

**Hong Kongs Clothing Industry is Backing the Green Textile Production**

Eleven leading clothing manufacturers in Hong Kong are prepared to make a point in the matter of environmentally compatible production and have, together with the Clothing Industry Training Authority/ CITA ([www.clothingtraining.org.hk](http://www.clothingtraining.org.hk)), founded the Sustainable Fashion Business Consortium (SFBC). This shall serve as information pool of the companies among themselves concerning a green textile production, and show new ways to form the trade with textiles more conservation-minded.

One can read on the website of the Hongkong Trade Development Council/HKTDC (<http://garments.hktdc.com>) that the Consortium was founded in April 2008 at the event of the World-Earth-Day with Chairman Pat-Nie Woo at the head. To the member companies belong the ladies lingerie manufacturer Ace Style Group, Crystal Group, Fountain Set, Glorious Sun Enterprises, Gunzetal, High Fashion International Management, Lever Style, Sun Hing Industries, TAL Apparel (supplier of Burberry) and the design company I Limited. The SFBC-members, which produce in plants in mainland-China, supply big international retailers like Marks&Spencer and H&M as well as US-enterprises like Gap and JC Penney. The member consortium represents any aspect of the production process – from design over yarn production, the weaving process and finally the clothing manufacture.

According to Woo 30% of the worldwide textile products last year came from mainland China. Of Hong Kongs total exports a share of nearly 40% consists of textiles and clothing alone. One of three pieces of textile on the global market comes from China.

By establishing the SFBC a great suction effect would go out from Hong Kong in the direction of mainland China in the direction of sustainable production and they could distinguish themselves here worldwide. As Woo further reported – he is also director of Central Textiles, one of two big yarn spinneries still left in Hong Kong – has the whole textile manufacturing a definitive effect on the environment at any production step – starting with energy consumption up to the polluted water after the dyeing –and finishing step. The SFBC-chairman mentioned also the quantities of waste fabric that end in the garbage. A clothing producer alone uses up more than 91 Mill woven fabric. Of those around 18 Mill m end up as waste, enough to cover 6,000 soccer grounds. One of the first initiatives of the Hong Kong environmental consortium is the recycling of waste fabric into 30% recycled Denim. Another measure is the conversion of the production plants to energy-efficient ones. With the current technology it would be possible to lower the energy use by 20%. This means that a middle-sized plant, using on average 35 Mill kilowatt hours per year, can save 7 Mill kilowatt hours p.a. – enough to supply 1,750 homes with energy.

SFBC is thinking of drawing up a carbon dioxide-counting standard, together with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Hong Kong. Then the producers could fix labels to the clothing parts which inform the consumer about the amount of carbon dioxide used for manufacturing this product.

SFBC wants to organize a global textile conference about sustainability in Hong Kong, together with the british RITE Group (Reducing

the Impact of Textiles on the Environment), [www.ritegroup.org](http://www.ritegroup.org), an industrial association (founding members Marks&Spencer, University of Leeds and Ecotextile News). Hong Kong could take in an international forerunner position with introducing a green textile production. After a plus of 2% in 2007, Hong Kongs clothing exports decreased in the first quarter of 2008 by 3%, of which a share of more than 70% was from the export to USA/EU. While the sales to the EU increased by

5%, the sales to the US lessened by 11%. The branch expressed their continuous worries about the weakening of the US-economy and expects in 2008 an unchangedly sluggish US-export business. They receive, however, a foothold from the relatively advantageous EU-economic constitution and the strong Euro, which will bring more EU-buyers to Hong Kong/ mainland China.

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