

Fashion 4 Development to Unveil Sustainability Directory

- Conscious Fashion Campaign will host a monthlong virtual event designed to offer actionable options.



Fashion 4 Development's virtual booth for the upcoming event.

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FASHION

Companies of all sizes will soon have free access to a directory for sustainability solutions.

To encourage more fashion companies to embrace sustainability, the Conscious Fashion Campaign, which falls under the United Nations Office

for Partnerships, is launching a monthlong virtual event on Thursday that will be billed as “Discover the SDGs.” Born out of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, were adopted by world leaders in 2015. They replaced the Millennium Development Goals, which had started a global effort in 2000 to fight poverty.

As one of the participants in next month’s virtual event, Fashion 4 Development will launch an online directory of sustainability tools and services. The upcoming group effort is in line with the Conscious Fashion Campaign’s plan to mobilize the fashion industry to create social, economic and environmental change.

There are about 30 organizations and companies that will participate in next month’s digital event. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the Institute of Positive Fashion, Lenzing, Arch & Hook, the Transformers Foundation, the Council of Fashion Designers of America, Redress and the Sustainable Angle are among those that have signed up.

Having been working on engaging the fashion industry through her role as chief of office for the U.N. Office for Partnerships, Lucie Brigham said, “If we truly want to make a change on the Sustainable Development Goals, we have to work all together. We have to use fashion and its creativity and positive narrative to help educate customers, audiences, Millennials and the media so that they really understand the human agenda in a more creative and practical context.”

The Conscious Fashion Campaign partners collectively represent more than \$4.7 billion in revenue and 14,700 employees. The digital event is in step with the “Decade of Action,” which is geared toward making good on the SDGs by 2030.

Net-zero emissions by 2050 is the goal.

In a speech late last year, U.N. Secretary General António Guterres said that emissions must decrease by half by 2030 and reach net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

In a joint interview with F4D’s founder Evie Evangelou and F4D Solutions’ managing director Jeanine Ballone, Brigham said, “Sustainability is no longer a

choice. It's a need," adding that younger consumers demand it.

In a survey conducted earlier this year you First Insight Inc., 62 percent of Generation Z participants prefer to buy from sustainable brands, which is on par with Millennials. To that end, three of the Secretary General-appointed climate advisers will share content that is geared for the young fashion-minded generation.

One priority is teach consumers that buying brands that uphold sustainable practices or that have no child labor practices equates with a positive decision.

Another one is to convince brands that true long term commitments — not green washing — are needed in their business models and that will pay off.

"We need to get a sustainable resilient recovery that works...by understanding who's doing what and emphasizing our collective power, if we work together, we are stronger," Brigham said.

Ballone agreed that you have to be collective now as opposed to any one area doing one thing. Future significant change can only be done collectively and involves creating a different value system "that has to be part of the natural growth of any business going forward," she said.

The ReClothe resource guide has been created by F4D and C.L.A.S.S. The Bergenz, Austria-based Dyntex Biosynthetics, Asahi Kasei's EcoSensor and Maeba International are among the resources that are currently listed. As of Thursday, it will also be available on F4D's site on an ongoing basis.

"We're trying to democratize all of the fashion solutions that are available now to the industry to implement and use that would make a clean value chain and supply chain for all of the industry globally. The first e-book will be a listing of all solutions, technologies, fabric suppliers, dyers and finishers." Ballone said.

The aim is to bolster circular fashion that is nonhazardous to the environment and support social programming. "What we realized is that only some of the big companies have access to a lot of these technologies and materials," she said.

"We want to create opportunities for all brands and young start-ups to have the information of the latest supply chain solutions in order to be more responsible in the development of all new products."

Users can go through a fiber's entire value chain process until it gets fully recycled. F4D is also looking to develop collaborations and key partnerships to connect these value chain opportunities, which are not being connected at this time.

The directory, which serves as a kickoff for F4D's 2021 strategy, will be updated on a quarterly basis. F4D is working with a few up-and-coming designers to help them change their production timelines, best practices and product development.

Mentoring and educational programs are underway globally and going forward partnerships with universities will be put in place to help utilize some of the elements of the resource guide and the solutions, Ballone said.

F4D's Evangelou has a long history with the U.N. Eleven years ago, F4D connected with the U.N. member states and officials to help welcome members of the fashion industry to the organization's headquarters to familiarize them with what were then U.N. Millennium Development Goals. Brigham also noted that 11-year history, during Monday's interview. Those targets encompassed human rights, gender equity, sustainability and other issues that apparel companies grapple with.

A couple of years after the Sustainable Development Goals were launched in 2012, F4D introduced Sustainia Living at the Copenhagen Fashion Summit in 2016. Noting how examining a sustainable lifestyle has increasingly been the focus in the years that followed, Evangelou said, "It's the food that you eat, the car that you drive, the way you live your daily life that's really going to make the true impact. So Fashion 4 Development is not only focused on fashion but on overall sustainability and trying to make it a new trend," adding that "a huge focus" on food, personal health and how fibers and fabrics affect your skin will happen in the coming months. "With COVID-19, health has become a major, major point. People are getting it more than ever," she said. "In 2015, when we launched Sustainia Living, people were paying attention but not as much now.

This virus has really put the pressure on and has opened up a lot of eyes."

She added, "We have to create awareness with consumers. If we get consumers to live a more responsible lifestyle, we will create sustainability just naturally because consumers will demand responsibly made and responsibly created items. Then the companies will have to supply that."

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JEANINE BALLONE, FASHION 4 DEVELOPMENT