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BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM 2023

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BACKGROUND

A LOOMING THREAT: CLIMATE-CRISIS

BANGLADESH, WITH ITS FLAT TERRAIN AND DENSE POPULATION, FACES HEIGHTENED VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS. DESPITE CONTRIBUTING LESS THAN HALF A PERCENT OF GLOBAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, THE COUNTRY HAS ENDURED SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC LOSSES, TOTALING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS. OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES, BANGLADESH HAS WITNESSED 185 EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS LINKED TO CLIMATE CHANGE, EMPHASIZING THE URGENT NEED FOR ACTION.

The textile and apparel industry, a vital pillar of the nation's economy, confronts imminent threats. With around 4.5 million workers, notably 60% women, this sector is a linchpin of national employment. As a key economic player, it stands at the forefront of climate action, tasked with setting an example for the nation.



BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM

WORLD'S FIRST CLIMATE-FOCUSED FORUM FOR APPAREL & FASHION INDUSTRY

THE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF BANGLADESH IS INTRICATELY LINKED TO THE ABILITY OF THE GARMENT INDUSTRY TO NAVIGATE AND ADAPT TO THE CHALLENGES POSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE.

TO TACKLE THIS ISSUE HEAD-ON, THE BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM TAKES THE LEAD AS THE WORLD'S FIRST FORUM DEDICATED TO CLIMATE ISSUES IN APPAREL & FASHION.

The Forum unites leaders, influencers, and practitioners across diverse sectors—government, business, civil society, and academia—to confront the complexities of transitioning toward a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy. The essence of this collective endeavor lies in fostering shared responsibility among stakeholders. The platform serves as a crucible for transformative change, paving the way for a sustainable future.

Through the Bangladesh Climate Action Forum, we aim not only to address the challenges but also to instigate a just transition that considers the well-being of all.



FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

THE VISIONARY TAKING THE LEAD

QUITE OFTEN, I SEE THAT AT CONFERENCES WE TALK ABOUT CLIMATE ACTION CHANGES, MITIGATION, OR RESILIENCE. BUT MANUFACTURERS ARE ALWAYS MISSING FROM THE DISCUSSION.

And I'm happy that today it is happening in a manufacturing country. I believe the manufacturers should be included in the discussion about setting up the target and how we can overcome these situations.

Without the support of or including the manufacturer, the journey towards net zero is almost impossible.



“IT IS THE VERY FIRST CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT IN THE WORLD, DEDICATED TO THE FASHION INDUSTRY, AND I'M VERY PROUD THAT WE ARE HOSTING SUCH AN INCREDIBLE CONFERENCE IN BANGLADESH.

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Founder & CEO,
Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE)





AREAS OF CONCERN

CLIMATE CRISIS



DECARBONIZATION



FINANCE & JUST TRANSITION



POLICY LANDSCAPE



COLLECTIVE ACTION



BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM 2023



1ST EDITION THEME

THE BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM'S INAUGURAL EDITION MARKED A MILESTONE WITH THE THEME "DRIVING CLIMATE ACTION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, AND COLLABORATIVE FINANCING FOR A JUST TRANSITION."

Centered on the synergy of technology and innovation, the chosen theme underscores the transformative power of sustainable solutions and green job creation.

By fostering dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaborative efforts, the forum became a catalyst for concrete actions, ensuring a just transition for all and amplifying efforts to address the urgent climate crisis.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



450+ National & International Delegates

45+ World class National & International Speakers

30+ Partners & Contributors

18+ Country Representation

09 Keynotes, Presentations and Case Studies

05 Panel Sessions

**ONE
EARTH**

**ONE
CLIMATE**



OPENING & WELCOME ADDRESS





MD. SHAHRIAR ALAM, MP

Former State Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

“OUR TRUST FUND, WITH AN INVESTMENT OF AROUND 490 MILLION US DOLLARS, HAS SO FAR SUPPORTED MORE THAN 850 ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE PROJECTS IN THE VULNERABLE AREA.”

Despite Bangladesh's low carbon contribution (0.4%), it faces severe climate impacts, with losses amounting to 2.4% of GDP in 2021. Coastal submergence threatens 12–18% of areas, displacing 20 million people by 2050. MP Shahriar Alam highlighted initiatives like the Climate Change Trust Fund (\$490 million) and the Global Hub on Locally Led Adaptation. The vision includes a just transition, targeting reskilling (3.83 million), climate-resilient jobs (4.1 million), and reduced unemployment. External support is crucial.

He stressed trade collaboration for green growth, innovation, and technology. He also called for collaborative efforts between the government, private sector, and international partners for a just transition.





THIJS WOULDSTRA

Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands to Bangladesh

“THROUGH THE PACT PROGRAM THE DUTCH CONTRIBUTION HELPED THE INDUSTRY SAVE MORE THAN HALF A MILLION TONS OF GREENHOUSE GASSES, WHICH CORRESPONDS TO TAKING 900 CARS OFF THE ROAD.”

Highlighting the historical ties between Bangladesh and the Netherlands, Thijs Woudstra emphasized shared concerns about water, agriculture, and climate change in his speech.

Acknowledging Bangladesh's challenges, he noted its growing potential for foreign investment despite these obstacles. He commended the garment industry's progress towards sustainability and achieving the goal of net zero emissions, citing lead-certified green factories. He talked about the Netherlands' role in promoting sustainability in the RMG sector, with a focus on extended producer responsibility (EPR) and a plan to make at least 50% of RMGs reusable and recyclable. The Netherlands' commitment to becoming a fully circular economy by 2050 aligns with efforts in Bangladesh to transition towards circular production in the RMG sector.

He looked forward to a matured relationship with opportunities for the Dutch private sector to contribute to technological and managerial cooperation for a just transition aligned with Bangladesh's sustainable goals.



MICHAL KREJZA

Head of Development Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

“THE RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE OBVIOUSLY CANNOT BE LIMITED TO PUBLIC AUTHORITIES ALONE. IT WILL NEED COMMITMENT FROM ALL THROUGH A WHOLE OF SOCIETY APPROACH.”

Michal Krejza acknowledged Bangladesh's economic progress but highlighted its vulnerability as the seventh most susceptible country to climate change. He stressed the need for comprehensive action involving the private sector in response to this threat.

The European Union's commitment to combat climate change is emphasized, notably through the European Green Deal and substantial contributions to climate finance for developing economies. The Global Gateway strategy aims to mobilize 300 billion euros by 2027 for global challenges, including climate action. He then underscored the essential role of the private sector in climate change mitigation and adaptation. He called for increased investment in sustainable production and collaboration with universities and foreign companies. Additionally, the importance of introducing circular economy practices in the manufacturing sector, especially in the ready-made garment (RMG) industry, is emphasized. The speaker encouraged the replication and scaling up of successful examples of reuse and recycling.

Participants are urged to discuss the business's role as an enabler for the green transition, emphasizing its potential to generate ideas, initiatives, investments, and innovations for a climate-resilient and prosperous Bangladesh.



He also expressed a positive view of Bangladesh as a key partner country, recognizing the steps taken by the government, industry, and manufacturers towards sustainability. PDS sees Bangladesh as a global leader in sustainable practices, expressing confidence that its leadership will propel the entire industry forward, not just for the benefit of the country but for the world. The emphasis is on quantifiable results that can shape the future of the industry positively.

PALLAK SETH

Founder & Executive Vice Chairman,
PDS Limited

“WE SEE BANGLADESH AS ONE OF OUR KEY PARTNER COUNTRIES. WE HAVE A GLOBAL SOURCING ORGANIZATION, BUT THE STEPS THAT BANGLADESH, AS A GOVERNMENT, THE INDUSTRY, AND ALL THE MANUFACTURERS ARE TAKING ARE WORLD-LEADING.”

Centered on the synergy of technology and innovation, the chosen theme underscores the transformative power of sustainable solutions and green job creation. By fostering dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaborative efforts, the forum became a catalyst for concrete actions, ensuring a just transition for all and amplifying efforts to address the urgent climate crisis.

Pallak Seth outlined the commitment of the PDS group to the industry through the establishment of a \$50 million Venture Capital fund.

The fund is designed to focus on five key areas:

- 1. Material Science:** Emphasis on ensuring that materials used in production are sourced sustainably.
- 2. Manufacturing Technology:** A commitment to more sustainable manufacturing technologies with a focus on automation.
- 3. Traceability and Transparency in the Supply Chain:** Prioritizing visibility and openness in the supply chain.
- 4. Circularity:** A commitment to preventing products from becoming part of landfills, instead promoting a circular economy.
- 5. Fashion Tech and Retail:** Investment in technologies and innovations in the fashion and retail sector.

MOU SIGNING CEREMONY



MOU SIGNING

Between Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE) & The Good Fashion Fund (GFF)

FOLLOWING THE POWERFUL OPENING REMARKS, A PIVOTAL MOMENT UNFOLDED AT THE BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM—AN IMPACTFUL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) SIGNING BETWEEN THE BANGLADESH APPAREL EXCHANGE (BAE) AND THE GOOD FASHION FUND (GFF).

THE CEREMONY SYMBOLIZED A COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATIVE COLLABORATION. THE MOU, SIGNED BY MOSTAFIZ UDDIN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BAE, AND BOB ASSENBERG, DIRECTOR OF GFF, EXEMPLIFIES A SHARED VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE WITHIN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY.

This strategic partnership marks a crucial step toward a greener future, where innovation and environmental responsibility take center stage in shaping the landscape of Bangladesh's garment sector.

KEYNOTES

KEYNOTE 01

CLIMATE CRISIS & THE CHALLENGE FOR HUMANITY

“Rich countries in the global North caused most emissions, but the poor global South faces the worst impacts of climate change, struggling to recover or prepare for disasters due to poverty and limited development.”

Dr. Vidhura highlighted the urgent need for action on the climate crisis, pushing for a 50% reduction in emissions within a decade. He emphasized fairness in goals, called for separating responsibilities and finances, and stressed building resilience in infrastructure. Concerned about potential disruptions, especially for vulnerable groups like apparel workers, he urged collaborative efforts to address the severity of the climate crisis.



DR. VIDHURA RALAPANAWA

Executive Vice President,
Epic Group

KEYNOTE 02

DECARBONISATION

“Energy efficiency is an easy win; it increases your profitability and reduces your costs.”

Pauline Op de Beeck, Environmental Portfolio Lead for the Apparel Impact Institute, addressed the urgency of decarbonizing Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. She commended the industry's craftsmanship but highlighted the environmental burden. Pauline called for the sector to be climate champions, emphasizing the need for collective action. She introduced practical measures like energy efficiency and solar adoption, citing the institute's Climate Fashion Fund. She stressed partnerships, aligning with global goals, and announcing the Clean by Design program in Bangladesh.



PAULINE OP DE BEECK

Environmental Portfolio Lead,
Apparel Impact Institute



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Message

Panel discussion with speakers on stage and large screen displays.

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PANEL DISCUSSION 01

DECARBONISATION – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BANGLADESH RMG INDUSTRY





PAULINE OP DE BEECK

Environmental Portfolio Lead,
Apparel Impact Institute

MODERATOR

MODERATED BY PAULINE OP DE BEECK, ENVIRONMENTAL PORTFOLIO LEAD, APPAREL IMPACT INSTITUTE, THE FIRST PANEL OF THE DECARBONIZATION DISCUSSION BROUGHT TOGETHER DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BANGLADESH RMG INDUSTRY, EMPHASIZING THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE AND CHALLENGES OF TRANSITIONING TO SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES.

Akila Fernando highlighted the significant energy consumption of Bangladesh's apparel sector, emphasizing its impact on the country's overall energy portfolio.

He identified vast potential for improvement through energy recovery systems, converting waste into useful energy. Fernando emphasized the overlooked power of energy efficiency, advocating for newer technologies and a technology-driven approach. He suggested rooftop solar panels as a viable solution for energy independence and reaching decarbonization goals. Fernando reflected on the changing perception of environmental impact in manufacturing, observing that the era of affordable renewable energy and efficiency improvements presents no excuses for inaction.



AKILA FERNANDO

Assistant Vice President, Engineering, Epic Group



AMER SALIM

Director, Aurum Sweater Ltd. &
Knit Asia Ltd.

Amer Salim, as a manufacturer and entrepreneur, expressed commitment to sustainability and decarbonization in the RMG industry. He identified key challenges, including access to funds, a scarcity of technical expertise, and land limitations.

Salim discussed his factory's initiatives like solar panel installation and rainwater harvesting, despite high costs and technical difficulties. He highlighted the necessity of assessing current practices and adapting to increasing utility costs. Salim suggested the need for a centralized audit system for sustainability and stressed the importance of buyer collaboration in achieving sustainability goals, highlighting the disproportionate efforts among different factories.

Inamul Haq Khan described Bangladesh's RMG sector as crucial in addressing GHG emissions and carbon decarbonization. He mentioned BGMEA's initiatives and the government's plans to guide factories towards sustainable practices.

Khan emphasized the RMG sector's relatively low contribution to pollution and highlighted opportunities in renewable energy transition, energy efficiency improvements, product design, and transportation optimization. He praised Bangladesh's progress in Green Building practices and discussed challenges such as alternative energy sources, land scarcity, and investment limitations. Khan emphasized the need for collaboration with buyers for effective implementation of green initiatives and acknowledged the importance of financial support for environmental-friendly activities.



INAMUL HAQ KHAN

Director, BGMEA & Managing Director, Ananta Companies



SHAFIUR RAHMAN

South Asian Operations Head, G-Star RAW

Shafiur Rahman detailed G-Star RAW's commitment to carbon emission reduction, with targets set for 2025 and 2030. He described how various departments in the organization, from design to logistics, contribute to these goals.

Rahman highlighted specific measures like modifying packaging to reduce polymer use, which was implemented globally. He mentioned efforts to use solar energy and other sustainable practices in manufacturing. Rahman stressed the importance of financial freedom for manufacturers, enabling them to invest in sustainable practices. He emphasized that supportive purchasing practices from brands can create conditions conducive to environmental consciousness and action in the manufacturing sector.

Peter Ford discussed H&M's journey towards aggressive decarbonization targets, focusing on measuring emissions and identifying fuel sources leading to high emissions.

He emphasized strategies for transitioning away from coal, optimizing biomass usage, and reducing fossil gas reliance. Ford highlighted the importance of electrification in H&M's global strategy, including efforts in Bangladesh despite challenges. He mentioned H&M's in-house engineering efforts, conducting energy audits, and exploring innovative technologies like thermal storage and heat pumps. Ford also spoke about collaborating with suppliers to create decarbonization roadmaps and utilizing financial instruments like the Green Fashion Initiative for technology investments.



PETER FORD

Program Lead, Climate, H&M Group

PANEL DISCUSSION 02

POLICY LANDSCAPE AND IMPROVEMENTS TO FACILITATE CHANGE





ASIF IBRAHIM

Director, BGMEA & Vice Chairman,
Newage Group of Industries

MODERATOR

PANEL 02 DISCUSSED THE ROLE OF POLICY IN SUPPORTING DECARBONIZATION IN THE RMG INDUSTRY, EMPHASIZING ENERGY EFFICIENCY, RENEWABLE ENERGY ADOPTION, AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION. IT HIGHLIGHTED CHALLENGES FACED BY SMES IN ACCESSING GREEN FUNDS AND THE NEED FOR FAIR PRICING.

Akila Fernando highlighted the significant energy consumption of Bangladesh's apparel sector, emphasizing its impact on the country's overall energy portfolio.

He identified vast potential for improvement through energy recovery systems, converting waste into useful energy. Fernando emphasized the overlooked power of energy efficiency, advocating for newer technologies and a technology-driven approach. He suggested rooftop solar panels as a viable solution for energy independence and reaching decarbonization goals. Fernando reflected on the changing perception of environmental impact in manufacturing, observing that the era of affordable renewable energy and efficiency improvements presents no excuses for inaction.



AZIZUR RAHIM CHOWDHURY

Managing Director, J.M. Fabrics Ltd. & Director,
New Asia Ltd.



AMBREEN TABASSUM

Operational Process Manager,
Decathlon Bangladesh

Ambreen Tabassum discussed Decathlon's approach to supporting sustainable practices and policies in the RMG sector.

She described Decathlon's role in ensuring compliance with environmental standards, including local pollution assessments and zero discharge of hazardous chemicals. Tabassum highlighted Decathlon's commitment to the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTI) and their internal efforts to ensure suppliers meet CO2 emission thresholds. She emphasized the importance of educating collaborators on climate change actions and ensuring sustainable sourcing. Tabassum also touched on policy aspects like net metering and Power Purchase Agreements (PPA), advocating for their utilization to enhance renewable energy integration into the national grid.

Buddhi Paranamana addressed climate action from an innovation perspective, emphasizing the importance of transparency and incentivization.

He suggested that policies mandating or incentivizing systematic reporting can positively impact environmental efforts. Paranamana pointed out the role of funding in advancing sustainability, highlighting challenges in fund disbursement. He stressed the need for localized innovation, citing recycling and compressed biogas as examples. Paranamana advocated for policies promoting recycling within the RMG ecosystem and emphasized the importance of innovative, regionally appropriate solutions. He underlined that localized innovations, supported by effective policies, can significantly contribute to the RMG sector's environmental goals.



BUDDHI PARANAMANA

Group Sustainability and Innovation Director,
PDS Limited



GIHAN PALIHENA

Director, Asia Product Supply South Asia,
Kontoor Brands Inc.

Gihan Palihena outlined key policy areas in Bangladesh to support climate action from Kontoor Brands' perspective.

He proposed four policy focus areas: renewable energy transition, policy development for solar power installation, space allocation for rooftop solar panels in industrial zones, and regulations for efficient green technology operation. Palihena emphasized the importance of investing in wastewater management and developing policies around it. He called for holistic policy development involving governing bodies, manufacturers, and consumers. Palihena stressed the need for collaborative advocacy, research support, supply chain rewards, consumer education on sustainability, and overall awareness building about decarbonization among all stakeholders.

M. Shahidullah Azim spoke about BGMEA's initiatives and vision for climate action in the RMG industry. He mentioned significant positive impacts from partnerships like the Cleaner Textile program, focusing on water, energy savings, and chemical use reduction. Azim highlighted BGMEA's commitment to reducing emissions and promoting circularity, acknowledging the need for collaboration with buyers, brands, and development partners due to the high costs involved. He emphasized the role of recycling in the RMG ecosystem and the promotion of recycled products. Azim mentioned the challenges of limited recyclers in Bangladesh and the efforts to increase their number.

He also underlined the importance of green building practices and power purchase agreements in facilitating sustainable transitions.



M. SHAHIDULLAH AZIM

Vice President, BGMEA &
Managing Director, Classic Group



NAFIS UD DOULA

Director, Impress-Newtex Composite Textiles Ltd.

Nafis Ud Doula discussed the challenges and opportunities of adopting sustainable practices in the RMG sector. He highlighted the difficulty in accessing green funds, which are predominantly available to larger manufacturers, leaving SMEs behind.

Doula emphasized the need for fair pricing from customers to support manufacturers transitioning to green technology. He pointed out the government's incentives, like a reduced tax for green practices, but stressed the need for greater consumer cooperation in paying higher prices for sustainably produced goods. Doula questioned the sustainability of green technology in the market, given the current pricing and consumer behavior patterns.

Naureen Chowdhury spoke about the need for a policy framework and institutional coordination for decarbonization, focusing on just transition, job security, and reskilling.

She emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in the RMG industry for climate action. Chowdhury highlighted the interconnectedness of climate issues and labor rights, advocating for equipping workers and suppliers to become agents of change. She mentioned studies showing the potential for green jobs in Asia and the importance of including workers' and suppliers' voices in the sustainability conversation. Chowdhury called for collective definition, measurement, and financing of sustainable pathways, ensuring all community voices, especially those of impacted workers, are heard.



NAUREEN CHOWDHURY

Head of Labour Rights Programme, Laudes Foundation



PANEL DISCUSSION 03

COLLECTIVE ACTION





SIVA PARITI

Senior Technical Marketing Officer,
BlueWin

MODERATOR

THE PANEL 03 DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ACHIEVE CLIMATE TARGETS IN BANGLADESH'S RMG SECTOR, EMPHASIZING SHARED OWNERSHIP, RESPONSIBILITY, AND RISK. IT HIGHLIGHTED CHALLENGES IN FINANCING AND RISK SHARING, EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR EQUITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS ACROSS THE VALUE CHAIN AND COLLABORATION AMONG MANUFACTURERS, BRANDS, AND ORGANIZATIONS.

Dr. Mohammad Assaduzzaman highlighted the Dutch Embassy's initiatives in collaborating with the Bangladeshi government, civil society, and private sector for green transition. He mentioned their support for multi-stakeholder coordination and sharing technological resources and management expertise.

The Embassy's efforts focus on achieving nationally determined contributions and maintaining standards for environmental governance. Assaduzzaman also discussed the Embassy's role in international coalitions and its focus on environmental, social, and governance aspects. He stressed the importance of technology transfer and knowledge sharing between the Netherlands and developing countries like Bangladesh to fulfill regional and global environmental targets.



DR. MOHAMMAD ASSADUZZAMAN

Senior Policy Advisor–Climate, The Embassy of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh



MOYEEN HYDER CHOWDHURY

Branch Manager Apparel & Accessories, Puma

Moyeen Hyder Chowdhury discussed Puma's comprehensive approach to decarbonization and sustainable practices.

He highlighted Puma's collaborations with IFC for cleaner textiles and with GIZ for renewable energy initiatives, emphasizing the brand's commitment to supporting its partners and suppliers. Chowdhury described Puma's efforts in training and coordinating with suppliers to achieve science-based targets, focusing on areas like product circularity and the environment. He mentioned the challenges faced by suppliers, especially in transitioning to green energy, and called for greater governmental support. Chowdhury underlined Puma's goal of significantly increasing the use of green energy by 2025, necessitating strategic and technological assistance for effective implementation.

Mohsina Yasmin discussed BIDA's role in regulating and promoting investment in Bangladesh's industrial sector, with a focus on environmental compliance. She highlighted the challenges BIDA faces in monitoring compliance among thousands of industries, given limited resources and manpower.

Yasmin emphasized the need for effective monitoring devices to ensure compliance with environmental standards. She mentioned BIDA's upcoming industry investment policy, which aims to streamline administrative processes and monitor policy compliance. Yasmin called for a more efficient system to supervise environmental compliance, stressing the need for collective action and shared responsibility among government bodies, manufacturers, and other stakeholders.



MOHSINA YASMIN

Executive Member, BIDA



MD. TANVIR HOSSAIN

Executive Director (Investment Promotion), BEPZA

Md. Tanvir Hossain discussed BEPZA's initiatives to promote sustainable practices within Export Processing Zones (EPZs). He mentioned incorporating lease agreements that mandate rainwater harvesting and solar panel installation. Hossain emphasized Bangladesh's role in addressing climate change, despite its low contribution to global emissions.

He highlighted the presence of LEED-certified industries within EPZs and their efforts to recognize and address environmental issues. BEPZA, as a regulatory body, engages with investors to collectively address environmental concerns. Hossain also mentioned BEPZA's focus on facilitating and advocating for incentives with government bodies to support investors in their sustainable transition efforts.

Sadia Raisa Khan emphasized the need for collaborative action to balance risk and impact in supply chains. She highlighted GIZ's role as a neutral mediator, facilitating dialogue and solutions among brands, manufacturers, and government policymakers.

Khan discussed GIZ's initiatives for capacity development and technical support for the private and public sectors. She underlined the importance of creating a space for open discussion, leading to mutually beneficial solutions. Khan also mentioned GIZ's advocacy role in influencing policy changes and their support in transitioning to renewable energy and other sustainable technologies, contributing positively to the supply chain and climate change mitigation.



SADIA RAISA KHAN

Advisor and Country Representative, Project Development Programme (PDP), GIZ Bangladesh



DR. VIDHURA RALAPANAWA

Executive Vice President, Epic Group

Dr. Vidhura Ralapanawe emphasized the necessity of shared ownership, responsibility, and risk in decarbonization efforts. He pointed out the current inequity where manufacturers bear the brunt of risks and financial burdens in decarbonization projects.

Ralapanawe argued for a more equitable approach, spreading risks across the value chain to accelerate decarbonization in the apparel supply chain. He called for a radical shift towards a more collaborative and inclusive approach from the existing system, where manufacturers have little say in setting targets, often imposed by brands, to setting and executing decarbonization targets.





PANEL DISCUSSION 04

FINANCE AND JUST TRANSITION





SIVA PARITI

Senior Technical Marketing Officer,
BlueWin

MODERATOR

PANEL 04 DISCUSSED FINANCING SUSTAINABLE TRANSITIONS IN BANGLADESH'S RMG INDUSTRY, EMPHASIZING FUNDING CHALLENGES, EFFICIENT PROCESSING, AND COLLECTIVE ACTION. IT HIGHLIGHTED THE ROLE OF BANKS, DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, AND PRIVATE FUNDS IN GREEN TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENTS, REQUIRING STREAMLINED PROCESSES AND COLLABORATION.

Alamgir Morshed spoke about IDCOL's role in supporting private sector investments in areas typically avoided by conventional banks due to high risk. He explained that IDCOL operates as a profit-making organization and follows project or corporate finance models, acknowledging the long payback period of sustainable projects.

Morshed highlighted the challenges of long-term local currency financing and the need for private sector participation, including banks and institutional investors. He emphasized the importance of developing the bond and capital markets to facilitate large-scale investments for Bangladesh's climate goals. He further discussed the rising demand for renewable energy technology, which is driven by changes in tariff structures and decreasing costs.



ALAMGIR MORSHED

Executive Director & CEO, IDCOL



BOB ASSENBERG

Fund Director, Good Fashion Fund

Bob Assenberg discussed the Good Fashion Fund's (GFF) role in supporting manufacturers in India and Bangladesh to adopt disruptive and environmentally impactful equipment. He highlighted GFF's investment and monitoring approach, focusing on environmental and social elements. Assenberg emphasized the need for broader awareness among manufacturers about available climate actions and technologies.

He discussed GFF's efforts to demonstrate investment viability in climate action and social impact through various platforms. Assenberg pointed out the importance of brands playing a role in long-term off-take agreements to ensure joint efforts in sustainability. He called for joint efforts and scaling up long-term sustainable setups.

Dishan Karunaratne discussed Bestseller's efforts to establish a baseline for their climate roadmap, emphasizing the importance of having a clear starting point for sustainable initiatives. He mentioned their work with key factories to develop this baseline and highlighted the investments made by suppliers in energy-saving and green technologies.

Karunaratne also stressed the need for training and developing factory workers to understand and carry forward these initiatives. Bestseller has invested in software to track and authenticate data related to savings and investments and is actively working on a fashion-forward strategy to promote a circular community.



DISHAN KARUNARATNE

Chief Representative, Bangladesh & Pakistan, Bestseller



DELWAR HOSSAIN

Joint Director, Sustainable Finance Department, Bangladesh Bank

Delwar Hossain highlighted Bangladesh Bank's initiatives to promote sustainable finance products, including various funds dedicated to green projects and initiatives. He discussed the challenges of communicating directly with entrepreneurs, relying instead on intermediary institutions. Hossain explained the bank's strategy of setting targets for green finance and sustainable finance, emphasizing the need for borrowers to have a clean Credit Information Bureau (CIB) record and a good repayment history.

He also touched upon the documentation requirements for green projects and the reliance on third-party opinions for assurance. Hossain underscored the bank's eagerness to disburse funds for environment-friendly initiatives efficiently.

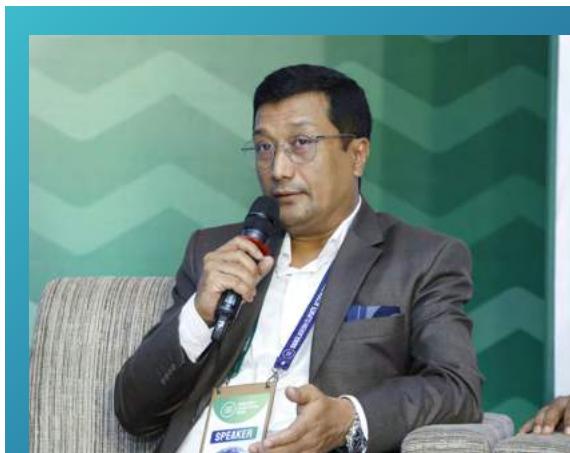
Enamul Huque discussed Standard Chartered Bank's role in promoting green technology and sustainability innovations. He differentiated between multinational clients, who are self-driven towards sustainability, and local entrepreneurs, who often require external pressure from buyers. Huque emphasized the urgent need for local entrepreneurs to commit to sustainability, warning of potential obsolescence without such commitment.

He highlighted the importance of proper documentation and adherence to international standards for sustainability funding. Huque also stressed the need for scaling up industry investment significantly and called for standardization in sustainability practices to facilitate documentation and validation for financial support.



ENAMUL HUQUE

Managing Director, Corporate, Commercial and Institutional Banking, Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh



SOHEL SADAT

Chairman & Managing Director,
Shin Shin Group

Sohel Sadat spoke about the challenges of accessing funds for sustainable initiatives. He highlighted the high costs and time-consuming processes involved, including lengthy documentation and delays in fund disbursement. Sadat emphasized the importance of collective action among stakeholders to address these issues, noting that despite partnerships with banks, fund processing often takes excessively long.

He shared his experience with solar panel installation, where the process took a year to complete due to slow documentation and funding procedures. Sadat called for more streamlined and efficient funding processes to support the transition to sustainable practices.

Ziaur Rahman discussed H&M's commitment to decarbonization and sustainable practices within their supply chain. He emphasized the need for a climate roadmap with specific timelines and investment plans for factory upgrades. Rahman highlighted H&M's engagement with suppliers and banks to facilitate this transition, focusing on energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption.

He stressed the importance of adapting to changing fashion industry demands and the need for strategic relationships with suppliers. Rahman also pointed out the necessity of legislative alignment for effective decarbonization efforts, underscoring the role of collaboration between brands, suppliers, and the government in achieving sustainable goals.



ZIAUR RAHMAN

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



PANEL DISCUSSION 05

CLIMATE JUSTICE, RESILIENCE, EQUITY AND JUST TRANSITION





DR. SALEEMUL HUQ

Director, ICCAD & Professor, IUB

MODERATOR

THE PANEL DISCUSSED CLIMATE JUSTICE, RESILIENCE, EQUITY, AND A JUST TRANSITION IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY, EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKERS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN, AND THE NEED FOR AN EQUITABLE ENERGY TRANSITION. IT CALLED FOR INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO ENSURE A JUST TRANSITION FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS, EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION.

A. J. M. Zobaidur Rahman discussed the RMG Sustainability Council's (RSC) role in ensuring the safety and environmental sustainability of Bangladesh's RMG factories. He highlighted RSC's work with over 1,880 factories, primarily serving the European market, focusing on maintaining basic safety standards and environmental aspects. Rahman emphasized collaboration with organizations like Oxfam and GIZ to incorporate environmental considerations into RSC's standard operating procedures.

He stressed the importance of including workers' voices in decision-making processes and advocated for a comprehensive approach that integrates climate justice, gender justice, worker rights, and environmental sustainability to advance a fair and just transition in the industry.



A. J. M. ZOB Aidur RAHMAN

Head - Media, Communications & Stakeholder Engagement, RMG Sustainability Council



EDWIN KOEKKOEK

First Counsellor, Team Leader – Green Inclusive Development and Social Protection, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh

Edwin Koekkoek discussed the EU Green Deal's approach to economic and environmental sustainability. He highlighted the necessity of inclusive policies to ensure no one is left behind in the green transition, particularly those dependent on fossil fuels or living in less advantaged regions. Koekkoek emphasized the need for migrant-friendly cities and training opportunities for climate migrants.

He advocated for socially and environmentally responsible corporate behavior, referencing the European Commission's directive for corporate responsibility, which encompasses various societal aspects like gender issues and health care, to ensure a sustainable future for all communities.

Md. Emran Hasan discussed the critical issue of climate injustice and inequality, highlighting the increased CO2 levels and the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. He emphasized the direct relationship between climate change and migration, with many RMG sector workers being climate-induced migrants. Emran pointed out the contradictions in government policies, such as high import duties on solar panels, which hinder the transition to renewable energy.

He advocated for a justice-based approach to energy transition, emphasizing the need for recognition, procedural, distributional, and remedial justice, and stressing the importance of ensuring the safety and rights of vulnerable RMG workers.



MOHAMMED EMRAN HASAN

Head of Climate Justice & Natural Resources Rights,
Oxfam in Bangladesh



FAZLE SHAMIM EHSAN

Vice President, BKMEA

Fazle Shamim emphasized the importance of inclusiveness in just transition processes. He noted Bangladesh's low contribution to global greenhouse emissions yet high vulnerability to climate change effects, particularly impacting the destitute. Shamim called for collective action among the government, NGOs, manufacturers, and buyers, highlighting inconsistencies like high import duties on solar panels that contradict government emissions reduction targets.

He stressed the need for consumer mindsets to change towards fair buying practices to support social and environmental sustainability. Shamim advocated for increased awareness and collective efforts to establish inclusiveness and fair practices throughout the apparel industry's supply chain.

Mahmuda Sultana stressed the significance of amplifying workers' voices and ensuring transparency and accountability towards them in the context of climate justice and just transition. She urged the need for platforms that bring together workers, manufacturers, brands, government officials, development agencies, and consumers to collaboratively form policies and make collective decisions. Sultana emphasized the interconnectedness of climate justice, gender justice, worker rights, and the importance of addressing these issues collectively.

She called for breaking the silence on these interconnected issues and moving forward with a holistic approach that addresses climate justice, worker rights, and gender equity in tandem.



MAHMUDA SULTANA

Acting Country Director, Oxfam in Bangladesh



SEEMA JOSHI

Fashion & IT Campaigns Director,
Stand.Earth

Seema Joshi discussed the importance of transparency in the fashion industry for achieving equitable decarbonization. She emphasized that international standards require businesses to respect human rights and that emerging regulations mandate due diligence in human rights protection. Joshi argued that transparency leads to accountability and provides opportunities for involving all stakeholders in shared responsibility.

She highlighted the need for proactive identification of workers' rights and livelihoods in decarbonization strategies, noting the increasing climate risks workers face. Joshi advocated for collective action and transparency to support rights-based approaches and equitable solutions in the fashion industry.

A MESSAGE FROM EUROPEAN UNION

EU COMMENDS THE FIRST BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM



H.E. CHARLES WHITELEY

Ambassador & Head of Delegation,
Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh.

H.E. CHARLES WHITELEY, AMBASSADOR & HEAD OF DELEGATION, DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO BANGLADESH, COMMENDED THE FORUM AS ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY INITIATIVE BY MOSTAFIZ UDDIN. REFLECTING ON GLOBAL CLIMATE DISCUSSIONS, HE HIGHLIGHTED THE RECENT CLIMATE AMBITION SUMMIT IN NEW YORK, EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR BOTH LOCAL AND GLOBAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE. ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY, HE NOTED THE INTERSECTION OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION. HE UNDERScoreD THE EUROPEAN UNION'S COMMITMENT TO CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2050.

Charles stressed the importance of massive investments to achieve the transition and attract foreign investments. He outlined the EU's engagement in supporting Bangladesh's green energy transition, citing a 400 million euro deal on renewable energy. The EU aims to assist Bangladesh in developing a sustainable energy market, optimizing grid infrastructure, and ensuring energy efficiency across all stages.



CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 01

DB SCHENKER'S GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY ENDEAVORS AND IMPACT

Mohammad Sams E Tabriz and Jennifer Ang from DB Schenker presented their company's commitment to sustainability. Schenker focuses on environmental impact, social responsibility, and governance. They emphasize sustainability in their operations, targeting carbon neutrality by 2040. They've reduced carbon emissions through optimized freight services and invested in renewable energy, biofuels, and electric vehicles. Their Singapore warehouse is a testament to this commitment, being carbon-negative. Schenker's approach includes comprehensive sustainability training for employees, ensuring a holistic and responsible approach to environmental impact.



MOHAMMAD SAMS E TABRIZ

DB Schenker's Global Sustainability Endeavors and Impact

CASE STUDY 02

LAFARGEHOLCIM'S COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE ACTION

Kaushik Mukherjee from LafargeHolcim outlined their sustainable waste management initiatives through their wing, Geocycle. Operating in over 50 countries, Geocycle, showcases a significant commitment to sustainable waste management and Net Zero targets. Their extensive waste disposal facilities, including co-processing in cement kilns, global presence and recognition in waste management, alongside future expansion plans, reinforce LafargeHolcim's dedication to environmentally responsible practices. They also issue disposal certificates, which are globally recognized for green waste management. The company collaborates with government bodies and MNCs in Bangladesh for efficient waste management, contributing to the circular economy.



KAUSHIK MUKHERJEE

Head of Geocycle Bangladesh, LafargeHolcim

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 03

TEAM GROUP'S ROAD TO DECARBONIZATION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

As the Deputy Managing Director of Team Group, Abdullah Hil Nakib emphasized the company's commitment to sustainability, outlining their framework and key initiatives. He highlighted their climate action goals for 2030, including a 50% reduction in emissions and a move towards Net Zero by 2050. He briefly discussed ongoing initiatives, such as installing an EGB boiler and implementing a solar master plan. Expressing excitement about the collective effort, Abdullah Hil Nakib emphasized the need for personal conviction to drive positive change, confidently stating that the shift towards sustainability can start immediately.



ABDULLAH HIL NAKIB

Deputy Managing Director,
Team Group

"In today's business, it's not just about results, but how you achieve them. Sustainability is a core part of our strategy, one of our five key levers, focusing on environmental impact and community well-being."

– Muhammad Sams E Tabriz, Managing Director, DB Schenker Bangladesh

"We've invested in a groundbreaking facility, which is not just carbon-friendly but carbon-negative. The facility is quite new and it will be self-sustainable in water and electricity, providing significant benefits to our customers."

– Jennifer Ang, Director, Consumer and Retail Vertical Market, DB Schenker

"In Bangladesh, Lafarge Holcim's Geocycle is stepping up with a 25 million US dollar investment to significantly boost waste disposal capacity by 400,000 tons, addressing the country's growing waste management challenges."

– Kaushik Mukherjee, Head of Geocycle Bangladesh, LafargeHolcim

"By creating win-win situations for workers, buyers, customers, and all our partners across the value chain, we are growing together while maintaining harmony with nature."

– Abdullah Hil Nakib, Team Group

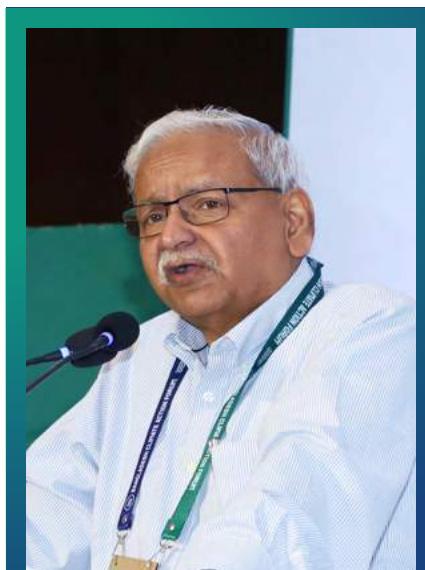
PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION 01

BANGLADESH CLIMATE RESPONSE

Dr. Saleemul Huq discussed the severity of climate impacts and warned that the escalating crisis will worsen in the coming years.

He highlighted Bangladesh's vulnerability and the need for a comprehensive, cross-ministerial approach to address impacts, losses, and damages. He stressed the importance of adaptation efforts for Bangladesh's 180 million vulnerable citizens and emphasized the potential for Bangladesh to pioneer solutions for the global community with committed partnerships from the private sector.



DR. SALEEMUL HUQ

Director of ICCCAD & Professor
at IUB

PRESENTATION 02

DECARBONISATION BEST PRACTICE FROM BANGLADESH RMG INDUSTRY

Laxmikant Jawale underscored the critical need for energy efficiency and sustainability in Bangladesh's RMG industry.

He highlighted the significant role of renewable energy and conservation practices in reducing environmental impact and aligning with economic goals, presenting the Apparel Impact Institute's initiatives as effective models for achieving a sustainable, competitive future.



LAXMIKANT JAWALE

Regional Lead, South Asia & Southeast Asia,
Apparel Impact Institute

PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION 03

DECARBONISATION GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE

E. Nand Gopal, Director of Climate & Energy Practice at Grant Thornton Bharat LLP, centered the discussion on the significance of energy efficiency and renewables in Bangladesh's carbon management strategy. He outlined a structured approach to carbon reduction, emphasizing the initial focus on renewables, followed by energy efficiency measures. Drawing insights from Bangladesh factories, he highlighted substantial improvement potential and outlined five solution brackets, ranging from best operating practices to renewables. By exploring success stories and practical examples, he conveyed the potential for Bangladesh to achieve carbon emission reductions and advance toward a sustainable industrial landscape.



E NAND GOPAL

Director, Climate & Energy Practice,
Grant Thornton Bharat LLP

"We have 180 million people living in one of the most vulnerable countries in the world, and for us, the issue of how we build resilience, adapt, and deal with losses and damages is more important."

– Dr. Saleemul Huq, Director, ICCCAD & Professor, IUB

"Start today for a more sustainable tomorrow."

– Laxmikant Jawale, Regional Lead, South Asia & Southeast Asia, Apparel Impact Institute

"When it comes to carbon management, the hierarchy is as follows: first, avoid emissions if possible; then minimize; followed by making it clean; and finally, if there are still emissions, rely on offsets."

– E Nand Gopal, Director, Climate & Energy Practice, Grant Thornton Bharat LLP



CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Vidhura Ralapanawe outlined the pivotal priorities for next year's climate action journey. These include knowledge creation and sharing, policy advocacy, a platform for collective action, and the co-creation of solutions. Urgency and necessity for decarbonization were emphasized, with tactical policy discussions on import duty, net metering, and incentivization. Panelists stressed collective actions, shared responsibility, and the need for a new collaborative model in the business sector. Panel 4 focused on funding actions, highlighting challenges in accessibility and affordability. Panel 5 introduced a novel perspective on addressing climate action by emphasizing the resilience of both factories and workers for equity and climate justice. Dr. Vidhura concluded by commending the conference organizers, applauding participants, and expressing the collective call for more actionable standards in the pursuit of impactful decarbonization.

DR. VIDHURA EMPHASIZED THE IMPERATIVE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION, URGING STAKEHOLDERS TO MOVE BEYOND TRANSACTIONAL BEHAVIOR TO STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT FOR A CRITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN CLIMATE ACTION.



DR. VIDHURA RALAPANAWA

Executive Vice President, Epic Group



BANGLADESH CLIMATE ACTION FORUM

OPENING & WELCOMING SPEECH

6-8 OCTOBER 2023
10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

Speakers:

- Dr. Hassanul Kabir, Secretary to the Government
- Dr. Md. Kamrul Hossain, Secretary to the Government
- Dr. Md. Kamrul Hossain, Secretary to the Government
- Dr. Md. Kamrul Hossain, Secretary to the Government

Partners: FPO, aii, epcc

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