



## CLIMATE ACTION IN FASHION

### *Discussion Paper*

#### **Climate Change: a global challenge with a global solution**

Climate change is one of the greatest threats facing humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In response, the Paris Climate Change Agreement seeks to accelerate and intensify action and investment needed for a sustainable, resilient low carbon future. Its central aim is to keep global temperature rise this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The scientific reality is that even these levels of warming will have a significant impact on the natural world and human society. Thus, the Paris Agreement also requires strengthened actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Paris Agreement requires countries to put forward national climate plans called “nationally determined contributions” (NDCs), with a commitment to strengthen these efforts in the years ahead. However, achieving and exceeding the ambition of these contributions will require all sections of society, in particular business, to increase the scale and acceleration of climate action. Unlike many previous transboundary environmental challenges, the drivers of climate change are not discrete. Climate change will impact almost every aspect of economic and social activity. Therefore, the response requires the participation of everyone in society.

#### **Implications for business**

Rapidly halting emissions and achieving a climate-neutral economy requires fundamental change from all sectors of the business world, including the fashion industry. Analysis by the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership highlights that the Paris Agreement now signals a clear route forward for business, built on:

- A clear long-term direction of travel;
- Confidence in the process;
- Political buy-in;
- A level playing field for business.

The We Mean Business Coalition has identified five opportunities for business resulting from the near-universal international adoption of the Paris Agreement. These are opportunities to:

- Seize new and expanded low-carbon market opportunities;
- Align investment decisions to long-term policy certainty;
- Benefit from policy coherence across borders and into new markets;
- Increase investor confidence and protect operations by managing climate risks;
- Be recognized as leaders among their peers by taking climate action.

## **How can the Fashion sector contribute?**

### ***Bringing together the efforts and initiatives already under way***

Attempts to address the climate impact of fashion involves a complex web of participating countries, industries and actors. Efforts to design and promote a new sustainable system for fashion production and consumption are well under way. Brands are adopting various sustainability approaches, including by looking beyond the first tier of suppliers, integrating sustainability in core business practices, making efforts to bring transparency to the supply chain, and so forth. This is a good start, from which industry can accelerate and improve action towards a different, more sustainable future. Alignment and improvement of these efforts under the UNFCCC umbrella could provide wide-reaching benefits in the response to climate change. The **UNFCCC Fashion Dialogue, to be held on 16-17 January 2018 in Bonn, Germany**, will aim to facilitate better coordination and establish collaborative, holistic approaches through inclusive partnerships built on principles, values and shared goals, aligned with the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### ***Taking direct action***

Fashion's impact on climate is large and its total impact is difficult to assess due to lack of data and appropriate tools. The sector's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are expected to increase by more than 60 percent to nearly 2.8 billion tons per year by 2030, according to projections in a recent report by the Global Fashion Agenda and The Boston Consulting Group. At a time when the world needs to reduce GHG emissions as rapidly as possible, these numbers pose a big challenge. There are strong reasons for the fashion sector to join hands and work towards a harmonized approach in addressing its global climate footprint. By doing so, it would maintain public trust and provide moral leadership. Further, the impacts of climate change on the supply chains of fashion will require the sector to develop plans for enhanced resilience to extreme weather events and changed climatic conditions.

### ***Advocacy and engagement***

Fashion engages a broad cross-section of industry, and influences its customers and society at large through its wide reach and the values associated with its products. This influence and engagement provides a significant opportunity for awareness-raising and for moral leadership. The fashion sector can therefore support the achievement of the Paris Agreement's goals by utilizing this moral leadership to advocate for lifestyle change and action.

## **How can the UN support the Fashion sector?**

### ***Convening and networking***

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Climate Convention is one of the largest global policy gatherings, with 20,000-30,000 people gathering annually for two weeks in COP host cities. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, these COPs have increasingly focused on cross-sectoral dialogues for implementation of climate action, which engage subnational policymakers, business leaders, the investment community and civil society. In addition to the COPs, the UNFCCC hosts or co-organizes many targeted gatherings for policymakers and practitioners; these include mid-year UNFCCC negotiation and 'stocktake' sessions in Bonn, regional carbon forums, a Global Climate Action summit in California in September 2018 and events with the UN Secretary-General, including a global summit planned for 2019. The UN Climate Change secretariat is committed to utilizing these fora to expand dialogue between economic sectors and between business and policymakers.

### ***Tracking and recognition***

The UN Climate Change secretariat operates a number of tracking and recognition mechanisms (NAZCA, Climate Neutral Now, Momentum for Change) which build upon the expertise of the organization in

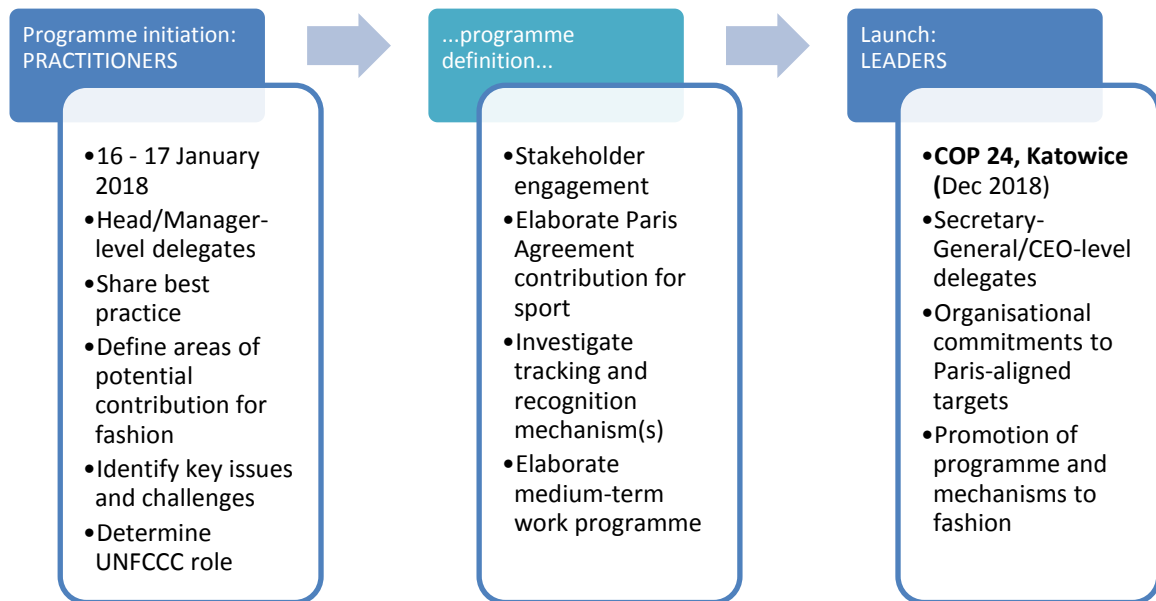
measuring the impacts of climate action and in recognizing the contribution of those taking such action. The secretariat is seeking to revise these existing mechanisms, or develop new ones, which provide transparency and recognition for entities other than nation-states that are driving ahead with ambitious climate action.

**Communications**

The UN Climate Change secretariat, through its Executive Secretary, is one of the most trusted global authorities on climate action and climate diplomacy. Efforts and actions amplified by the secretariat can provide substantial profile-raising in policy and technology fora.

**UNFCCC Fashion Dialogue / Climate Action in Fashion Programme  
Moving forward together**

The Climate Action in Fashion Programme will aim to be an ambitious, results-based programme, designed and developed with industry practitioners and agreed by the sector’s leadership.



**Programme initiation**

The UNFCCC Fashion Dialogue, on 16-17 January 2018 will bring together a wide array of fashion stakeholders around the common goal of addressing climate change. The Dialogue should help build broad support for climate targets and implementation activities, pursued under the Programme. The goal would be to put the fashion industry on track for the net zero emission economy of 2050 that global leaders agreed in Paris.

The UNFCCC Fashion Dialogue is designed for manager-level delegates, especially:

- those with first-hand experience of designing and delivering sustainability and climate change programmes with fashion/apparel;

- representatives from international companies and organizations with fashion and/or climate change and sustainability objectives;
- those with CSR, community engagement or communications responsibilities;
- representatives from textile and apparel production;
- representatives from government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

***Programme definition***

The UNFCCC Fashion Dialogue is expected to prepare a Template for the new Climate Action in Fashion Programme, designed and led by the industry itself. Building on the progress made at the Dialogue, delegates and other practitioners will be invited to help develop and refine the Template over the following six to nine months. The aim would be to define the scope, priority areas and audiences, core activities and targets for the Climate Action in Fashion Programme. The content of the Programme will build from the Dialogue outputs and Template, but would likely cover:

- climate targets for the fashion sector derived from the Paris Agreement;
- engagement strategies for priority audiences and key topics;
- activities to support, share and reward climate good practice in fashion;
- mechanisms to track progress towards targets.

***Programme launch***

The Climate Action in Fashion Programme is expected to launch at COP24 in 2018, in Katowice, Poland, with a high-level event with the COP President, Secretary-General, Chair or CEO-level representatives from the most influential organizations in the fashion industry, together with leaders from apparel brands. The dialogue will culminate in the signing a Climate Declaration for Fashion, securing the signatories' support for a Climate Action in Fashion Programme.

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