

## Fashion & textiles failing to tap water-related biz: CDP



Pic: CDP

The global fashion, apparel, footwear and household textiles industry is largely blind to the risks of water pollution and is failing to tap into water-related business opportunities, according to a new report published by CDP, a global environmental non-profit. Just 1 in 10 fashion companies show awareness of water pollution across whole value chain.

"CDP research shows the fashion and textiles sector's level of awareness and transparency is low, despite companies increasingly facing material risks from water pollution, including regulatory penalties, losing the social license to operate and damaged brand image. Less than half of the companies requested to provide data did so, and of those that reported, only one in 10 show awareness that water pollution is a risk across every stage of the apparel value chain," the London-headquartered organisation said in a press release.

The CDP report 'Interwoven Risks, Untapped Opportunities' analyses data from 62 companies (brands, manufacturers and retailers) involved in the fashion/apparel, footwear & home textiles industry. These 62 companies disclosed through CDP's water security questionnaire in 2019, at the request of investors and corporate customers.

CDP's analysis found the majority of substantive pollution risks reported by these companies were identified in the manufacturing stages of their value chain. Very few substantive risks were reported in other parts of the value chain known to have a high pollution potential. In fact, awareness of water pollution across all stages of the value chain is represented by just seven risk-aware companies: high-street fashion giants Gap Inc, H&M and Inditex (the biggest fashion group in the world and owner of Zara); along with luxury fashion houses Burberry and Kering Group (owner of Gucci and Saint Laurent); American multinational clothing firm Hanesbrands Inc; and South Africa-based multinational retailer Woolworths Holdings Ltd.

"Water is a business-critical issue for the apparel industry, and we recognise its importance across our value chain.

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We must focus not only on reducing water consumption in our manufacturing operations, which we started tackling with our water reduction goal, but also in raw material cultivation and customer product water use. We are also committed to improving water access and quality, in the regions we operate. Water is a context based, localised issue and the industry will need to continue to work with stakeholders in key water basins across our value chain, including the communities that are impacted by our water usage,” said Agata Smeets, director of Supply Chain Sustainability at Gap Inc.

Marie-Claire Daveu, chief sustainability officer & head of International Institutional Affairs at Kering Group, added: “Water pollution is one of the six environmental impacts covered by Kering’s Environmental Profit & Loss account for nearly 10 years. Because of the large amounts of water used by tanneries, special wastewater treatment measures are required: we have been working with our suppliers to improve processes, and implement programmes to protect the environment all along our supply chain.”

Fibre2Fashion News Desk (RKS)

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