



**Sustainable Fashion Summit
ECOSOC Chamber, Friday, 1 February 2019**

**H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King
President of the Economic and Social Council**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the Sustainable Fashion Summit.

Let me start with thanking The Library and the UN Office for Partnerships for hosting this event to accelerate SDG implementation and spur action towards a more sustainable fashion industry.

[\[Fashion and the 2030 Agenda\]](#)

As you know, Sustainable fashion is key to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The fashion industry is a \$2.5 trillion-dollar industry that employs approximately 60 million people worldwide, most of them women.

Clothing production doubled from 2000 to 2014, and the number of garments purchased each year by the average consumer increased by 60 percent.¹

Undoubtedly, fashion has a global impact on the economy and the environment.

[\[Partnerships for the SDGs and sustainable fashion\]](#)

¹ McKinsey report from [2016](#)

Mitigating the sustainability impact of the fast-fashion business will likely require action across the industry, across governments, and across citizens.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides all of us with a plan of action to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path, ensuring that no one is left behind. Yet, we can only achieve it if we work together in partnerships.

Four years into implementing the 2030 Agenda, we have been seeing a range of different partnerships taking shape that all contribute to SDG achievement - public, public-private, multi-stakeholder, with civil society, academia, local governments.

Indeed, we need all the hands-on deck to achieve this transformative agenda. By pooling resources, we can achieve more: more impact, greater efficiency, and more sustainability.

The fashion industry has an important role to play, from big multinational companies to small and medium enterprises. All along the value chain, there is action to be taken that can contribute to SDG progress, improving peoples lives and protecting the environment.

[role of SMEs]

While the SDGs are intended for all tiers of business, SMEs will have a leading role to play in meeting several of the SDGs, and in evolving towards a more sustainable fashion industry.

SMEs account for an overwhelming majority of private sector business and economic activity in both developed and developing countries.²

Improving the economic livelihoods of the communities in which it operates, paying fair and equal wages to all its employees and ensuring that no one within the supply chain is living beneath the poverty line, are some of the ways which a business can help reach the Goals by 2030.

Governments, on the other hand, have an important role to play to foster an enabling environment for small enterprises and put in place policies to make SMEs more productive and sustainable.

The UN, through providing this multi-stakeholder platform, can continue to promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, by sharing SDG-related knowledge, tools and expertise.

[Conclusions]

These goals go beyond philanthropy, they are about governments, businesses, charities, civil society, consumers and activists coming together to safeguard the future of life on this planet.

² OECD report [2017](#)

The SDGs present greater opportunities for businesses to transform their practices, for government to adapt their policies, and for consumers to change their mindsets.

This year is critical for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as we will have two High-level Political Forums on sustainable development (HLPF), one in July under the auspices of ECOSOC and one in September at summit level, under the auspices of the General Assembly, which will look at ways to accelerate progress towards all the SDGs. Effective partnerships can galvanize action to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs.

I am looking forward to listening to the success stories related to fashion, sustainability, innovation and social justice that you will discuss here today.

I thank you.