

Rotary Africa event to unpack sustainable development of fashion and textiles

Sustainability has become a crucial consideration for many industries, with businesses globally needing to be increasingly cognisant of their contribution to protecting the environment. The textile and fashion industry is no exception. In fact, for many years, this industry has had a notoriously large environmental footprint.



Credit: cottonbro from Pexels

Thanks to the likes of a new generation of eco-innovators and eco-friendly fashionistas, the future of sustainability in the texting and fashion industry in Africa is looking promising.

The upcoming Zone 22 Rotary Africa Centennial International Conference, taking place on 24 and 25 April, is hosting a panel discussion on this crucial topic. In celebrating the positive change that Rotary International has had within Africa over the last 100 years, this conference also unpacks some of the real challenges that still need to be addressed on the continent. One such key area is the protection of the environment.

Innovation in Africa

Sustainable and environmentally-friendly textile development will be discussed by a panel including Kenyan designer Anyango Mpinga, a forward-thinking eco-innovator who explores the use of emerging technologies to create biodegradable textiles. Mpinga is passionate about aligning to the United National Sustainable Development Goal of sustainable employment, economic growth, and fair employment opportunities for all, particularly within the textile industry.

Also on the panel will be Samata Pattinson, CEO of Red Carpet Green Dress, a global change-making organisation bringing sustainable design to the forefront of conversation and action within the fashion industry.

According to Pattinson, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of African designers over the last few years, aided by the increasing recognition of African aesthetics within pop culture, which has inspired and contributed to more designers showing their range of designs to the world.



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1 Apr 2021



Bringing his perspective to the discussion will be Skander Negasi, CEO of Trade and Fairs Group who is also the Messe Frankfurt representative for East Africa and co-organiser of African Sourcing and Fashion Week, Africa's biggest trade event for the textile, apparel and fashion industry.

"Due to lack of resources, African designers have always been sustainable with resources in comparison to the European countries. There is a bright future when it comes to designing," he says.

Think bark cloth manufacturing in Uganda, woven textiles from Nigeria and Ghana, traditional Berber weaving in North Africa, and beadwork from Maasai and Ndebele artisans.

The panel will be moderated by Kutay Saritosun, the director of fashion brands at Bluesign Technologies in Switzerland, a man passionate about educating brands on producing more sustainable products.

Ahead of his involvement at the upcoming conference, Saritosun who is himself a Rotarian and former Rotary exchange student, says that the growth and movement of manufacturing factories throughout Africa have the potential to change the industry by being more mindful and wary of the environmental and social impact they have.

The fashion industry can no longer turn a blind eye to responsible consumption and production of materials and need to play their part in making a positive impact on climate change. This panel discussion forms part of a session on Protecting the Environment, one of the 11 sessions taking place at the conference.

Sustainability and responsible business practices are no longer buzzwords used by brands to persuade their customers that they're good corporate citizens, says African Brand Architects managing director Natalia Rosa. "New empowered generations demand and no longer ask nicely for action over promises. They want to see, not hear how businesses' strategies incorporate sustainability as a way of doing business and how these strategies contribute meaningfully to the communities and environments connected to them."



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Focus on environmental protection

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Architects has aligned itself with Rotary as the anchor sponsor of this Centennial Conference because of the organisation's commitment to sustainability, resilience and authenticity.

More than \$18m in Rotary Foundation global grant funding has been allocated over the last five years with a specific focus on water, sanitation and hygiene and community economic development.

Protecting the environment will officially become Rotary's seventh area of focus on 1 July 2021. It joins peacebuilding and conflict prevention; disease prevention and treatment; water, sanitation, and hygiene; maternal and child health; basic education and literacy; and community economic development, topics which are all included at the upcoming two-day virtual conference.

For more information about the conference and programme of events and speakers, visit <https://www.rotary9400.org.za/sitepage/rotary-africa-centennial>.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>