



Chapter 1

Intro

Dear Partnership Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is the Partnership's first digital annual report that, from now on, will always be published at our Members' Meeting in spring. Thus, we can link the information in the report directly to the content on the Partnership website, so that you can dive deeper into the respective topics.

Building back with better buyer-supplier relationships

For purchasing and manufacturing companies in Germany and worldwide, 2020 was a bad year, if not the economically worst year in decades. And this has had and continues to have in some cases enormous effects on the people who work in our industry, first and foremost in the producing countries. In Germany and Europe, many companies are struggling to survive and have had to change their business models at a faster pace than ever before, and we saw radical disruption.

In the production countries, the increased pressure to change is often hitting companies and people much harder. The financial resources of many companies and their business partners are chronically scarce. Systems of social protection are weak or are non-existent. Workers have hardly any substantial alternatives or savings and are often unprotected against the effects of the crisis: Job losses, wage cuts, health risks and other restrictions.

The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles is committed to achieving demonstrable improvements in working and environmental conditions in textile value chains. Especially in these times of crisis, this requires our members to focus even more on their business partners and the workers. In April 2020, the Textiles Partnership and its strategic partners took a clear position and issued a call-to-action with recommendations on how to immediately respond to the crisis and how to build responsible business relationships in the longer term. In this, responsible purchasing practices are key and we therefore made them our annual topic for 2021.

Implement and report on due diligence obligations in a structured manner

Besides purchasing practices, our activities on circular economy and climate action, which continue to gain momentum, and the joint engagement of Partnership members in Tamil Nadu and on living wages, complaints mechanisms, wastewater management and organic cotton, the focus in 2021 will also be on the Review Process. Postponed by one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the revised Review Process has now been launched.

The core of the effort is to support companies in implementing their due diligence obligations in a structured manner and in accordance with the requirements on the basis of a solid risk analysis, and to report on them in an equally structured and appropriate manner. In this way, the Partnership can underscore its claim to be the first point of contact for anyone wishing to systematically implement due diligence and thus taking responsibility also for business partners and workers in their value chains

Achieving more together

Important decisions will also be made in 2021 with regard to the structures of the Textiles Partnership. A new Steering Committee will be elected and a group of experts will discuss the further development of the governance structures. In addition, we will continue to expand our network of strategic cooperation partners with the aim of increasing the impact of the Partnership's activities while at the same time reducing the effort required from our members.

The Corona crisis has greatly accelerated existing trends in the industry and has had a profound impact on companies, stakeholders and many millions of employees, also and above all in the producing countries. Against this background, we in the Textiles Partnership have taken up key topics for the future and are pursuing their implementation. Use your membership in the Partnership as an opportunity to work together on these issues and on your organisation's contribution to achieving fair working conditions and a business case for production within planetary boundaries.

We hope you enjoy reading our first digital annual report and we are looking forward to a continued and trustful cooperation in the Textiles Partnership.

Jürgen Janssen

on behalf of the Partnership Secretariat