

Preface - Pierre Hupperts

Change set in motion

In 2018, the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile (AGT) took further steps in the area of International Responsible Business Conduct (IRBC). Companies, the government, civil-society organisations, and trade unions are working together to bring about sustainable change in the garment and textile chain.



A great deal has been achieved since the Agreement was signed in 2016. The number of participating brands has risen to 92, representing nearly half of the Dutch garment and textile market. Many companies have made good progress with their due diligence (risk management). A clearer picture of the chain is emerging: the list of production locations grew strongly in 2018. Cooperation within the Agreement has led to a further deepening and broadening of knowledge and understanding of the chains and due diligence, with workshops, training courses and meetings. In addition, numerous joint projects have been set up, aimed at tackling problems in production countries.

But we are well aware that this is only the start of the change process. Change is slower than we would wish it to be in view of our enthusiasm and commitment. It takes time to arrive at the right approach and to change the organisation and processes within companies. This makes it essential to set clearly defined priorities and to focus our attention and efforts on activities that can really make a difference.

The Dutch textile market is only a small part of the world market and our influence is limited. However, our initiative can help to get things moving within the international garment and textile sector. Together with the German Bündnis für nachhaltige Textilien [*Partnership for Sustainable Textiles*], we are working to achieve broader cooperation in Europe.

All the companies and other parties in the Agreement are following a steep learning curve. We can apply this new knowledge in a positive fashion in follow-up steps. In this annual report, we present the results for 2018, together with many stories from the field which illustrate how the Agreement is gradually taking shape.

Pierre Hupperts, chair of Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile