

## THE FACT THAT HUMANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MISUSE IN GHANA

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### **ABSTRACT**

The fact that humans, who are responsible for the misuse and destruction of natural resources, are the party suffering the greatest harm within the ecosystem has increased the importance of environmental responsibility even more. In environment-based production strategies, environmental protection has become an economic activity that needs to be taken into consideration through all processes from designing to packaging. In this study, where eco-textiles were dealt with in a comprehensive manner, it was emphasized that aiming at manufacturing a healthy final product would not be sufficient and that environmentally friendly practices would have to be used in the production process as well.

The fashion industry has to play an important role in the path towards sustainability and the circular economy. Indeed, the fashion industry is a sector with a high environmental impact; it involves a very long and complicated supply chain, which is associated with large consumption of water and energy, use of chemical substances, water and air pollution, waste production and finally micro plastic generation.

In particular, textiles and clothing waste has become a huge global concern.

Against this background, this paper aims at analysing the existing EU measures that have an impact on the development of sustainable practices and the transition to a circular economy in the fashion industry, with a particular focus on the EU revised legislative framework on waste adopted within the Circular Economy Action Plan of 2015.

**Keywords:** circular fashion; textile and clothing waste; EU Waste Framework Directive

**INTRODUCTION**

Ghana — The rise of fast fashion in the United States is supporting an invisible "salvage market" that sees American clothes waste shipped to faraway countries where it fills marketplaces, clogs up beaches and overwhelms dumps.

There has been a five-fold increase in the amount of clothing Americans buy over the last three decades, but each item is worn only an average of seven times, according to reports. This has resulted in more discarded clothing than ever.

Many Americans donate their used clothing to charities when they are finished with it, under the assumption that it will be reused. But with the increasing amount of items being discarded, and the poorer quality of fast fashion, less and less can be resold, and millions of garments are put into bales and shipped abroad every year.

Whatever they cannot sell in their thrift stores gets sold off into the 'salvage' market," Liz Ricketts, co-founder and director of the OR Foundation, told CBS News. It's a long and complicated supply chain that is completely invisible to not only the average person, but even to people participating," Ricketts said.

The U.S. is the biggest culprit

At Ghana's Kamanto market, around 15 million items of used clothing from Western countries arrive every week. The entire population of Ghana is only 30 million.

The whole fast fashion model is built around... building cheap clothing, and the U.S. is the biggest culprit, exporting more second-hand clothing than any other country on earth," Samuel Oteng, a fashion designer and project manager at the Or Foundation, told CBS News.

Trucks offload bales of textiles — called Obronwawu, or "Dead White Man's Clothes" — at the market, which is a seven-acre maze of over 5,000 stalls. The bales are purchased by market traders — who do not know ahead of time what's in them — for between 25 and 500 dollars each. They then clean, tailor, and re-dye what they can of the clothing to give it new life.

**DO NOT HIDE UNDER THE GUISE OF DONATIONS**

Oteng says upcycling is becoming increasingly difficult because of the poor quality of fast fashion garments.

Before they used to have good quality clothes, but now there's a lot of trash," he said. "I feel like waste is being built into the model of fast fashion: Overproduce, overproduce, overproduce. In the end, people wear clothes for just like two weeks, and then just discard them. The waste doesn't end up in America. Ultimately it ends up here in Kantamanto.

Do not hide under the guise of donation

The upcycling work of traders at Katamanto is not enough to reduce the glut of clothing created by America's addiction to fast fashion. It is estimated that 40 percent of all the clothing bales sent to Ghana end up in landfills.

And some of the unsold clothing washes out to beaches when it rains, creating massive tangled webs called "tentacles" in the sand

The director of waste management for the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Solomon Noi, delivered a message to the U.S.: "Deal with it."

Do not hide under the guise of donations of second hand clothing, and then you ship them over to us just to cause problems to us, he said.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHE TAKING PLACE IN GHANA**

Fast fashion in Western countries supports an unnoticed "salvage market" in which clothing trash is sent to other countries

Despite providing shoppers up to 99% off on the Black Friday Sale in 2019, the Boohoo-owned label went so far as to include a freebie with every sale on Black Friday in 2020. It's only one instance of the persistent manufacturing and customers' desire for new, low-cost fashions, the impact of which can be seen in locations like Kantamanto Market, Accra, Ghana, which itself is home to West Africa's largest resale market and a receiver of a growing number of low-quality garments.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)

Consequently, an estimated 40% of all clothing bundles are discarded, eventually ending up in landfills or the ocean as per The OR Foundation, NGO, US. This has made it much more problematic for market vendors – who are still attempting to recuperate damages from the pandemic and the

The number of clothes purchased has increased almost fivefold over the previous three decades, given the emergence of fast fashion. Every week, 15 million used garments arrive in Accra from the United Kingdom, Europe, the US, and Australia, filling the city's huge retail market. As quoted by DW, "The goods that are coming now are really impacting our business," claimed one seller, emphasising that such cheap and poor goods cannot be resold in the marketplace.

This has led to more clothes being thrown than ever before. Fast fashion in Western countries supports an unnoticed "salvage market" in which clothing trash is sent to other countries where it fills marketplaces, jams beaches, and overwhelms landfills causing an ecological catastrophe fed by fast fashion, but at the other corner of the globe.

Whatever they can't sell in their thrift stores ends up in the 'salvage' market," co-founder and director of the OR Foundation, Liz Ricketts, told CBS News.

Furthermore, abandoned clothes wash up on the country's shores after being discharged into the sea. According to UN Goodwill Ambassador Roberta Annan, this is a calamity waiting to happen for marine life. "You won't be able to get it out. You must dig. It's been buried," she told DW. Some of these items are polyester and synthetic materials, which end up in the canal and choke out the aquatic life and cloth market, Annan said further.

With a limited supply of quality used clothes and an increasing supply of throwaway apparel, Ghanaians are driven to do precisely what we're told won't happen when we donated our unwanted. They travel hundreds of kilometres just to be discarded, never seeing their supposed second life

## **CONCLUSION**

Increasing environmental problems have urged companies manufacturing goods to meet basic necessities of people to turn their looks to environment-based management strategies. This

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<sup>2</sup> [www.cbsnews.com](http://www.cbsnews.com)

new approach also forms the basis of ecological production. The main objective of ecological production is to adopt and implement certain strategies that can make maximum use of nature without upsetting the ecological balance.

Owing to changing demand and technologies, textile and apparel product, which are among the basic necessities of people, can negatively affect the environment as well as humans during the production, usage and disposal stages. The share of environmentally friendly eco-textiles within international textile and apparel trade has been increasing so as to minimize hazardous effects. Importance attached to environmental protection by consumers (end users) and their understandings of responsibility have provided great contributions to this issue. Further improvement of the present level of ecological consciousness will help parties involved in various processes in textile trade and production to establish more efficient and to-the-point environmental quality standards

Rather than wasting the clothes and throwing them away so that it causes problem for the environment it would be better if the clothes that are not in use are provided to the poor. Dumping as well as burning of the clothes causes to much of problem for the environment. The smoke from the burning clothes may lead to harmful diseases. Throwing away of the clothes after using once or thrice should be stopped. The government should take steps and measures in order to solve the problem of clothing waste under the environmental law.

The fashion industry has to play an important role in the path towards sustainability and circular economy, and circular economy especially is one of the strategic areas of innovation for the future development of the textile and clothing sector in Europe and beyond.

In this perspective, given the fact that textiles and clothing waste has become a huge global concern,

We have emphasized how the EU circular economy package is opening new scenarios for pre-consumer waste (waste materials or processing waste) and post-consumer waste (textiles or other items) in the garment value chain.

Indeed, besides establishing targets for textile waste for the first time, the EU package includes the use of economic instruments and other measures to provide incentives for the application of the waste hierarchy, such as the extended producer responsibility, and appears

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<sup>3</sup> [www.news18.com](http://www.news18.com)

to introduce a change in the concept of waste that is increasingly treated as a resource, with a significant impact on the fashion industry

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<sup>4</sup> www.vox.com