



## Supply Chain Actors connected at the GOTS Bangladesh Seminar 2019

'Connecting for Success' was the theme of the second GOTS seminar in Dhaka on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2019. It was the second regional GOTS event in Bangladesh, after the one held in November 2016.

Around 330 participants from six countries congregated for fruitful discussions on sustainability and organic textiles. Including representatives from different stages of the manufacturing industry like spinning, knitting, wet processing, garmenting as well as buying houses, international brands, certification bodies, testing laboratories, media, and academics.

The event was part of regional GOTS activities. With the aim to connect stakeholders and to receive feedback on the specific needs of local market players events of this kind are organized all over the world by GOTS Representatives.

Sumit Gupta, GOTS Representative in India & Bangladesh and Seminar Coordinator opened the seminar with a welcome address, followed by the National Anthem. The formal program for the day ensued.

**Session 1** titled '*Connecting Sustainable Retail: Stories from Fashion Industry*'. Claudia Kersten, GOTS Managing Director moderated the session. Bruno Van Sielegheem from Stanley/Stella, Belgium and Jan Moritz from Julius Huepeden GmbH, Germany participated as speakers. The session revealed success stories from brands, market trends, and data about GOTS. Both brands reaffirmed their commitment to sustainability and buying GOTS certified products.

**Session 2** named '*Technical Criteria and Implementation*'. Rahul Bhajekar, GOTS Managing Director was the moderator and session speaker. Further, Sumit Gupta, GOTS Deputy Director Standards Development & Quality Assurance and Prachi Gupta, GOTS Expert, Quality Assurance & Impact, shared their expertise as speakers and talked about important technical topics like GMO Testing and GOTS technical criteria.

Besides, the speakers explained the existing software tool for Certified Entities the 'GOTS Monitor (Water/Energy)', and the 'Central Database System'

After lunch, the entertaining and explanatory **GOTS Quiz** was on the agenda. Participants were able to test their GOTS knowledge. Four lucky winners, answering 17 out of 18 questions correctly, were announced. Ms. Kersten presented each of them with a GOTS Certified Organic Silk Tie. The names of the winners are:

1. Abdur Rahman
2. Achutha Kumar
3. Asifur Rahman
4. Suhas Khandagale

**Session 3** was under the topic *'Connecting on the Job: Workers and Management'*. Herbert Ladwig, GOTS Policy & Legal Advisor moderated the session. Armanul Azim, Tosrifa Industries Limited; Dr. Uttam Kumar Das, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh; Abdul Mottaleb, CERES Bangladesh and Abdul Alim, Sustainable Management System Inc contributed as panelists. Primarily, this session examined collective bargaining and complaint procedures at factories in Bangladesh.

**Session 4** *'Connecting Supply Chain Partners: Efficient Partnerships for Success'*, was moderated by Montashir Nahid, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). As panelists, Md. Humayun Kabir, Zaber & Zubair Fabrics Ltd.; Md. Sazzad Hossain, Fakir Knitwears Ltd.; Naishadh Desai, Britacel Silicones Ltd, and Dr. Binay Choudhury, Control Union Certification brought their expertise to the stage. The session led to a very engaging discussion with the panelists and the audience.

Speakers and delegates provided numerous valuable inputs during this daylong seminar. Delegates highlighted the importance of traceability and transparency within the supply chain; communication of workers' rights; an open and supportive attitude to collective bargaining; increased mutual consideration of certifications; capacity building among workers and the need for robust internal systems for Certification Bodies.

Furthermore, it was emphasized that GOTS helped to improve conditions in manufacturing units. For example, some factories installed an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) to become GOTS certified.

After the last session, Sumit Gupta closed the event concluding "The large turnout today is proof that GOTS successfully serves as a platform for its stakeholders to work on sustainable solutions together".

Our sincere gratitude goes to all partners for their valuable contributions to the seminar.

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