“Ethical fashion is garment design, production, and distribution that focuses on reducing harm to people and the planet. In the most ideal sense, it benefits those working along the supply chain and creates a better future for everyone—not just for those at the top. Ethical fashion is concerned with social impact and the ethics behind a brand's label. The phrase is thought to be the opposite fast fashion”*⁹
- **Sustainability:** *“Related to fast fashion as well as the desire for more ethical business practices generally is the trend towards ethical fashion and sustainable shopping. This has led to the rise of environmentally concerned initiatives like the Clean Clothes Campaign, the Fashion Pact External debuted by French president Emmanuel Macron in 2019, Fibershed (in California), the New Standard Institute, the NRDC's Clean by Design, and others. There are two rising topics in the sustainability discussion within the fashion industry. The first is the rise of organic brands. The second is sustainable consumption and low waste with the related interest in second hand fashion -- thrift stores, clothes consignment websites and stores, and re-purposing. One emerging problem related to sustainability and ethics is the practice of greenwashing which is conveying a*

⁷ Europarl.europa.eu. 2015. "Circular economy: definition, importance and benefits | News | European Parliament". Europarl.europa.eu. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/economy/20151201STO05603/circular-economy-definition-importance-and-benefits> .

⁸ Hayes, A. 2022. "How Fast Fashion Works". Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fast-fashion.asp> .

⁹ Stanton, A. 2022. "What Is Ethical Fashion? — The Good Trade". The Good Trade. <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-ethical-fashion> .

*false impression or providing misleading information about how a company's products are more environmentally sound"*¹⁰

- **Secondary Raw Materials:** *"Secondary Raw Materials (SRMs) have no clear legal definition on the European Union Community level. Technically, SRMs can be identified as materials that can be recycled and then injected back into the economy as new raw materials. SRMs are typically obtained either from production waste or from End-of-Life (EoL) products, sent to recycling plants at the end of their lifespan"*¹¹
- **Greenwashing:** *"Greenwashing is the process of conveying a false impression or providing misleading information about how a company's products are more environmentally sound. Greenwashing is considered an unsubstantiated claim to deceive consumers into believing that a company's products are environmentally friendly"*¹²
- **Biodiversity:** *"Biodiversity is a term used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth. It can be used more specifically to refer to all of the species in one region or ecosystem. Biodiversity refers to every living thing, including plants, bacteria, animals, and humans. Scientists have estimated that there are around 8.7 million species of plants and animals in existence. However, only around 1.2 million species have been identified and described so far, most of which are insects."*¹³
- **Ready-to-wear:** *"Ready-to-wear" (known as prêt-à-porter in French) is a fashion industry term that signifies that an article of clothing was mass-manufactured in standardized sizes and sold in finished condition—rather than designed and sewn for one particular person. Most of the clothing that we will buy in our lifetime—from sweatshirts to denim, cardigans to handbags—is ready-to-wear, which means it was purchased "off the rack."*¹⁴
- **Slow Fashion:** *"Slow fashion is the opposite of fast fashion. It encompasses an awareness and approach to fashion that considers the processes and resources required to make clothing. It advocates for buying better-quality garments that will last longer, and values fair treatment of people, animals, and the planet along the way. The main difference between sustainable or ethical with slow fashion is that it hones in on reducing consumption and production more specifically."*¹⁵

¹⁰ Guides.loc.gov. Ezez. 2022. "Research Guides: Fashion Industry: A Resource Guide: Introduction". Guides.loc.gov. <https://guides.loc.gov/fashion-industry> .

¹¹ EU Science Hub. 2022. "Raw Materials Information System". Rmis.jrc.ec.europa.eu. <https://rmis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/?page=policies-and-definitions-2d5b5e> .

¹² Kenton, W. 2022. "Greenwashing". Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/greenwashing.asp> .

¹³ National Geographic Resource Library. 2019. "Biodiversity". Education.Nationalgeographic.Org. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/biodiversity> .

¹⁴ MasterClass. 2021. "Ready-To-Wear Fashion Guide: Inside Look At Prêt-À-Porter." Masterclass. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/ready-to-wear-fashion-guide> .

¹⁵ Hill, M. 2021. "What Is Slow Fashion? - Good On You". Good On You. <https://goodonyou.eco/what-is-slow-fashion/> .

5. Legal Framework

5.1. *The Fashion Sustainability and Social Accountability Act, New York*

The Fashion Sustainability and Social Accountability Act, New York is a drastic and quite innovative piece of legislation, being, in actuality, the very first of its kind in the United States of America to actively pursue social and environmental sustainability requirements on major global fashion brands. The duality of its purpose speaks volumes about its significance. On the one hand it demands honest and full disclosure of all environmental and social due diligence policies by retail sellers and manufacturers, while, at the same time, raising a large fund, projected at the implementation of beneficially, environmentally-oriented practices and projects.¹⁶

5.2. *EU Sustainable Corporate Governance Initiative*

The European Commission, on the 23rd of February 2022, drafted, introduced and adopted a proposal for a Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence. The goal is to promote sustainable and responsible corporate practices that safeguard human rights and encompass environmental concerns into their corporate governance.¹⁷

5.3. *Green Claims Code, UK*

In an attempt to prevent the ever-popular corporate strategy of consumer misdirection, by including environmentally-friendly words such as “eco” or “sustainable” with zero accompanying proof to actually support such claims. This piece of legislation requires that claims must be clear, truthful, accurate, unambiguous, while, simultaneously, not omitting any relevant significant piece of information. Substantive and not misleading product claims and descriptions is the target.¹⁸

¹⁶ Dentons.com. 2022. "The proposed New York Fashion Sustainability Act – A game changer for fashion chains?". <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/articles/2022/march/24/the-proposed-new-york-fashion-sustainability-act-a>

¹⁷ Commission, E.2022. "Corporate sustainability due diligence.". https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/corporate-sustainability-due-diligence_en >.

¹⁸GOV.UK. 2022. "Making environmental claims on goods and services.". GOV.UK.. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-claims-code-making-environmental-claims/environmental-cla.>]

5.4. Carbon Label Law, France

The French Parliament in 2021 passed a bill that demands the compulsory “carbon labeling” on goods such as clothing and textiles, so that the consumer is aware how detrimental to the environment the production and manufacturing of the product was.¹⁹

5.5. Extensive EU Legislation

In March 2022, the European Union has started drafting very elaborate proposals to be put into action by 2023 such as the “Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme” that essentially obligates brands to pay a “waste fee’ based on how circular (in other words how biodegradable and recyclable) their products are, a ban on unsold products being destroyed and mitigation on overseas textile waste and a crackdown on the problem of “greenwashing”.

5.6. The United Nations Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action

Under the auspices of United Nations Climate Change, fashion stakeholders worked towards a thorough and comprehensive adherence to climate action by the textile, clothing and fashion industry. It was launched at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018 and renewed at COP26 in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021 and constitutes one of the most fundamental legal documents on the issue.²⁰

5.7. Paris Agreement

As an addition to the UNFCCC Framework, in 2015 185 parties came together and adopted the Paris Agreement. The central aim of the Agreement is to strengthen the global response to climate change

¹⁹ Fibre2fashion.com. 2021. "Read all Latest Industrial News in french-parliament-passes-law-to-apply-carbon-label-Fibre2Fashion". Fibre2fashion.com. <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/news/apparel-news/french-parliament-passes-law-to-apply-carbon-label>

²⁰ Unfccc.int. 2021. Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Fashion%20Industry%20Carter%20for%20Climate%20Action_2021.

by keeping the global temperature below 2 or 1.5 degrees Celsius and to safeguard that all Parties report regularly on their emissions and their Agreement implementation efforts.²¹

6. Main Discussion of the Topic

6.1 What is fast fashion?

Since the turn of the 20th century, clothing has grown to be seen as more of a throwaway item, and the industry has become more globalized. Nowadays, clothing is frequently created in one country, made in another, and swiftly distributed all over the world. The fast fashion industry has gained its ground over the past 15 years by rising demand from a growing middle class across the globe with higher disposable income, leading to a doubling in production over the same period.

But let's take a step back and start from the beginning. What is fast fashion? The term fast fashion has become the center of many conversations regarding fashion, sustainability, and environmental consciousness. The term refers to *“clothing designs that move quickly from the catwalk to stores to take advantage of trends. The collections are often based on styles presented at Fashion Week runway shows or worn by celebrities. Fast Fashion allows mainstream consumers to purchase the hot new look or the next big thing at an affordable price. It became common because of cheaper, speedier manufacturing and shipping methods, an increase in consumers' appetite for up-to-the-minute styles, and the increase in consumer purchasing power—especially among young people—to indulge these instant-gratification desires”*²².

Basically, the fast fashion industry is a vicious circle of rapid design, production, distribution, and marketing of clothing leading to retailers pulling enormous amounts of product differentiation and consumers getting more ready-to-wear fashion and variety of products at a low price. The term was first used in the 1990s when Zara started operating in New York City. At the beginning was a revolutionization of the fashion industry, which traditionally was exclusive and available only for the

²¹ Unfccc. "The Paris Agreement". 2015. Unfccc.Int. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

²² Zande, J. 2022. "What is e-commerce? Definition, benefits, examples.". The Future of Customer Engagement and Experience.. <https://www.the-future-of-commerce.com/2020/01/19/what-is-e-commerce-definition-examples/>.

few, as Zara's mission at the time was to take only 15 days for a garment to be designed, produced and distributed and sold in stores.²³

According to UN reports, fashion production accounts for an estimated 2-8% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Around 215 liters of water is consumed by the garment production annually and the textiles account for about 9% of microplastic losses to the oceans.²⁴ By merely washing our clothes 500.000 tons of microfibres are released to our oceans every single year²⁵.

According to Quantis International Report in 2018²⁶ the main three procedures that impact most the environment are dyeing and finishing (36%), yarn preparation (28%) and fiber production (15%). What's more, in accordance with the report fiber production mainly impacts *freshwater withdrawal* (is the procedure of diverting or withdrawing water from a surface water or underground water)²⁷ and every region's ecosystem due to cotton cultivation as dyeing and finishing, yarn preparation and fiber production processes are leading to rapid resource depletion because of the fact that during these energy-intensive processes fossil fuels are highly consumed.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change estimates that by 2030 the fashion industry's emissions by textile production are expected to rise by 60%.²⁸

6.2 The environmental impact of fast fashion

As the need to consume all the more has increased the past few years globally, the growing market of cheap clothing and new items is taking its toll on the environment. Approximately in 2014

²³ Maiti, Rashmila. 2022. "Fast Fashion: Its Detrimental Effect on the Environment". Earth.Org. <https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/>.

²⁴ Home - The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion 2022. "The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion". The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion. <https://unfashionalliance.org/>.

²⁵ McFall-Johnsen, M. 2019. "The fashion industry emits more carbon than international flights and maritime shipping combined. Here are the biggest ways it impacts the planet.". Business Insider. <https://www.businessinsider.com/fast-fashion-environmental-impact-pollution-emissions-waste-water-2019-10>.

²⁶ Quantis.com. 2018. "Measuring Fashion 2018 Environmental Impact of the Global Apparel and Footwear Industries Study Full report and methodological considerations". Quantis.com. https://quantis.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/measuringfashion_globalimpactstudy_full-report_quantis_cwf_2018a.pdf.

²⁷ Maiti, Rashmila. 2022. "Fast Fashion: Its Detrimental Effect on the Environment". Earth.Org. <https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/>.

²⁸ Unfccc.int. Fashion Industry, UN Pursue Climate Action for Sustainable Development.2022. <https://unfccc.int/news/fashion-industry-un-pursue-climate-action-for-sustainable-development>.

consumers bought 60% more clothing than they did in 2000²⁹. However, they only kept the clothes for half as long. To be precise, 85% of the textiles and the garments end up in the landfills each year.

The environmental impact of fast fashion consists of the depletion of *non-renewable sources*. The obscene amount of waste that the fashion industry produces, first and foremost, impacts the water. The excessive water use for manufacturing textiles reduces the freshwater sources and minimizes the supply of safe drinking water. Especially cotton, which worsens the problem of the industry's water exploitation. As we speak, in 2022, approximately 884 million people worldwide lack access to safe drinking water.³⁰ The fashion industry is the second largest industry that consumes water requiring thousands of gallons of water just to produce a pair of jeans or a cotton shirt. Also, textile dyeing is the second most important polluter of clean water as the leftovers of the process often are thrown away in rivers or streams.³¹

The synthetic fiber production and use is another important impact that fast fashion has on the environment. In an attempt to cut down on expenses of the numerous fashion collections that brands present each year, they prefer to use synthetic materials. However, polyester, nylon and acrylic take hundreds of years to biodegrade. When we wash our fast fashion clothes millions of microplastics degrade into the water. As the wastewater is drained from our washing machines this microplastics travel into the environment. Marine ecosystems are the most affected from the microplastics due to the adverse implications that have to sea creatures when they digest them. According to the report of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) that was published in 2017, estimated that 35% of all microplastics in the ocean come from the laundering of synthetic textiles like polyester.³²

Last but not least, fossil fuels are the driving force of the fast fashion industry. Most fast fashion brands use fossil fuel power to produce their garments. During combustion these energy sources release greenhouse gasses into the environment. As we have already mentioned, fashion production accounts for an estimated 2-8% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions³³. Also, these highly energy consuming processes that mostly require petroleum release volatile particulate matter and acids like hydrogen chloride. And let's not forget that the pesticides that are used to grow cotton compromise the health of the farmers. When these dangerous gasses, particulates and pesticides are released

²⁹ ibid

³⁰ Marsh, Jane. 2022. "The Fast Fashion Environmental Impact - Environment Co". Environment Co. <https://environment.co/the-fast-fashion-environmental-impact/>.

³¹ ibid

³² Boucher, Julien & Friot, Damien. 2017. "Primary microplastics in the oceans: a global evaluation of sources.". IUCN Library System. <https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/46622>.

³³ Home - The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion 2022. "The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion". The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion. <https://unfashionalliance.org/>.

into the atmosphere they alter Earth's composition and its ability to maintain viable life. If large amounts of air pollutants continue being generated, then our planet will suffer from extreme droughts, migration and ecosystem instability.³⁴

6.3 Fast fashion and its impact on the Oceans

Industries such as fashion, as we have already mentioned, inflicts great damage to the oceans. Over 35% of all microplastics that are released into the world's oceans are from synthetic fibers.³⁵ Every time we wash our clothes 700,000 microfibers are released into the water system. These microfibers are so tiny that filters can't capture them all, thus they wind up entering our rivers and oceans. Every year, half a million tonnes of synthetic fibers end up in the oceans. This amount of plastic is equivalent to more than 50 billion plastic bottles floating into the water.³⁶

The fashion industry accounts for 20% of global waterwaste. This the equivalent to more than half a trillion gallon of fresh and safe water³⁷. While dyeing our clothes many toxic chemicals are used, chemicals which endanger the health of workers, leach out into rivers and groundwater systems - systems that harm the land, jeopardize the safety of drinking water, and kill fish.³⁸ Also, garments such as cotton and jeans which need a great amount of water and fertilizers in order to be produced contribute to the pollution of runoff waters and the drying up of entire lakes.³⁹

Not to mention, nearly 100,000 marine mammals per year are killed by plastic debris, and it is claimed that 90% of seabirds have plastic in their stomachs. Fish and other marine creatures can mistake microplastics and fibers that are discharged from human garments for food. This not only hurts the animal that consumes it, but it also affects larger creatures and people further up the food chain. In other words, the clothes that we wash and throw away eventually cause more harm to us than we can imagine.⁴⁰

³⁴ ibid

³⁵ ibid

³⁶ Ellen Macarthur Foundation.2022. "Fashion and the circular economy". Ellenmacarthurfoundation.org. <https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/fashion/overview> .

³⁷ Textile Exchange. 2021. "Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report". https://textileexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Textile-Exchange_PREFERRED-Fiber-and-Materials-Market-Report_2021.pdf.

³⁸ Victoria and Albert Museum. 2020. "V&A · Pollution: the dark side of fashion". Victoria and Albert Museum. <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/pollution-the-dark-side-of-fashion>.

³⁹ Golley, E. 2020. "Fashion's Impact on our Oceans — Fashion and the Free". Fashion and the Free. <https://www.fashionandthefree.com/fashion-impact-oceans> .

⁴⁰ Savelli, Heidi. 2020. "Fashion's tiny hidden secret". UNEP. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/fashions-tiny-hidden-secret>.

10% of the
Global Carbon Emissions
comes from
the Apparel Industry



70 million
oil barrels
are used every year to produce
polyester



400%
more carbon emissions
are produced if we wear a garment
5 times instead of 50 times



41

Table1: Fashion & Environment — SustainYourStyle.

6.4 Fast fashion and its impact on Biodiversity

The production and processing of all the many materials used to produce our clothes, as well as the materials used for packaging, are major uses of biodiversity in the fashion industry. The production process, wear, care, and disposal phases of the fashion industry all have a negative influence on biodiversity.

But while the fashion industry's effects on climate change have received a lot of attention, its significant influence on biodiversity has been overlooked. Even though we rely on biodiversity for our food and energy water and soil, we facing fast declining of biodiversity - at a faster rate than ever before in human history⁴².

The alteration of habitat brought on by agriculture for the production of cotton, viscose, wool, rubber, leather hides, or any other natural fiber accounts for a large component of fashion's biodiversity impact. For instance, the fashion industry contributes significantly to global deforestation by cutting down 150 million trees annually to make viscose and other cellulosic materials. A million species, or between 12 and 20 percent of the estimated total species, including marine and terrestrial, are also in danger of extinction.

⁴¹ Charpail, Mathilde. 2017. "Fashion & Environment — SustainYourStyle". SustainYourStyle. <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/whats-wrong-with-the-fashion-industry#anchor-environmental-impact>.

⁴² Knowledge.unccd.int. 2019. "IPBES' 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services | Knowledge Hub". Knowledge.unccd.int. <https://knowledge.unccd.int/publications/ipbes-2019-global-assessment-report-biodiversity-and-ecosystem-services>.

As the demand for clothing develops globally, the effects of raw materials on the environment will only get worse. By 2030, it is anticipated that the fashion industry will use 35% more land for the production of fiber, releasing up an additional 115 million hectares for biodiversity protection.⁴³ Our clothing has an effect on the climate during its whole lifecycle, from manufacturing to disposal. It has been estimated that the fashion industry emitted around 2.1 billion tonnes of greenhouse emissions in 2018, equating to 4% of the global total.⁴⁴ Overall 52% of fashion's emissions come from raw material production and fabric and yarn preparation.

6.5 Definition and Significance of Sustainable fashion

Sustainable Fashion is a recent, innovative modus operandi of large franchises and brands that aims at amplifying the benefits to the industry while at the same time minimizing the detrimental impact on the environment. As per the generally accepted definition by fashion experts, Sustainable Fashion is: *"an all-inclusive term describing products, processes, activities, and actors (policymakers, brands, consumers) aiming to achieve a carbon-neutral fashion industry, built on equality, social justice, animal welfare, and ecological integrity"*.⁴⁵

Sustainable Fashion is the counterweight to the ever-dominating Fast Fashion, which as mentioned before, aims to produce as many pieces possible, with any means necessary. It isn't explicitly covered in the scope of the commitments made in the Fashion Pact, nor is directly pursued by the One Planet Summit Conventions, which are, mainly, focused on combating the devastating consequences of Fast Fashion, yet is an irreplaceable complementary practice to this noble effort.

Its magnitude is, of course, enormous. First and foremost, sustainable fashion prioritizes minimal waste. Statistics show that on a global scale, there is one garbage truck of textile waste dumped every second. It goes without saying that this huge amount of waste is attributed to fast fashion companies that launch fashion trends ever so often and fulfill them with poor quality cheap price products. On the other hand, this is exactly what Sustainable Fashion is trying to mitigate, particularly by using long-lasting materials. This is where its significance shines, namely in the usage of biodegradable or

⁴³ Somers, Sienna. 2020. "Nature in Freefall: How Fashion Contributes to Biodiversity Loss - Fashion Revolution". Fashion Revolution. <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/nature-in-freefall/>.

⁴⁴ McKinsey & Company. 2020. "Fashion on Climate : How The Fashion Industry Can Urgently Act To Reduce Its Greenhouse Gas Emissions". <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Industries/Retail/Our%20Insights/Fashion%20on%20climate/Fashion-on-climate-Full-report.pdf> .

⁴⁵ Home - The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion 2022. "The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion". The UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion. <https://unfashionalliance.org>

recycled eco-friendly materials such as organic cotton, recycled cotton, organic hemp, organic linen etc.⁴⁶ and not from petroleum-based ones, as is the norm when it comes to fast fashion, hence why sustainable fashion shows remarkable results when it comes to low CO2 and Greenhouse Gas emissions.

Lastly, sustainable fashion deserves accolades for its limited water waste. Seeing as it prioritizes organic textiles that require little to no water, ridding itself from the outrageous amounts of water required by regular fast fashion brands during the manufacturing, dyeing and finishing processes.

6.6 The Pillars of Sustainable Fashion

Sustainable Fashion rests on five crucial pillars, all inextricably linked and equally important. They are (per the general accord) as follows: use of eco-friendly materials, fair and ethical labor, versatile and time-withstanding creations, circularity and inclusive business models towards employees from all walks of life.⁴⁷ Bearing in mind that the labor and social aspect of this issue are out of the mandate of our committee, they shall, thus, be exempt from this study guide as well. This means we will be focusing on eco-friendliness, longevity and circularity.

6.6.1. Eco-Friendliness

Although the concept of eco-friendliness is gaining considerable traction, evolving from simply a trend to almost a grand movement, there is still a lot to be addressed. The first step is to promote the use of eco-friendly materials, by primarily cutting off petroleum-based products. This is the so-called “Green Manufacturing” and aims at encouraging business and industries to use fabrics such as organic cotton and hemp etc. However, and this is of grave importance, the acquisition of environmentally favorable raw materials is just the very first base. In order to characterize an enterprise as eco-friendly, it has to maintain that tone all along the supply chain, namely the material production, the product manufacturing, the product use and, lastly, the final disposal.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Sustainable Jungle. n.d. "30 Sustainable Fabrics For The Most Eco Friendly Fashion". Sustainable Jungle. <https://www.sustainablejungle.com/sustainable-fashion/sustainable-fabrics/>

⁴⁷ Sakay, Y., 2021. "Abiding by sustainable fashion's 5 pillars is not an easy feat". Daily Sabah. <https://www.dailysabah.com/life/fashion/abiding-by-sustainable-fashions-5-pillars-is-not-an-easy-feat> .

⁴⁸ Posinasetti, N., 2018. "Sustainable Manufacturing: Principles, Applications and Directions". <https://www.industr.com>. <https://www.industr.com/en/sustainable-manufacturing-principles-applications-and-directions-2333598>.

Sustainable manufacturing should integrate sustainable activities at all levels of manufacturing – product, process and system. This, essentially, means that manufacturing organizations should aim for activities such as energy use reduction. This can be achieved by leveraging renewable energy, the self-replenishing and most cost-effective resource, that makes operation without importation of energy possible.⁴⁹ Additionally, it is imperative for companies to be aware of the importance of using modern, smart manufacturing software and hardware that do not produce the massive emissions as old, heavy or outdated ones do.

Another incredibly important aspect of the sustainable fashion industry is water management. The Fast Fashion industry is the second most water-intensive industry in the world, consuming approximately 79 billion cubic meters of water per year. It takes about 2,700 liters to create an average, normal-sized t-shirt. To put it into perspective, this is equivalent to enough drinking for one person for 900 days, a staggering number given the fact that 2.7 billion people experience water scarcity yearly.⁵⁰ In order to reduce water consumption, the first step would be to establish a solid water assessment and maintenance system by developing a water conservation plan along with the employees of the company and consistently setting and achieving conservation benchmarks. Afterwards, regularly checking for leaks, efficiently operating water-intensive machinery (which is ubiquitous in the fashion industry), shutting off cooling units that require lots of water, installing water-efficient technologies such as aerated faucets to mitigate water flows and water heater insulations as well as timers, that reduce water waste by automatically turning off faucets during intervals.⁵¹

Another huge aspect that simply cannot go unmentioned is, quite naturally, the significance of online commerce, aka e-commerce. Online marketing is way more environmentally-amiable than regular offline marketing like direct mail or printed advertising. This goes without saying, because the material resources expended into the business transactions are greatly reduced, which simultaneously reduce their negative impact on the environment.⁵² Additionally, it is estimated that ecommerce is approximately 17% more carbon efficient than traditional retail stores. This is due to the fact that since most online brands don't rely heavily on physical store locations, which allows them to better manage,

⁴⁹ Industry Today. 2020. "Make Your Factory an Eco-Friendly Manufacturing Plant | Industry Today.". Industrytoday.com. <https://industrytoday.com/make-your-factory-an-eco-friendly-manufacturing-plant/>.

⁵⁰ Mogavero, T. 2020. "Clothed in Conservation: Fashion & Water | Sustainable Campus". Sustainablecampus.fsu.edu. <https://sustainablecampus.fsu.edu/blog/clothed-conservation-fashion-water>.

⁵¹ Erwin, M. 2022. "6 Steps to More Effective Water Conservation for Businesses | PG&E. [". PG&E. <https://www.pge.com/en/mybusiness/save/smbblog/article/6-steps-to-more-effective-water-conservation-for-b> .

⁵² Seltzer, Diane. 2022. "Green Marketing Ideas to Promote Eco-Friendly Small Businesses - Small Business Marketing Tools". Small Business Marketing Tools. <https://www.sbmarketingtools.com/green-marketing-ideas-to-promote-eco-friendly-small-businesses/>.

organize and, if needed, mitigate vehicular transportation and deliveries, one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions.

6.6.2. Longevity

Longevity is a more straight-forward concept. It essentially describes slow fashion, a new trend that attempts to enhance the lifespan of clothing. Companies aiming to shoot for timelessness, employ production strategies and policies that revolve around a more conscientious consumption. First and foremost is the doing away with the annual “out with the old, in with the new” phenomenon. Slow fashion brands -should- tend to change clothing seasons less frequently. This means that they have less manufacturing footprints and, as a result, consumers are driven to shop with greater parsimony and responsibility. Another great tactic to ensure longevity would be to stock fewer clothing products and concentrate on less grandiose product lines, leaving a narrower range of fashion choices for consumers, on to which they are more likely to trust and hang on for longer periods of time. This, of course, has another great advantage: the fact that having fewer items for selling at any given time, results in completely selling or using every manufactured item rather than being left with leftovers, meaning that no resources go to waste.⁵³

The path to longevity isn't one sided though. The consumer also plays a major role. The transition to ethical and slow fashion doesn't happen overnight and it is quite rational to assume that most people are reluctant to ditch immediately their beloved and luxurious fast-fashion brands altogether. An excellent idea would be to raise awareness towards the environmental dangers they entail, while at the same time launching extended campaigns that will bring slow fashion brands into the spotlight. This would allow consumers to investigate via social media and start building their own slow fashion wardrobe step by step. Of course, careful treatment, maintenance and preservation of clothing would go the extra mile in pursuing our goal.⁵⁴

⁵³ Cunningham, Peter. 2022. "Why ethical fashion is made for referral marketing | Buyapowa's Expert Insights". Buyapowa's Expert Insight on Referral Marketing | Blog. <https://www.buyapowa.com/blog/ethical-fashion/>

⁵⁴ Cowley, L. 2022. "Transitioning To Slow Fashion In 10 Easy Steps | Eco World". Eco World. <https://ecoworldonline.com/transitioning-to-slow-fashion-in-10-easy-steps/>

6.6.3. Circularity

This is, arguably, the most important aspect of sustainable fashion. As mentioned before, sustainable fashion aims to renounce the horrible name fast fashion has as one of the major contributors to climate change and environmental pollution. Every year, millions of clothes are fabricated, worn and then thrown away. The fashion industry needs to be reinvented and refurbished.

Three principles define the products in a circular economy for fashion. Those products are:⁵⁵

a) Used More → In order to achieve that, the clothing items must maintain a certain level of durability, the capability to remain operational and relevant over time, enabling them to withstand multiple uses. This brings us to the next stage which is reuse. Clothes and apparel should be designed in a way that could be worn for longer periods of time, without being significantly modified and, thus, running the risk of being thrown away after just a couple uses.

b) Made to be made again → Naturally, the first word that comes to mind is recycling, a vital part of the circular economy. It would be easy to intonate the importance of recycling and just be done with this thematic, but the problem runs much deeper than that. The question here is not of technical nature, namely the way in which the brands will recycle their products, but how we can push recycling into more companies' policies. Initiatives from all over the world have started manifesting themselves, they just need to be brought to the light and implemented with close collaboration between State and companies. For example, the European Commission very recently adopted a draft proposal for the "Circular Economy Action Plan".⁵⁶ High quality recycling is only possible when an effective waste separation takes place. The Commission's proposal is the harmonization of separate waste collection systems, dealing with issues such as their density, accessibility and other local conditions such as the remoteness of the area and the ratio of businesses and inhabitants.

In order to talk about successful recycling, it is imperative to take precaution against the hazardous substances by substituting them early on with safer-by-default chemicals. Hence, why we should turn towards employing strategies to minimize the appearance of such substances in recycled materials, enhancing cooperation between authorities and the industry to progressively develop harmonized

⁵⁵ Ellen Macarthur Foundation. 2018 "Fashion and the circular economy". [Ellenmacarthurfoundation.org. https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/our-work/activities/make-fashion-circular/report](https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/our-work/activities/make-fashion-circular/report).

⁵⁶ European Commission. 2020. "A new Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner and more competitive Europe". EUR - Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1583933814386&uri=COM:2020:98:FIN> .

systems to obtain, track and manage information on perilous substances or improving the classification of hazardous waste in order to maintain clean recycling streams.

Quite interesting is, also, an initiative under the name of Extended Producer Responsibility that holds producers accountable for the disposal of their products even after they left the market. This policy practically tries to force companies to create a more circular financial model, preventing waste, supporting recycling goals, manufacturing eco-friendly products and following sustainable production practices.⁵⁷

Lastly, another riveting measure of Canadian origin is the ban on textiles in residential garbage. It doesn't permit the entering of textiles in residential waste by offering donation bins throughout the area and choosing accessible community locations as donation centers. These local bans could have a huge effect on the landfill diversion, especially if more communities and, eventually, states catch on. This ban could invigorate the reuse, recycling and donation of clothes.⁵⁸

6.7 The Problem of Greenwashing

In today's greed-driven world of fast fashion, it is not uncommon for companies to capitalize on the ever-growing demand for eco-friendly products. Basically, greenwashing conveys a misconception about the fact that their products are environmentally sound, usually by making unsubstantiated claims, predominantly with press releases, advertisements and questionable or dubious statements on the packaging and description of the product.

This is a matter that requires urgent attention, since it barricades the development of a sustainable economy. It forces consumers to be more dubious and distrustful of environmental initiatives and, practically, impedes them from fully grasping the gravity of their marketing decisions seeing as they can't tell the difference between valid and invalid claims.⁵⁹

Thankfully, measures are constantly being implemented and via rather extended regulations the phenomenon is rather starting to recede. Incredible has been the role of the World Federation of Advertisers. New regulations have been put in place, such as the necessity for clear evidence to back

⁵⁷ Make Fashion Clean (MFC). 2021. "5 Policies to Reduce Post-Consumer Fashion Pollution — Make Fashion Clean (MFC)". Make Fashion Clean (MFC). <https://makefashionclean.org/blue-circle-buzz/2021/4/20/5-policies-to-reduce-post-consumer-fashion-pollution>

⁵⁸ (ibid)

⁵⁹ Horiuchi, R. and Schuchard, R.2009. "Understanding and Preventing Greenwash: A business guide". Bsr.org. <https://www.bsr.org/reports/Understanding%20 Preventing Greenwash.pdf> .

up any kind of environmental claim, while simultaneously demanding the use of simplified, not overly technical and confusing language. Additionally, products should be required not to omit any kind of vital information with the justification of lacking text space on the packing (a common practice) and to help the consumer understand the environmental impact of the item he is purchasing. The latter could be achieved by integrating related codes and regulation as vital info, as mentioned above, so the customer can detect whether the “sustainable product” he is about to acquire has passed said legal standards.⁶⁰

Because it is rather improbable to expect huge corporations to always abide by those rules, seeing as they are driven by profit, there will constantly be initiative to bend the rules to achieve it. Hence why, enforcing and reinforcing such regulations as the aforementioned ones is extremely important, as such an important matter cannot be simply left to the “good will” of said companies. It is an occurrence that demands the close collaboration and the collective efforts of both the authorities and the consumers themselves!

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the environmental problems caused by the fashion industry are far from negligible. As this trillion dollar industry continues to be a contributor to about 20% of industrial wastewater pollution, to an enormous water drainage that causes scarcity in many regions of the world, to about 8-10% of humanity’s carbon emissions, to the release of 500,000 tons of microfibers and debris into the oceans annually, to the ridiculous plastic and petroleum-based materials usage that reaches a staggering 60% and the detrimental effect on the planet’s biodiversity, the need for a shift to more sustainable forms and models of fashion is more imperative than ever! Let’s start evolving from passive observers to the planet’s massacre to its active benefactors!

⁶⁰ Marsh, Jane. 2022. "The Fast Fashion Environmental Impact - Environment Co". Environment Co. <https://environment.co/the-fast-fashion-environmental-impact/>.

8. Points to be addressed

1. How can slow, ethical and sustainable fashion help adverse the impact that fast fashion has had on the environment?
2. Is the existing legal framework that regulates the fashion industry adequate regarding the protection of the oceans and biodiversity?
3. What measures should be taken in order to accelerate the progress in the protection of the oceans and biodiversity?
4. How can the involved parties of the Fashion Pact become more active and committed to the effort of changing the fashion industry?
5. In what ways can States promote sustainable fashion by implementing the use of eco-friendly materials instead of petroleum-based ones, while following a sustainable manufacturing policy?
6. How can the longevity and durability of industrial products be further encouraged?
7. What initiatives could be taken to prioritize the principles of a circular economy?
8. How can States respond to the issue of greenwashing?

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