

Seminar Summary

Moving the needle #12 **Sourcing from Myanmar:** **A dialogue about** **available options**

Asian Dialogue on Sustainability in the
Textile and Garment Industry Series

November 2022



Seminar summary

Explore the complexities of sourcing from Myanmar in this insightful discussion. Industry experts examine the risks, challenges, and ethical considerations for brands and suppliers.

Discussion topics:

- The impact of Myanmar's political crisis on garment workers and supply chains.
- Due diligence challenges and human rights risks in sourcing decisions.
- The debate over responsible exit strategies versus staying and mitigating harm.

Speakers

Stephen Frost – Moderator, industry expert on responsible sourcing

Dr Jonas Christoffersen – Human rights attorney, expert in corporate due diligence.

Khaing Zar Aung – President, Industrial Workers' Federation of Myanmar (IWFM).

Seminar key takeaways

- **Heightened risks for brands:** Human rights violations, including forced labour and trade union suppression, create significant ethical and compliance risks.
- **The due diligence dilemma:** While responsible sourcing frameworks exist, the realities on the ground make effective implementation nearly impossible.
- **The responsible exit debate:** Some advocate for brands to withdraw, while others argue that staying ensures continued livelihoods for workers.

Industry perspectives

- **Brands exiting Myanmar:** Some brands are exiting Myanmar due to rising compliance risks, while others are implementing enhanced monitoring.
- **A unified response to protect workers:** International organisations and trade unions advocate for a unified response to protect workers.
- **Brands looking to source elsewhere:** Alternative sourcing destinations, such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, are being considered by brands.

Calls-to-action

- **Assess your sourcing strategy:** Evaluate whether continued operations in Myanmar align with your company's ethical and legal commitments.
- **Engage with stakeholders:** Connect with unions, NGOs, and compliance experts to gain deeper insights into risks and mitigation strategies.
- **Stay informed:** Follow updates on Myanmar's evolving situation and industry-wide responses to responsible sourcing.

Resources for further reading

- [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)
- [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\): Garments from Myanmar](#)
- [Reports from the Industrial Global Union on Myanmar's labour rights situation](#)

About the Asian Dialogue Series

The “Asian Dialogues on Sustainability in the Textile and Garment Industry” series was initiated to foster collaboration and strengthen regional knowledge exchange for greater social, environmental and economic sustainability in the sector. Launched in 2015, the series aimed to cultivate regional, sector-specific dialogue and promote cooperation between actors from across the supply chain.

About Asia Garment Hub

The Asia Garment Hub is a digital one-stop shop tailored to the garment and textiles sector in Asia, viewed through a lens of Decent Work and Sustainability.

Join the AGH Circle

The AGH Circle is a dedicated discussion forum - where you can network and engage with industry professionals in discussions on decent work and environmental sustainability for free.

Join the Asia Garment Hub Circle today. Click [HERE](#) to register.

