

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Over 36 major brands pledge to achieve sustainable cotton by 2025

WASHINGTON DC – 23 more of the world's most renowned clothing and textile companies, including Burberry, Adidas, Kathmandu and Timberland today pledged to use 100% sustainable cotton by 2025<sup>1</sup>. 36 major brands and retailers have now signed up to the 100% by 2025 pledge, including four of Forbes magazine's list of the world's ten largest global apparel brands<sup>2</sup>, and three of the top 10 UK clothing retailers.<sup>3</sup> This announcement was made at the annual Textile Exchange Sustainability Conference, where more than 400 textile and apparel leaders have come together to discuss the most important sustainability issues facing the industry.

This pledge – called the sustainable cotton communiqué - demonstrates that there is a demand for more sustainable cotton, and the commitment made by companies will help to drive sustainable practices across the sector. In turn, this will help alleviate the environmental and social costs that are too often associated with cotton production, including the over-use of pesticides, the release of greenhouse gases, the depletion of local water sources and rising costs of production.

The brands that have committed to the 100% by 2025 pledge are: ASOS, EILEEN FISHER, Greenfibres, H&M, IKEA, Kering, Levi's, Lindex, M&S, Nike, Sainsbury's, F&F at Tesco, Woolworths, Adidas, A-Z, BikBOK, Burberry, Burton Snowboards, Carlings, Coyuchi, Cubus, Days like This, Dressmann, Hanky Panky, House of Fraser, Indigenous Designs, KappAhl, Kathmandu, Mantis World, MetaWear, Otto Group, prAna, SkunkFunk, Timberland, Urban, Volt and Wow.

### **Impact**

There have been substantial gains made over the past few years in scaling the production of more sustainable forms of cotton, which is now higher than ever at over 3 million tonnes in 2016. However, companies are actively sourcing less than a fifth of this available sustainable cotton.<sup>4</sup> In order for sustainable cotton to become standard business practice, the amount of sustainable cotton grown and bought must increase significantly. This pledge sends a signal to millions of producers that there is a real demand for a more sustainable approach to cotton production that reduces the environmental and social costs.

<sup>1</sup> This initiative recognises several existing standards as delivering sustainable cotton: Organic, Fairtrade, Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), Cotton Made in Africa and recycled cotton certified to an independently verifiable standard such as the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) or the Recycled Claim Standard (RCS). In addition, CottonConnect's REEL programme and code provides a starting point for businesses aiming for greater sustainability in their cotton supply chain.

<sup>2</sup> Nike, H&M, Kering and Addidas. <https://www.forbes.com/pictures/574381cb4bbe6f6361857bb/vi/#146d78e07223>

<sup>3</sup> 2015/2016. M&S, Tesco and H&M. <https://www.retailconomics.co.uk/top10-retailers-clothing-and-footwear>

<sup>4</sup> WWF-Solidaridad-PAN UK, Cotton Ranking Report, 2016

The companies that have pledged their support are at various stages on their journey to using sustainable cotton, with some already securing all of their cotton from sustainable sources. However, all are clear that collaboration across the sector is needed to bring about transformative change.

**Quotes from selected companies and NGO representatives:**

*"The industry is awakening to the necessity of sustainably grown cotton. It is great to see additional brands joining this initiative to accelerate the momentum of cotton production in a way that will positively impact smallholder farmers, water quality and soil health."* **La Rhea Pepper, Managing Director, Textile Exchange**

*"As a pioneer in organic cotton bedding, Coyuchi cares immensely about what our sheets, towels and apparel are made of and its greater impact on the environment and the hands that touch it from earth to factory to home. Coyuchi is excited to join the pledge and the growing momentum by likeminded brands committed to a more sustainable future."* **Eileen Mockus, CEO, Coyuchi**

*"Burton has a responsibility to protect the people and playground that sustain our sport and lifestyle. We recognize that there are social and environmental costs associated with producing our products. We are continuously striving toward sustainability in our production practices, including the materials we source. Burton is proud to join other industry leaders in this pledge, which is aligned with our commitment to sourcing 100% sustainable cotton by 2020."* **Donna Carpenter, CEO and Co-owner, Burton Snowboards**

*"It's been a long journey to reach 100% organic cotton. Kudos to all the prAna employees & global supply chain partners who put in countless hours. We couldn't be more ecstatic about this sustainability milestone!"* **Russ Hopcus, President, prAna**  
*"House of Fraser supports the Sustainable Cotton Communiqué as part of our shift to sourcing sustainable cotton in our house branded fashion and homeware products. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate to scale the uptake of sustainable materials in fashion, and applaud HRH The Prince of Wales for his leadership."* **Maria Hollins, Executive Director of Buying and Design, House of Fraser**

*"At Timberland, we strive to be Earthkeepers in everything we do and we recognize sustainable cotton sourcing as a major part of that goal. Studies have shown the positive social benefits to farming communities as well as the potential for these practices to sequester carbon into the soil. This is exciting work as we move beyond just minimizing environmental impacts to strategically creating real environmental and social benefits within the supply chain."* **Zachary Angelini, Environmental Stewardship Manager, Timberland**

**Notes to Editors**

This announcement, made at the annual Textile Exchange conference, follows the launch of the sustainable cotton communiqué at a high level meeting in May this year that was attended by HRH The Prince of Wales and organised by The Prince's International Sustainability Unit (ISU) in collaboration with Marks & Spencer and The Soil Association (UK).

**Information about cotton and sustainability**

Cotton is the most abundantly produced natural fibre and its production supports the livelihoods of over 350 million people<sup>5</sup>. Despite its global importance, cotton production can be beset by a number of environmental and social challenges. Whilst cotton only covers 2.4% of the world's arable land, it accounts for 6% of global pesticide use<sup>6</sup>. With around 2,720 litres of water needed to make just one t-shirt, conventional cotton production is highly dependent on water<sup>7</sup>. Higher temperatures and changing rainfall

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<sup>5</sup> Fairtrade Foundation, Commodity Briefing: Cotton, 2015

<sup>6</sup> Pesticide Action Network UK, 2017: <http://www.pan-uk.org/cotton/>

<sup>7</sup> Fairtrade Foundation, Commodity Briefing: Cotton, 2015

patterns caused by climate change are likely to cause severe water shortages in some areas, as well as increase the prevalence of pests and diseases, negatively affect yields. The challenges of the cotton sector are also social and economic, with cotton farmers and their dependents negatively impacted by the over-use of pesticides and petroleum based fertilizers, and rising costs of production and volatile market prices. More information, including the full text of the sustainable cotton communiqué, is available on the ISU website: [www.pcfisu.org/sustainable-cotton](http://www.pcfisu.org/sustainable-cotton).

### **About Textile Exchange**

Textile Exchange, founded in 2002, is a global nonprofit organization that works closely with all sectors of the textile supply chain to find the best ways to minimize and even reverse the negative impacts on water, soil, air, animals, and the human population created by this industry. Textile Exchange accomplishes this by providing the knowledge and tools the industry needs to make significant improvements in three core areas: Fiber and Materials, Integrity and Standards, and Supply Chain. A truly global organization, Textile Exchange is headquartered in the U.S. with Staff and Ambassadors located in more than 10 countries. To learn more about Textile Exchange, visit: [www.TextileExchange.org](http://www.TextileExchange.org) and Twitter at @TextileExchange.

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