

**Written submission from the Union of Concerned Research in Fashion to the
Copenhagen Fashion Summit, 2019:
Considerations on Sustainability Agenda**

May 6th, 2019

We, the Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion, recognize that the response of the fashion sector to the intensifying ecological crisis has been - and continues to be - over-simplified, fragmented and obstructed by the growth logic of extractive business models as they are currently realized and practiced.

As a group of concerned researchers, supported by 300 signees from institutions around the world, our view is that textile and clothing researchers can no longer remain uninvolved or complacent, and we need to conduct ourselves in new ways. The Union's founding members have more than a century of combined research experience and see uncritical research findings, duplication of research, reduction and misuse of scientific and technical knowledge as obstructing the sustainability transformation of the sector. We thus wish to ask the following questions of the Copenhagen Fashion Summit:

Question 1:

Circular fashion systems as they exist today do nothing to tackle consumption - the elephant in the room. Instead they perpetuate the repeated replacement of fashion products with new ones, wrongly suggesting that this has no impact on resource levels or people's expectations about how to act. We see circularity as one of many transition strategies; useful while we transition to something better. We would like to ask the Copenhagen Fashion Summit, what you see this other, better future to be?

Question 2:

Within the discourse on sustainable fashion, there is an explicit tendency of countries in the wealthy north preaching abstinence and austerity to the global south. How are the organizers of the Copenhagen Fashion Summit listening to diverse voices, including those of workers and the socially disadvantaged?

Question 3:

The Union of Concerned Researchers in Fashion advocates for whole systems and paradigm change, beyond current norms and business-as-usual. The fashion industry is very far away from true sustainability, and the measures of progress currently used are based on reducing impacts, to "do less harm." This risks measuring insignificant changes, putting the whole endeavor of transparency at risk. How can the Copenhagen Fashion Summit champion action towards exposing the real usage and waste of resources, and its direct link to the business side, to prices, salaries and profit margins? This form of transparency would at least reveal how far away we are from true sustainability.

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