IAF AND ITMF, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ITC, UNVEIL SCI AT OECD FORUM

An initiative to accelerate reduction of audit and standard fatigue

During a side session organized by the International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) and the International Apparel Federation (IAF) at the OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector held online from February 1st to February 5th, the two organizations unveiled their joint initiative, the SCI or Standards Convergence Initiative. The SCI will serve as a global industry wide platform to discuss and develop a strategy as well as the tools to accelerate the reduction of audit and standard fatigue in the clothing and textile industries.

The auditing conduct of standard holders, along with brands, retailers and other buyers' decisions determines if we are moving firmly in the direction of less unnecessary overlap of audits and standards. Therefore, one of the first steps of the SCI, in collaboration with the **International Trade Centre (ITC),** is to create transparency in the conduct of the main standard holders, brands and retailers and 3rd party standard holders, measuring to what extent they are contributing to the reduction of audit and standard fatigue.

For this purpose, the SCI has identified four criteria to use as a yardstick to judge standard holders' commitment to reduce audit and standard fatigue. The four criteria are:

1. Willingness to harmonize standards,
2. Compliance with OECD and ILO guidelines,
3. The use of existing platform to avoid audit duplication and
4. Global certification of auditors.

The four criteria will provide a foundation for a structural monitoring of standard holders' efforts to reduce audit and standard fatigue that will be carried out by ITC. During the session at the OECD Forum, the ITC explained how its unique Standards Map Database will be used to measure and monitor standard convergence in the industry. First results of the monitoring are expected in the third quarter of 2021.

In addition to this monitoring exercise, from its global, industry wide vantage point, the SCI will actively foster collaboration between different actors that are each working on a partial solution. And, because large brands and retailers sticking to their own standards block the reduction of standard fatigue, the SCI will continuously call on these brands and retailers to either drop their proprietary standards in favour of 3rd party standards or to collaborate in other ways that observably reduce audit and standard fatigue.

More information about the SCI is available at www.standard-convergence-initiative.org

About the International Apparel Federation:

IAF (www.iafnet.com) is the world's leading federation for apparel manufacturers, (SME) brands, their associations, and the supporting industry. IAF's membership now includes apparel associations and companies from more than 40 countries, a membership that directly and indirectly represents over a hundred thousand companies and over 20 million employees. IAF brings its members together to jointly create stronger, smarter and more sustainable supply chains.

About the International Textile Manufacturers Federation:

ITMF (www.itmf.org) was founded in 1904 and is an international forum for the world's textile industries. The mission of ITMF is to 1) connect its members by providing meeting grounds to strengthen relations along the entire textile value chain from fibre to fashion, 2) inform its members by collecting, analyzing and distributing relevant data, and 3) represent the textile industry towards governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) by actively participating in discussions about the evolution of the industry.

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