

SUSTAINABILITY

## Year-over-year emission fluctuations stunt Fashion Charter signatories: report

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*In order to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, experts are attempting to tackle fashion's greenhouse gas problem with haste. Image credit: UNFCCC/Steve Adcock for Pixabay*

By AMIRAH KEATON

The upstream environmental impacts of apparel production are still proving to be one of the industry's biggest barriers to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

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As experts express a sense of urgency as far as global warming is concerned, emission fluctuations occurring up and down the sector's supply chains threaten the health of corporate ESG efforts established in the interest of the planet. A new progress report from the United Nations' Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action addresses many of the claims in the aftermath of the coalition's introduction, showing luxury leaders are still united in an attempt to tackle fashion's greenhouse gas problem.

"As with any other [industry], the emissions footprint of fashion is significant," said Conor Barry, manager of engagement at [United Nations Climate Change](#), in a statement.

"While progress has been made more of the industry needs to come on board, to create a level playing field, share [resources] and knowledge and accelerate [collective] industry transition," Mr. Barry said. "The direction of travel is clear: it is imperative to decarbonize our economy as soon as possible in support of the broader Sustainable Development Goals."

"This requires herculean effort by everyone, and U.N. Climate Change remains committed to [helping] the fashion industry in this journey."

Renewable future

Following the formation of the United Nations Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action at the 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24), a new release marks a reporting milestone for the group.

In the roughly three years since its founding, the Charter, housed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has been shaped by fashion stakeholders interested in identifying solutions for the broader textile and clothing and industries to progress in the direction of holistic climate action.

The coalition's latest report, [The United Nations' Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action Progress Report 2023](#), brings the public in on a variety of steps taken in alignment with the ultimate goal limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels.

ESG targets of industry past have traditionally honed in on the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, as these fossil fuels currently supply around 80 percent of the world's energy according to U.K.-based environmental law charity [Client Earth](#), on the behalf of factories and other fashion production centers.

Per the report, the sector is starting to shift focus and get specific in identifying other sources of harm.

More than 80% of companies in the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint, but the industry still has a long way to go, according to a new report released today by U.N. Climate Change and [@CDP](#).

U.N. Climate Change (@UNFCCC) [March 27, 2023](#)

The U.N.'s report admits that reducing Scope 3 emissions those that occur in a company's value chain but are not directly controlled by the company is key to reaching the 1.5-degree Celsius threshold that unites signatories.

Considering the above, monitoring the state of emissions levels in the acceleration of a transition to a net-zero economy is crucial.

The progress report suggests that, though marginal improvements have been made across other categories, this one appears to be where fashion could use a hand, as modern realities of heightened atmospheric carbon concentrations are met with some resistance, according to the numbers.

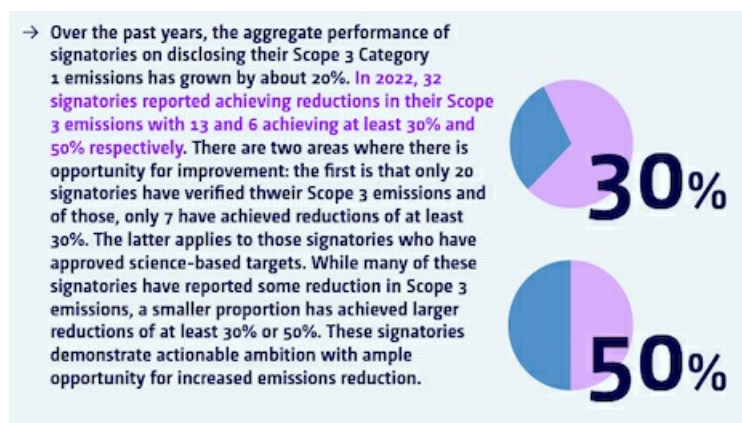


Image credit: UNFCCC

Thirty percent of companies that have signed onto Charter efforts have reported a doubling of energy consumption over the last three years, marking further cause for concern.

The CDP actually estimates that a company's Scope 3 emissions are more than 11 times higher than Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions the emissions that a company directly produces from its own operations combined.

Also known as "upstream emissions," these offshoots the gas burned in the transport of packaging from a supplier to a brand's store, or the methane emitted during the very agricultural operations that provide industry players with leathers and other precious materials, have entered the conservation chat in recent years.

Smart supply chain management has arguably never held greater importance. Thankfully, the portion of signatories who cite increased involvement has grown.

Last year, 80 percent of Fashion Charter signatories reported engaging their supply chains on climate-related conflicts, marking an increase of 20 percent.

Luxury takes the lead

By November 2021, 130 companies and 41 supporting organizations comprised the Charter. As of Feb. 22, 2023, the brand, supplier and retailer participant count is now down to 99.

The report details that in the last three years, 31 signatories have lost accreditation due to failure to report. Others

have left the Charter entirely.

Current luxury members include the likes of Burberry, Chanel, Herms, Hugo Boss and Stella McCartney. Conglomerates such as Kering Group and LVMH also grace the ranking.

*Four years ago, the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action launched at COP24*

"While individual action will continue, with the full commitment of the Charter's signatory base we have a unique opportunity to collaborate on issues that no brand, supplier or retailer can achieve on its own," the U.N.'s Mr. Barry said, in a statement.

Besides teamwork, it seems that disclosure is a driving force of change.

CPD data shows that 89 percent of signatories complied with the Fashion Charter's basic reporting requirement and disclosed climate-related information for this reporting round, as compared to an initial 2020 response rate of 73 percent.

Third-party auditing could strengthen these transparency efforts. Currently, only 50 percent of signatories report third-party verified Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions.

"The luxury industry has a responsibility to take a leading role in the fight against climate change," said Marie Claire-Daveu, chief sustainability and institutional affairs officer at Kering, in a statement.

"By openly and honestly sharing the impact of our actions on a regular basis, we show our commitment to sustainability and our leadership in the luxury industry," she said. "Through verified disclosure, we take responsibility for our role in shaping the future and demonstrate our determination to create a world that is not just sustainable, but thriving."