

Impact Economy launches the Burmese Edition of the “Sustainable Apparel Value Chains” report

Lausanne/Switzerland, 1 April 2014 - Impact Economy announced today the launch of the Burmese Edition of “Sustainable Apparel Value Chains: A Primer on Industry Transformation.” The Primer analyzes the competitiveness and sustainability issues facing the USD 3 trillion (and counting) global textile and garment industry.

“Myanmar’s garment industry is booming. It earned more than USD 917 million in exports in 2012 and could easily employ more than 100,000 people by 2015. Garments are already the country’s most important manufactured export and numerous new factories are being built. The revival of the industry could yield important development dividends as the country modernizes,” said Dr. Maximilian Martin, the author of the report and founder of Impact Economy.

Myanmar is one of Asia’s last frontiers, a fact that is both exciting and daunting. With a long tradition in textile and garments and excellent craftsmanship, its garment cluster could well graduate beyond USD 6 billion in garment exports within a few years. Furthermore a number of developments are transforming the industry:

- ◆ The movement from slow to fast fashion—fashion products now move quickly from the catwalk to high street stores in order to capitalize on current fashion trends;
- ◆ Production continues to shift away from advanced economies and towards emerging markets—absorbing unskilled labor into formal employment and propping up entire economies; and
- ◆ Support for greater transparency is growing—spurred by consumer consciousness, environmental compliance requirements, advocacy groups, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.

Despite progress, the industry is nevertheless less sustainable today than it has ever been: a point that was brought to global attention by the tragic 2013 Rana Plaza accident in Bangladesh. Supply chains transparency and total resource productivity are needed. The report identifies a series of key levers that could help achieve this kind of industry transformation, including:

- ◆ Considering the entire supply chain to foster total resource productivity and transparency;
- ◆ Impact-investing to fuel critically needed upgrades to industry infrastructure;
- ◆ Improving working conditions with a particular emphasis on gender to drive systemic change; and
- ◆ Replicating leading players’ best practices could provide a meaningful way to turbocharge efforts.

A win-win of raising productivity and competitiveness, as well as social and environmental performance, is possible. But an ambitious, systemic approach is needed.

“Myanmar’s enthusiasm to catch up with its neighbors is at an all-time high. Getting the job done and setting Myanmar on a path to becoming a leading sustainable apparel cluster is possible,” said Martin. *“This shift will require transferring best practices, collaboration between government, industry associations, producers, buyers and civil society, and having the guts to act.”*

The Primer aims to inform the Burmese garment and textile industry and its stakeholders working toward combining competitiveness with greater sustainability. For the full publication please follow this [link](#).

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