



# BANGLADESH CIRCULAR ECONOMY SUMMIT

BANGLADESH CIRCULAR  
APPAREL & TEXTILES  
FORUM

## FROM LINEAR TO CIRCULAR: A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL

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**15 JUNE, 2023**

Radisson Blu Water Garden,  
Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**ORGANIZED BY**



**POST EVENT REPORT**

Accelerating

# The Momentum of Circularity

The Bangladesh Circular Economy Summit is a groundbreaking event that brings together experts, policymakers, and businesses to discuss the transition to a circular economy in Bangladesh.

With the increasing need for sustainable economic growth and reduced environmental impact, it is clear that we need to find new ways to deliver prosperity within planetary boundaries. The circular economy represents a viable solution to this challenge.

We believe that a circular economy can bring many opportunities for businesses, policymakers, and society as a whole. The summit will delve into the evolving relationship between brands, manufacturers, and legislators, discussing how trade and job opportunities can be maximized by transitioning to a circular economy.





# The Man Behind the Show

"Bangladesh Circular Economy Summit aims to find out the opportunities for the shift from the linear to circular business model and foster collaborations among the stakeholders to promote circular economy in the country."

With thanks and best wishes,



**Mostafiz Uddin**

Founder & CEO,

Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE)



# The Focus

Focus on the overall principles of the Circular Economy and how they can be applied to Bangladesh's economy as a whole and manufacturing sectors alike. It will unpack the foundations that should be in place for the transition to circularity to take place in equitable ways and avoid possible pitfalls.

This summit also included cases to understand how the Circularity principles can be applied to diverse industries, like construction, pharmaceuticals, or electronics; and align their business models to global supply chains.

The focus will be on the overall industries of Bangladesh, zooming in on how circularity principles are being applied and adopted in all sectors. This summit has explored emerging and scaled-up circular solutions, industry best practices, and shared lessons for the apparel industry from other industries.

It delved into how a manufacturer can best accelerate circularity and what is needed from different stakeholders.



Bangladesh Circular Economy Summit 2023

# Event Highlights

**520+**

National &  
International Delegates

**20+**

Country  
Representation

**35+**

Partners &  
Contributors

**40+**

Worldclass National &  
International Speakers

**09**

Keynotes, Online & Offline  
Presentations & Fire Side Chat

**04**

Interactive Panel  
Sessions



## Bangladesh Circular Economy Summit 2023

# Event Agenda

## PART 01: CREATING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BANGLADESH

09:00 - 09:30	Registration
09:45 - 10:25	Welcome Speech & Opening Plenary
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 - 11:05	Keynote 01: Circular Economy Myth Busting - A Shared Understanding
11:10 - 11:30	Keynote 02: Circular Economy in Bangladesh - Challenges and Opportunities
11:35 - 12:20	Panel Session 01: The Bangladesh Economy - The path towards a Circular Economy?
12:25 - 12:40	Presentation 01: Circularity Gap Report 2023

## PART 02: CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN ACTION - CROSS-INDUSTRY & SECTOR PERSPECTIVES

12:00 - 01:30	Roundtable Discussion: New Business Models to Promote Circular Fashion in Bangladesh
12:45 - 13:30	Panel Session 02: Circular Cities
13:30 - 14:10	Lunch
14:10 - 14:20	Presentation 02: Blueprint for a Circular & Sustainable Future

## PART 03: CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN APPAREL AND TEXTILE - LESSONS LEARNT AND STEPS INTO THE FUTURE

14:25 - 14:35	Keynote 03: Circular Business Models and Design for Apparel Industry in Bangladesh
14:40 - 15:25	Panel Session 03: Accelerating Circular Economy in Apparel and Textile - the Role of Policy
15:30 - 16:15	Panel Session 04: Lessons Learnt and Next Steps for Post Industrial Recycling in Bangladesh - Practical and Tangible Advice and Actions for Progress
16:20 - 16:40	Coffee Break
16:40 - 17:25	Fireside Chat: Decent Work in a Circular Economy - How to Achieve a Just Transition
17:30 - 17:40	Presentation 03: Circularity - The Journey is the Destination
17:45 - 18:00	Closing Statement



# Opening Plenary





## GUEST OF HONOR

# Md. Atiqul Islam

Mayor, Dhaka North

City Corporation.

Former President, BGMEA

## Extended Producer Responsibility

Md. Atiqul Islam said that adopting a circular economy requires collaboration among different sectors. He stressed the importance of collaboration between brands, the government, and other stakeholders. The mayor especially prioritized implementing Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies and frameworks as a key step towards enabling circularity.

## Waste to Energy

He said Dhaka North City Corporation has set up a waste-to-energy project for the first time in Bangladesh's history. The project, situated at Amin Bazar, is a 42.5MW biopower project expected to be commissioned in 2024. Household waste will be used as feedstock to fuel the plant. The power generated from the project will be sold to the Bangladesh Power Development Board under a power purchase agreement for 25 years. The project will not only ensure sustainable waste management for the DNCC (Dhaka North City Corporation), but it will also address the issue of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



We have huge pre-consumer waste. So how can we use these resources for making reusable products using the latest technology to learn the latest experience of the circular economy? Different countries have different circular solutions to save resources and the environment. Working together, we can make this circular economy viable.



## GUEST OF HONOR

# Saber Hossain Chowdhury, MP

Special Envoy to the Honorable Prime Minister of  
Bangladesh Environment & Climate Change

Mr. Saber Hussain said, the private sector is at the forefront of the game when it comes to sustainable development goals. From a policy perspective Bangladesh's economy is looking to shift from linear to circular economy. So, the traditional model of take, make and waste needs to be avoided. Bangladesh has a 3R strategy that is Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, I would put one "R" at beginnings and "R" at the end. First "R" for Refuse, which is the place where consumers step in and the last R Repurposing.

Our Honorable Prime Minister has a clear vision for Bangladesh to be a global leader in climate action. The world is facing an existential crisis due to climate change as well as pollution and there are many responses to that transition to a circular economy is one of the effective responses we can adopt.

Bangladesh's textile industry is not only important for the economy but also for many social indicators especially gender development. Globally the fast fashion industry is emerging and that opens an opportunity for countries like us to create employment. But business as usual the environmental impact of fast fashion is detrimental; emissions would grow by 50% between now and 2050. Not only that to secure our position and reach our strategic growth vision we need other natural resources like water, natural resources, impact on pollution on the environment etc. So, besides economic growth there will be some negative externalities in terms of the environment. So, investing in sustainability is crucial for our resilient growth.



If you sell something for \$10? Maybe we get 1.7 dollars. What can we do to continue to innovate, and how can we continue to invest in sustainability? Bangladesh wants to be an aspirational role model for sustainability. But what is the premium that the textile industry of Bangladesh is expecting to get by making that switch to sustainability?

## Call to Action:

1. No plastic, followed by less plastic, better plastic, and recycling.
2. We must use 60% recyclable materials.
3. The industry should reach out to the government with specific demand of policy support they need to switch to circular economy.
4. Global solidarity and partnership.



## GUEST OF HONOR

# H.E. Anne van Leeuwen

Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom  
of the Netherlands to Bangladesh

H.E. Anne van Leeuwen said Bangladesh has been graduating into a middle-income country, which has some major implications for the RMG sector and the economy at large. Bangladesh has proven Henry Kissinger wrong and is now a middle-income country, thanks to the inexhaustible energy and enterprising spirit of the people of Bangladesh.

He shed light on a paper of Mrs. Olivia Snider (Special Reporter, UN Secretary of Poverty & Human Rights). Reiterating the three conclusion he said:

- There is ample room for Bangladeshi RMG suppliers to charge higher prices to their clients, and to increase wages even more significantly, but only if buyers are held responsible.
- To ensure due diligence requirements are effectively monitored, brands should publish the names and other details of their supplier factories and request information about their sub-contractors.
- To ensure just and fair conditions of work for today's workers, buyers must ask/change higher prices and guarantee the right to a living wage and favorable working conditions.
- To support the RMG sector, increasing the minimum wage and implementing a more comprehensive wage policy is needed, rather than racing to the bottom on labor costs. Bangladesh can move away from its two-way trap. But overall improvement is achievable through incentives and a regulatory framework.



To be a developed country by 2041 requires a sustainable development policy. Congratulations on the job we have done together as brands, factories, government organizations, and buyers to see the wonderful journey Bangladesh has taken in the past 50 years. Looking at it prospectively.

## Call to Action:

1. To support the industry, the potential areas of collaboration include environmental sustainability – circular fashion, recycling, and energy efficiency.
2. Often graduation and development thresholds are perceived as threats to opportunity in line with the importance of GSP standards. It would be better for Bangladesh to meet this standard and get further as a middle-income country.



## GUEST OF HONOR

# Edimon Ginting

Country Director,  
Bangladesh Resident Mission,  
South Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

Edimon Ginting, the Country Director of the Asian Development Bank in Bangladesh, emphasized on the Bangladeshi economy. Over the last 15 years, Bangladesh has been growing faster than many developing countries and is on its way to becoming a middle-income country. By 2026, the country hopes to achieve upper-middle-income status. When a country experiences growth, it generates both a success story and a waste problem. The ready-made garment (RMG) sector is the fastest-growing industry in the country but also produces a significant amount of waste. It is time to reconsider the growth model, as the future for Bangladesh and other Asian countries may not be as promising if the current approach continues. The country's progress indicates that it has been prioritizing growth over environmental cleanliness, which is an expensive strategy. Bangladesh, as a leader in the garment industry, possesses the technology to address this issue. Consequently, there is no need for Bangladesh to delay addressing environmental concerns. The current costly growth strategy, coupled with the impacts of climate change and plastic pollution, will affect the consequences of this unsustainable growth model. Additionally, it poses health hazards, and the long-term costs will be substantial.

## Call to Action:

1. Asian Development Bank is moving to climate change-based banking so does other banks so cleaner production need to be mainstream of business.
2. Energy transition, how to make the production process of the factory cleaner.
3. Transition of linear to circular
4. Road map for switch to circularity



1. The Asian Development Bank is shifting towards climate-conscious banking, and many other financial institutions are following suit. It's high time for businesses to make cleaner production a fundamental part of their operations.
2. To take the lead in transitioning to cleaner production processes by adopting sustainable energy solutions and innovative technologies
3. Rethinking how we use resources to embrace circular economy
4. To craft a well-defined roadmap that outlines the steps and milestones for transitioning to a sustainable, circular economy.



## GUEST OF HONOR

# Dr. Bernd Spanier

Deputy Head of Delegation,  
Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

Dr Bernd Spanier, Deputy Head of Delegation, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh said, the EU pioneered circular economy, and the concept became mainstream since 2015, eight years ago, and it's growing and growing. Firstly, Bangladesh is hungry for raw materials. Secondly, it's one of the largest producers of ready-made garments in the world, which makes it also one of the largest producers of garment waste. To make the foothold strong in the global value chain Bangladesh must do more with less and it is in the DNA of Bangladesh. Bangladesh have witnessed a growth of 8-9 % in the past 10 years. To make even more with less, Bangladesh needs to invest more in a circular economy.

Global economy must decouple economic growth from resource consumption and circular economy is an avenue to do so. The EU is investing more in circularity, almost 1% of our GDP invested in the recycled-related industry. EU wants to help Bangladesh do the same by partnering up.



## Call to Action:

1. Circular Economy should be driven by green and renewable energy.
2. Bangladesh having the largest amount of pre consumer waste and needs investment, knowledge and collaboration from EU.



1. To drive the circular economy with renewable energy, ensuring a sustainable and eco-friendly future.
2. To seek investment, knowledge and collaboration from EU and other partners and improve pre-consumer wastage issue.



## GUEST OF HONOR

# Leyla Ertur

Head of Sustainability,  
H&M Group

Leyla Ertur, Head of Sustainability at H&M Group, emphasized that H&M has been dedicated to sustainability for the past three decades, witnessing a remarkable transformation in the process. The sustainability landscape has evolved significantly since the early '90s, and H&M has been actively involved in supporting circularity and climate initiatives on multiple fronts. It has been working diligently to enhance material sustainability, focusing on innovations for low-impact materials and promoting processes that reduce resource intensity.

H&M has a strategic goal of ensuring that 20% of their materials come from recycled sources by 2025, with a long-term aspiration of sourcing 100% of materials from recycled or sustainable origins. While H&M believes they will achieve their 2025 target, they acknowledge that the journey doesn't end there.

The global apparel industry is on the brink of a profound transformation, and the most crucial aspect of this change is our mindset. By establishing climate and circularity targets, H&M aims not only to meet growth objectives but also to reduce emissions by 25-26% and decouple growth from resource consumption. To transform fashion culture and address the fashion industry's most pressing challenges, everyone must expedite the shift toward circularity. The remarkable transformation occurring in Bangladesh's textile industry is having a profound impact on the approach to today's work.



We need to join forces to build a circular fashion ecosystem, and Bangladesh is unique as the country with the world's largest share of pre-consumer textile waste readily available for recycling. Bangladesh has a great potential to attract investments from local and foreign investors to scale up the production of high-value recycled fibers from pre-consumer waste.

## Call to Action:

1. **Legislation:** Bangladesh is the world's largest cotton waste (Pre-consumer waste) producing country. It is a great opportunity to reach out a new chapter in Bangladesh. Legislation to ensure the circular economy will transform Bangladesh's textile industry.
2. **Low-impact Materials:** Scaling up sustainable materials resulted in the biggest opportunity.
3. **Renewable Energy:** Working directly with the suppliers to transform the energy grids through direct investments.
4. **Collaboration:** Working on emissions reduction with the value chain partners to achieve greater goals.





## KEYNOTE 01

# Circular Economy Myth Busting - A Shared Understanding

## Kim Poldner

Professor, Circular Business,  
The Hague University of Applied Sciences

Dr. Kim Poldner's keynote delved into clarifying misconceptions about the circular economy, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding. She introduced Bill Sharp's three-horizon model, illustrating the shift from linear to circular economies. A circular economy goes beyond recycling, involving diverse strategies like business model innovation, supply chain revamping, and advanced waste handling technology. Material innovation, resource utilization, and positive ecological impact are crucial in minimizing environmental footprint. Despite the appeal of quick returns, a long-term perspective is essential, considering future generations. Driven by consumer awareness and technology, circular economy's potential lies in innovations like mechanical and chemical recycling, bio-based textiles, and regenerative agriculture, demanding a holistic inner transformation.



The presentation highlighted the multifaceted nature of the circular economy, dispelling myths and emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach involving various strategies, consumer awareness, technological advancements, and a long-term vision for a sustainable future.





## KEYNOTE 02

# Circular Economy in Bangladesh - Challenges and Opportunities

## Riaz Hamidullah

Ambassador,  
Embassy of Bangladesh to the Netherlands

During Ambassador M. Riaz Hamidullah's presentation on the circular economy in Bangladesh, he emphasized that circularity is not just a trend but a means of achieving sustainability and decarbonization. He highlighted the opportunities and challenges faced by Bangladesh as it progresses towards becoming a middle-income country and stressed the importance of embracing circular practices for competitiveness and innovation. He discussed initiatives to make water circular in manufacturing and research on using abundant resources like maize plant, jackfruit, pineapple, and banana for transformational industry change. The fundamental factors for sustainability transformation, such as risk-taking and moving out of comfort zones, were underscored. The presentation also touched on issues like e-waste, cotton waste utilization, technology adoption, energy transition, maritime shipping changes, and the shift towards circularity in the agricultural food sector. The key takeaway is that circularity is not just a fashion statement, but a shared responsibility involving attitude shifts, innovation, and adaptability for a sustainable future.



Let's begin with sustainability. However, it's important to understand that circularity is not just a passing trend; it's a fundamental concept, as is decarbonization. These three principles are essential for the transformation towards sustainability: a willingness to take risks, an appetite for pushing beyond our comfort zones. We must prioritize these principles and delve into them further.



# 01

# PLENARY SESSION

The Bangladesh Economy- The  
Path Towards A Circular Economy



PLENARY SESSION 01

# The Bangladesh Economy- The Path Towards A Circular Economy



**MODERATOR**

**Riaz Hamidullah**

Ambassador,  
Embassy of Bangladesh to the Netherlands

- 1. Zaved Akhtar**  
CEO and Managing Director,  
Unilever Bangladesh Limited
- 2. Ariful Hoque**  
Director,  
Bangladesh Investment Development Authority
- 3. Ziaur Rahman**  
Regional Country Manager Production  
(Bangladesh, Pakistan and Ethiopia), H&M
- 4. Iqbal Chowdhury**  
CEO,  
LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited



## PLENARY SESSION 01

# Highlights

## Zaved Akhtar

CEO and Managing Director,  
Unilever Bangladesh Limited

Mr. Akhtar shed light on the initiatives being taken by UNILEVER Bangladesh to reduce the impact of plastic on the natural environment. UNILEVER's strategy focuses on transitioning from using less plastic to better plastic, ultimately aiming for a plastic-free approach. Their goal is to ensure that plastic is used effectively and doesn't end up in landfills. He mentioned UNILEVER's commitment to reducing virgin plastic consumption by 50% and increasing the utilization of post-consumer recycled plastic by 25%. This effort not only alleviates the environmental burden of plastic but also keeps materials in circulation.

Furthermore, UNILEVER is in the process of redesigning their bottles to reduce plastic consumption by one third and ultimately eliminate the use of plastic altogether. This shift represents the adoption of circular economy principles in their business practices.

The main challenge lies in addressing single-use and multi-layer plastic. Mr. Akhtar proposed a solution: actively collecting single-use plastics that enter the environment and incentivizing individuals to participate in plastic reclamation. By doing so, the aim is to gather more plastic than what is released into the environment. As an organization, their aspiration is to achieve a net reduction in plastic consumption, making a positive environmental impact.

## Ariful Hoque

Director, Bangladesh Investment  
Development Authority

Mr. Hoque, Director of BIDA, envisions BIDA as a key player in Bangladesh's economic transformation. BIDA enthusiastically supports the government's policies in alignment with Vision 2041. He emphasizes that while circularity is not a new concept for Bangladesh, it requires some reorientation to transition from a linear to a circular model. Mr. Hoque highlights the significance of specific policy support to facilitate the adoption of a circular economy in Bangladesh, including:

- **Tailored Incentives:** To promote circularity, there's a need for sector-specific incentives, rather than one-size-fits-all programs. It's essential to consider the return on investment, which presents a challenge
- **Adopting Circularity in Production:** Integrating circularity into the production process is a novel concept in our system, but it is vital for the industry's sustainability. Government policy support is crucial in this regard.

Mr. Hoque stresses that the focus is currently on experimenting rather than seeking immediate solutions. Across Asia, various experiments are taking place, and it's essential to be open to the possibility of failures. The existing incentives are not well-suited to promote a circular economy, which is the core issue. Collaboration with organizations such as BGMEA, FBCCI, and other apex trade bodies is underway to understand the specific incentive requirements for driving circularity.

## Iqbal Chowdhury

CEO,  
LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Limited

Mr. Chowdhury highlighted Holcim's pioneering efforts in co-processing waste materials, and its decades-long dedication to developing innovative, tailor-made industrial and municipal waste management solutions for a diverse clientele. With sustainability as the cornerstone of its strategy, Lafarge Holcim Bangladesh aspires to become a net-zero company. The company is also championing the circular economy through its Geocycle recycling initiative, aiming to achieve more with fewer resources.

Lafarge is persistently engaged in exploring alternative and sustainable materials, with the goal of reusing construction demolition waste in clinker manufacturing. They have established an exclusive facility in Bangladesh to manage industrial waste for the clinker manufacturing process. In terms of circularity, achieving similar cement strength with a 30% reduction in CO2 emissions is a remarkable accomplishment.

Decarbonization and circularity are key focuses. Numerous initiatives are in progress to decarbonize the cement industry. Collaboration is underway with manufacturers who are seeking solutions for recycling waste materials.

## Ziaur Rahman

Regional Country Manager Production  
(Bangladesh, Pakistan and Ethiopia), H&M

Mr. Rahman proudly stresses H&M's operation in Bangladesh for the past three decades, how it stands as one of its major sourcing destinations. Thus, if H&M wishes to instigate change, it must initiate this transformation here, in Bangladesh, as this is where our core operations are located.

His remarks on circularity highlighted H&M's ambitious objective to ensure 100% sustainable materials by 2030. However, it should be noted that the current policy environment in Bangladesh does not favor manufacturers, especially in terms of post-consumer waste recycling.

H&M has already commenced collaborative efforts with its suppliers in Bangladesh, focusing on enhancing their capacity and investments. Their commitment extends beyond placing orders, ensuring that their suppliers benefit from these investments. As a result, they do not just refer to their suppliers as such but rather as partners.

Furthermore, he emphasized that circularity presents a strong business case and has the potential to open new avenues for manufacturers and, in turn, contribute to the broader economy of Bangladesh.



# 02 PLENARY SESSION

## Circular Cities



PLENARY SESSION 02

# Circular Cities



**MODERATOR**

**Morten Lehmann**

Co-founder and CEO,  
Tailwind

- 1. Kristin Strandberg**  
Cities Strategist,  
Circle Economy
- 2. Engr. Taqsem A. Khan**  
Managing Director and CEO,  
Dhaka Wasa, Bangladesh
- 3. Ashraful Islam**  
Town Planner,  
Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk)
- 4. Prof. Akter Mahmud**  
Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning,  
Jahangirnagar University
- 5. Abdul Hamid**  
Director General, Department of Environment,  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change



## PLENARY SESSION 02

# Highlights

## Kristin Strandberg

Cities Strategist,  
Circle Economy

Kristin Strandberg emphasized the role of circular economy in cities, highlighting that 39% of Bangladesh's population lives in urban areas, with a 3% annual increase. She defined circular cities as systems where the value of infrastructure, materials, and nutrients is maintained for as long as possible, minimizing resource extraction. The potential benefits of circular cities include economic, social, and environmental resilience, job creation, reduced emissions, and enhanced competitiveness. She presented the Circular City Actions Framework, which encompasses five R strategies: Rethink, Regenerate, Reduce, Reuse, and Recover. Strandberg emphasized the importance of stakeholder collaboration and shifting from a linear "take, make, waste" model to circular systems.

## Engr. Taqsem A. Khan

Managing Director and CEO,  
Dhaka Wasa, Bangladesh

Taqsem A. Khan shared Dhaka WASA's vision for a sustainable water management system and achievements in reducing water consumption and loss. He mentioned circular water and smart water initiatives to address water scarcity and pollution.

Khan emphasized a shift towards a climate-resilient water management system, with a focus on reusability and circularity. He highlighted the establishment of treatment plants for decarbonization and the need for mindset changes to achieve a sustainable water future.

## Ashrafal Islam

Town Planner,  
Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk)

Ashrafal Islam discussed the challenges faced by Dhaka, including solid waste management, traffic congestion, climate change, and rural migration. He highlighted efforts to promote sustainable development, including the extension of Dhaka through Purbachal New Town and the use of non-fired bricks. Islam emphasized promoting green building technology and comprehensive trip generation models for transportation planning. He stressed the need for green spaces and incentives for green construction practices to achieve circularity in city planning.

## Prof. Akter Mahmud

Professor, Department of Urban and  
Regional Planning, Jahangirnagar University

Professor Akter Mahmud, from Jahangirnagar University, discussed the extensive potential for circular economies in Bangladesh's urban areas during his speech. He emphasized the need for transformative changes in key sectors, including construction, water management, and transportation, to address environmental challenges. He stressed the importance of innovative solutions, research, and collaboration. To make circular economies a reality, he called for government incentives and entrepreneurial engagement. Professor Mahmud's insights offer a roadmap for a sustainable urban future in Bangladesh.

## Abdul Hamid

Director General, Department of  
Environment, Ministry of Environment,  
Forest and Climate Change

Abdul Hamid discussed the focus on waste management and plastic pollution reduction in Dhaka. He mentioned the Extended Producer Responsibility guideline and highlighted the need for waste to be seen as a resource for other sectors.

Hamid discussed the green credit scheme by Bangladesh Bank and efforts to promote environmentally sustainable growth. He also emphasized zero-liquid discharge mechanisms for water pollution reduction and the use of blocks instead of burnt bricks for air pollution reduction.



# Roundtable Discussion

## New Business Models To Promote Circular Fashion in Bangladesh





## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

# Key Takeways

## 1. Towards Circular Textile:

Our mission is to demonstrate the viability of a local circular and socially responsible textile value chain. In 2023, our objective is to establish state-of-the-art collection and sorting facilities that are fully compliant and economically sustainable. In the longer term, we aim to develop the necessary infrastructure to initiate textile waste recycling from the ground up and bring relevant technologies to Bangladesh.

## 2. Closing the Loop on Textile Waste: Building a Circular Value Chain from the Bottom Up

1. Objective 2023: Prove a circular and transparent waste stream is possible in Bangladesh.
2. Build partnerships with association, legislators, manufacturers, waste handlers, recyclers, and technology providers building a business viable state of art and compliant collection and sorting centers in Bangladesh.
3. Collect, sort and supply the waste ensuring full traceability, transparency and higher value solution.
4. Work with local recyclers and facilitate the entry solutions with latest technology to Bangladesh.
5. Engage and collaborate with technology providers for all aspects of recycling.
6. Stimulate policy change and legislation in Bangladesh to support the transition to a circular textile value chain.

## 3. Smart Bangladesh & Circular Economy

The implementation of a circular economy is crucial for creating a smart Bangladesh. By transitioning from a linear economy to a circular one, we can minimize waste generation and maximize resource efficiency. Additionally, embracing circularity will enable Bangladesh to reduce its dependence on imports and foster local innovation and entrepreneurship.

A collaborative initiative, driven by inclusion, pilots projects and shares insights to influence policy.

### Next Steps:

1. Developed detailed business models, including value chain examples and relevant figures.
2. Conducted information gathering and established networks with technology providers, recyclers, and traceability experts to estimate waste volume and types available.
3. Fostered collaboration with current waste handlers.
4. Customized solutions to align with specific requirements and crafted a comprehensive financial proposal.
5. Engaged in one-on-one discussions.
6. Integration of manufacturers, aggregators, informal actors, state-of-the-art sorting centers, and recyclers.

### Future Perspectives & Recommendations:

1. Continued research and development of innovative pre-consumer waste recycling techniques.
2. Collaboration with other brands and industries for a collective impact on recycling.





## PRESENTATION 01

## Circularity Gap Report 2023

### Ola Bąkowska

Strategist Circular Textiles and Apparel, Circle Economy

Ola Bąkowska, a strategist from Circle Economy, discussed the circularity strategy for textiles and the circular economy. She highlighted the transition from the Circularity Gap Report to the Circularity Value Chains Project, focusing on accelerating practical circularity across industries. Ola emphasized that circularity is a means to create a prosperous and sustainable planet, not just an end goal. The report underscores that circularity goes beyond recycling and necessitates a holistic approach involving slowing down consumption, narrowing focus, and regenerating the system. The report presents 16 impactful strategies that can contribute to maintaining planetary boundaries, addressing sectors like agriculture, textiles, cities, and construction. Ola stressed the importance of country-specific solutions, innovation, collaboration, and the urgency of adapting to limited resources. In Bangladesh, pilot projects in the textile industry are being led by UNIDO, despite challenges in metrics and data evaluation. She concluded by emphasizing the need for stakeholders to communicate effectively, highlighting existing effective practices, and fostering collaboration and change.

Fulfilling our societal needs by using 70% of materials, limiting carbon dioxide, and finding a circular way to use water in agriculture, textiles, cities and the construction sector is necessary. Each country needs a different solution to find the most effective one. Innovations and collaborations are essential. It is always necessary to find a common language, common agenda and ensure all parties try to work as efficiently as possible.

## PRESENTATION 02

## Blueprint For A Circular & Sustainable Future

### Buddhi Paranamana

Director, Sustainability & Innovation PDS Limited

Mr. Buddhi Paranamana, Director of Sustainable Innovation at PDS Limited, discussed the concept of a replicable blueprint for achieving sustainability in the design, sourcing, and manufacturing industry.

He highlighted the circular economy framework and showcased PDS Limited's initiatives, emphasizing their \$50 million venture fund to invest in startups offering sustainable supply chain solutions. Paranamana underscored the importance of collaboration and showcased examples of startups focusing on conscious buying, repair, reuse, resell, and innovative recycling methods. He encouraged audience members to adopt the blueprint and work collectively towards building a circular economy for a more sustainable future.



The presentation highlighted the importance of developing a blueprint for circularity, investing in sustainable startups, showcasing examples of successful circular solutions, and advocating for collaboration as a vital catalyst for realizing a circular and sustainable future.





## KEYNOTE 03

# Circular Business Models and Design for the Apparel Industry in Bangladesh

## Stephanie Schuitemaker

Head of Communication and Member,  
Holland Circular Hotspot

Ms. Stephanie Schuitemaker, Head of Communication at Holland Circular Hotspot, delivered a keynote speech on "Circular Business Models and Design for the Apparel Industry in Bangladesh."

She introduced Holland Circular Hotspot's role in promoting international collaboration for the circular economy and highlighted the Netherlands' ambitious circular goals. Schuitemaker discussed the potential challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh in adopting circular economy practices, addressing shifts in skills and job markets.

She emphasized that adapting to new economic models and societal transitions is key to remaining competitive. She outlined European developments, such as stricter design norms and extended producer responsibility, that will impact the textile industry. Schuitemaker stressed the significance of transitioning from mass production to quality items and embracing circular economy practices to save costs and stay relevant.

She identified Bangladesh's current phase of development as a prime opportunity for radical change towards a circular economy, emphasizing initiatives like scaling up recycling and introducing circular design. She encouraged Bangladesh to embrace circular principles, adapt global developments, collaborate with front runners, and anticipate changing markets to secure a sustainable future.



The presentation highlighted the importance of adaptive capacity, embracing circular design, staying informed about international developments, and engaging in collaborative learning to capitalize on the business opportunities presented by the circular economy in the apparel industry.



# 03 PLENARY SESSION

Accelerating Circular Economy  
In Apparel And Textile – The Role of Policy



PLENARY SESSION 03

# Accelerating Circular Economy In Apparel And Textile – The Role of Policy



**MODERATOR**

**Micke Magnusson**

Entrepreneur-In-Residence and  
Agent For Impact, Enviu

- 1. Zaki Uz Zaman**  
Country Representative, The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- 2. Abdur Rahim Khan**  
Additional Secretary, Ministry Of Commerce,  
Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
- 3. Rabbi Faisal**  
Stakeholder Engagement & Public Affairs Manager,  
H&M Group
- 4. Ahmed Shihab Zaman**  
National Platform Liaison, Partnering For Green Growth  
& The Global Goals 2030 (P4G)
- 5. Omar Gias**  
Director, Strategic Engagement,  
Bangladesh Apparel Exchange



## PLENARY SESSION 03

# Highlights

## Zaki Uz Zaman

Country Representative, The United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Representing the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Mr. Zaman discussed the organization's role in promoting collaborations and partnerships for sustainable industrial development. He mentioned a flagship project focused on circular economy valuation, with pilots in collaboration with H&M and Bestseller. He highlighted the importance of establishing a platform to bring together stakeholders from various sectors and discussed the potential benefits of a circularity platform in Bangladesh, both in terms of industry development and environmental sustainability.

## Abdur Rahim Khan

Additional Secretary, Ministry Of Commerce, Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh

Abdur Rahim Khan, an Additional Secretary from the Ministry of Commerce, addressed the importance of policy support for promoting circularity in the textile sector. He mentioned ongoing efforts to introduce incentives and policies to facilitate circular practices, such as creating a circular economy guideline for the apparel sector. Abdur

Rahim Khan emphasized the need to transform informal textile waste practices into formal, circular businesses in Bangladesh.

## Rabbi Faisal

Stakeholder Engagement & Public Affairs Manager, H&M Group

Faisal talked about H&M Group's commitment to circularity and sustainability in the apparel industry. He mentioned their recent collaborations with the Bangladesh government, manufacturers and exporters associations, and UNDP. Faisal emphasized the importance of collaboration among stakeholders, including the government, to address the global challenges of circularity. He highlighted the necessity of supporting advanced recycling technologies and fostering a formal supply chain for textile waste to ensure successful circular business models.

## Omar Gias

Director, Strategic Engagement Bangladesh Apparel Exchange

Omar discussed the "Closing the Loop of Textile Waste in Bangladesh" project initiated by the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE). He mentioned the project's goals of advocating for policy support and developing innovative business models. Omar emphasized the potential benefits of forming a collaborative platform of key stakeholders, such as brands, manufacturers, and government authorities, to accelerate the adoption of circular practices in Bangladesh's textile industry.

## Ahmed Shihab Zaman

National Platform Liaison, Partnering For Green Growth and The Global Goals 2030 (P4G)

Mr. Zahman discussed a partnership involving P4G (Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030) in Bangladesh. He mentioned that the project aims to create a value chain for high-quality textile waste, introducing modern recycling technology to convert waste into virgin fiber. The partnership also intends to generate employment opportunities while preventing environmental pollution caused by textile waste.





# 04 PLENARY SESSION

Lessons Learnt and Next Steps for Post Industrial Recycling in Bangladesh -  
Practical and Tangible Advice and Actions for Progress



PLENARY SESSION 04

# Lessons Learnt and Next Steps for Post Industrial Recycling in Bangladesh - Practical and Tangible Advice and Actions for Progress



**MODERATOR**

**Dr. Michael Klode**

Project Manager,  
GIZ Bangladesh

- 1. Gagan Bansal**  
Head of Material Innovation and Strategy,  
H&M Group
- 2. Matin Abdullah**  
Professor,  
Brac University
- 3. Stephanie Schuitemaker**  
Head of Communication,  
Holland Circular Hotspot
- 4. Mumit Hasan**  
Director, Business & Operations,  
Bangladesh Reverse Resources



## PLENARY SESSION 04

# Highlights

## Gagan Bansal

Head of Material Innovation and Strategy, H&M Group

Gagan Bansal highlighted H&M Group's focus on circularity and its engagement in various projects aimed at enhancing material recycling. She discussed technological advancements in recycling, including mechanical and chemical recycling processes. Bansal noted the limitations of mechanical recycling in terms of fiber length and durability.

She also mentioned technologies that address recycling of blends and polyester. She stressed the importance of collaboration among supply chain partners to drive innovation and achieve circularity.

## Matin Abdullah

Professor,  
Brac University

Matin Abdullah discussed a project initiated by BRAC University and Copenhagen Business School to map post-industrial waste flows in Bangladesh and India. The project aimed to identify the current waste flows, including collection, sorting, storage, and export. He highlighted the presence of upcycling and recycling clusters in Bangladesh, such as those focused on making yarn from waste materials.

Abdullah emphasized the importance of considering existing informal sector livelihoods when implementing policies for circularity.

## Stephanie Schuitemaker

Head of Communication,  
Holland Circular Hotspot

Stephanie Schuitemaker discussed the importance of involving the informal sector in waste management solutions and highlighted examples from Latin America and Africa where efforts are being made to include the informal sector in formal waste management systems.

She emphasized the need for ambitious goals beyond recycling and waste management, focusing on system changes and innovative business models that contribute to circular economy practices.

## Mumit Hasan

Director, Business & Operations,  
Bangladesh Reverse Resources

Mumit Hasan explained the role of Reverse Resources as a software-as-a-service platform for providing traceability in the reverse supply chain. Reverse Resources aims to support stakeholders involved in the supply chain, such as factories, recyclers, and brands, by offering tools that facilitate waste segregation and traceability.

He discussed the challenges of implementing waste segregation in factories and emphasized the need for mindset shifts and change management to achieve circularity.





## PRESENTATION 03

## Circularity - The Journey is the Destination

### Werner Lange

Coordinator, GIZ Textile Cluster Bangladesh

In the final presentation by Mr. Werner Lange, Coordinator of GIZ Textile Cluster Bangladesh, the topic "Explaining Circularity, the Journey is the Destination" was addressed. Mr. Lange acknowledged the room's sparse attendance and humorously reflected on the potential of an entirely empty room by the end of his talk. He emphasized that much had already been discussed throughout the day, and his contribution would offer a distinct perspective from development cooperation. He highlighted the need to connect the dots within the concept of circularity. Drawing on the analogy of polka dots, he underlined the challenge of aligning various aspects. He discussed the shift from a linear model to a circular economy, stressing the importance of avoiding waste and pollution and its implications for industries like fast fashion. Mr. Lange urged industries to accept potential disruptions and invest in sustainable practices. He touched on the commitment of the Bangladesh government to circularity and how it aligns with formal employment and sustainability goals. Mr. Lange concluded with optimism, emphasizing the importance of a focused approach, dedicated stakeholders, and the belief that the journey, while uncertain in its duration, will eventually lead to its destination.

Mr. Lange underlined the necessity of commitment, alignment with regulations, viable business cases, and comprehensive supply chain engagement for a successful transition to a circular economy. He highlighted the role of regulators, the potential of waste-to-energy solutions, and the importance of collaboration among dedicated stakeholders in driving this transformative change.

## ONLINE PRESENTATION

## Coming into Action - How The Government Can Play Their Role

### Arnoud Passenier

Strategic International Advisor on Circular Economy, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Netherlands

In his online presentation, Mr. Arnoud Passenier, Strategic International Advisor on Circular Economy at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management Netherlands, emphasized the need for action in the circular economy rather than just discussion. He highlighted the importance of courage, collaboration, and transparency in achieving sustainable solutions for climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Passenier discussed the significant role of governments as partners in promoting circularity and mentioned regulatory measures and market incentives like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems to encourage brands and retailers to manage waste responsibly. He stressed the value of convening power, networks, and partnerships to drive innovation and change along the value chain. Passenier also mentioned the Dutch government's collaboration with stakeholders, signing an MOU to promote the use of recycled materials in garments, and called for international cooperation to create a global movement towards circularity. He concluded by encouraging others to challenge their governments to join the circular economy movement.

Mr. Passenier underscored the importance of government involvement as a partner in advancing the circular economy. He encouraged regulatory actions, incentives, networking, and challenging industry standards, all while promoting a just transition and international collaboration to create a sustainable and circular future.



## FIRE SIDE CHAT

# Decent Work In A Circular Economy - How To Achieve A Just Transition



## MODERATOR

## Sandra Gonza

Strategy and Business Impact Consultant, Tailwind

Sandra Gonza, a Strategy and Business Impact Consultant at Tailwind, took on the role of the moderator for the session. Her main responsibility was to facilitate the conversation and guide the discussion towards exploring the social dimension of transitioning to a circular economy. She opened the session by highlighting that while the benefits of circularity in terms of the environment and resource management had been discussed throughout the day, the social aspect had not received as much attention. She set the tone by framing the session's focus on "decent work" within the broader context of circular economy transition and the concept of a "just transition."

## Naureen Chowdhury

Head Of Labour,  
Rights Laudes Foundation

Naureen Chowdhury, the Head of Labor Rights Programme at Laudes Foundation, provided insightful perspectives on the concept of a "just transition" and its relationship to the circular economy. She emphasized that the term "just transition" should be viewed as a broader transition for impacted communities, defined by their needs and voices. Her view was that this transition, especially in the face of climate impacts and growing inequalities, should be centered around ensuring dignity, fairness, and equity. Naureen stressed the importance of preserving labor rights, worker agency, fair compensation, safety, and the enhancement of human dignity in new jobs that emerge within the circular economy. She advocated for basing the definition of the jobs of tomorrow on the input of impacted communities and workers on the ground.

Her recommendations included empowering the voices of impacted communities, ensuring the protection of fundamental labor rights, embracing technology, and proactively forecasting the skill demands of future jobs.

## Apoorva Shankar

Senior Labour Market Consultant,  
Circular Jobs Initiative, Circle Economy

Apoorva Shankar, the Senior Labor Market Consultant for the Circular Jobs Initiative within the Circular Economy, shared insights from Circle Economy's approach to the circular economy and just transition. Apoorva argued that a just transition should not only consider environmental and economic factors but should place people at its core. She advocated for a balanced integration of social, environmental, and ecological considerations, reflecting a triple bottom line approach. Apoorva underscored the importance of reimagining economic practices within the limits of the planet's resources, redistributing wealth and power, and creating jobs that are not only sustainable but also equitable.

She introduced Circle Economy's framework for categorizing circular jobs into different types and highlighted the significance of addressing informality within the circular economy. Apoorva's recommendations included upskilling workers for changing job profiles and ensuring the involvement of diverse stakeholders in shaping the circular transition.



## CLOSING REMARKS

# Summit Key Takeways & Next Steps

## Morten Lehmann

Co-founder and CEO,  
Tailwind

Morten Lehman, the Co-founder & CEO of Tailwind, presented the concluding remarks for the summit. Acknowledging the importance of translating circularity into local realities, Lehman emphasized that circularity is not a new concept but needs to be tailored to Bangladesh's context. He underscored the need for Bangladesh to take ownership of circularity for economic security and niche development. He emphasized collaboration among all stakeholders and urged businesses to act proactively even in the absence of incentives. He noted that circularity isn't just about the environment but also about generating jobs and upskilling the workforce. Lehman highlighted the need to create livable cities and a conducive business environment amidst climate change challenges. He praised the efforts of the Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) team and partners in organizing the event and underscored BAE's ongoing commitment to promoting the circular economy in Bangladesh. Lehman expressed gratitude to all contributors, speakers, and participants, and concluded by announcing the end of the summit.

Martin Lehman highlighted the need for Bangladesh to embrace circularity as an economic driver. He stressed collaboration among stakeholders, immediate action, and addressing challenges such as job creation and climate change. He believes that the continued engagement in the journey towards a circular economy is crucial to realizing sustainable growth and prosperity for Bangladesh.





# Moments





Outreach

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**12 JUNE  
2024**

Radisson Blu Water Garden,  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Bangladesh Circular Economy Summit 2024**

**FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:**

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN | FOUNDER & CEO, BANGLADESH APPAREL EXCHANGE | MUDDIN@MOSTAFIZ.ORG | +880 1730-035100

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