



## THREADS OF CHANGE

### WEAVING SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE TEXTILE WASTE ACCUMULATION

**L**et's think about each piece of clothing: thousands of intertwined threads make it up. Each one represents a decision in the consumption chain, from its manufacturing to the way the person who will use it acquires it and, finally, wears it.

But beyond each individual garment, the collective impact of the textile industry on the environment is undeniable. The truth is, if we pull on some of

those threads to unravel their life cycle, we will realise that our wardrobes are still far from sustainable.

Just as every thread has its role in a fabric, each actor – governments, experts, companies, and citizens – must be part of the solution. Only by collaboratively developing a more sustainable model of production and consumption we can move towards a more efficient and equitable waste management system.

## ZERO WASTE DAY

**92 MILLION TONNES OF TEXTILE WASTE**

Hundreds of thousands of people worldwide marked the International Day of Zero Waste, which spotlighted solutions to the mounting environmental and social problems caused by the fashion and textile sector.

At the core of Zero Waste Day was the idea that the rapidly expanding fashion industry is having an outsized impact on the planet.

Here are **three key takeaways** from the third edition of Zero Waste Day.



### A PLANET FREE OF HARM FROM CHEMICALS AND WASTE

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**1** It showcased how fashion and textiles contribute to a global waste pollution crisis.

Studies suggest that every year, 92 million tonnes of textile waste are generated worldwide and each second the equivalent of a garbage truck full of clothing is incinerated or dumped in a landfill.

**2** It emphasised the impact of second-hand clothes on developing countries.

**3** It brought together young people to voice their ideas for change.

### HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN SUPPLY CHAINS

**T**he textile sector serves as a vital engine of economic

development and employment. However, it also poses significant environmental and health risks due the extensive use of hazardous chemicals.

An estimated **15,000 chemicals** are used in textile manufacturing, many of which are hazardous and persist throughout the supply chain. For fashion, it has been estimated that producing 1 kg of textiles requires 0.58 kg of various chemicals on average.

#### Pesticides and POPs

The production of textile raw materials and clothing articles uses a variety of chemicals, from pesticides in natural fibre production to dyes, processing chemicals, performance-enhancing coatings/ treatments, flame retardants and other chemicals commonly employed in the dyeing and finishing stages.

## 5 WAYS TO REDUCE WASTE IN FASHION INDUSTRY

In Chile's Atacama Desert, piles of unwanted clothes reached so high they were reportedly visible from space. In Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka, textile dyes turned a river black, said international media. And in the English Channel, researchers found synthetic fibres in the bellies of fish.

But experts say there are some simple things that governments, businesses and everyday people can do to minimize waste in the sector and reduce its environmental toll.

**1. Build a more circular fashion industry**

**2. Improve fabric recycling**

**3. Remove hazardous chemicals from clothes**

**4. Change the narrative that newer is always better**

**5. Shop less, shop better**

### GLOBAL FRAMEWORK ON CHEMICALS

The GFC is an initiative across the life cycle of chemicals at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

The first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) will be held from 24–27 June 2025 in Punta del Este, Uruguay.