



**CRADLE TO CRADLE  
NGO**

**C2C SUMMIT:  
TEXTILES &  
SUPPLY CHAIN**



# C2C SUMMIT: TEXTILES & SUPPLY CHAIN

The C2C Summit Textiles & Supply Chain on 28 January 2021 with a focus on the Global South has shown that the global textile industry is facing fundamental change towards circularity and true sustainability. In light of increasingly scarce resources and simultaneous global population growth, this is the only way to achieve positive and healthy growth. At the summit, we discussed with representatives of companies and NGOs as well as politicians not only the problems which the industry faces, but also the solutions that already exist today. Around 300 people from the textile industry, politics, associations, NGOs and civil society registered for the digital event. The all-day summit focused on how the global textile value chain can be brought into cycles in order to end not only the waste of resources and environmental damage caused by the industry - especially in the production countries of the Global South - but also the social consequences of this.



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Dr. Maria Flachsbarth,  
Parliamentary State Secretary in the German  
Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and  
Development at the C2C Summit



“We need textiles designed for skin contact and circulating either in the biological or the technical cycle. This way, we can end the squandering of resources and the emergence of textile landfills.”

Nora Sophie Griefahn and Tim Janßen,  
executive directors at Cradle to Cradle NGO  
at the C2C Summit

Between 2000 and 2015, the global textile production volume doubled. At the same time, the sector accounts for 10 % of global carbon emissions – equaling the amount that Germany, Russia, and Japan emit together. Combined with the high consumption of water, it is no surprise that the textile industry is the second largest pollutant. Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary in the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, added that environmental damages and the squandering of resources lead to harmful working conditions in the industry, which have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She stressed that we urgently need a circular economy in the sector and that we must use the minimum amount of resources, avoid waste and reuse fibers.

“The Cradle to Cradle approach can help us achieve a Circular Economy in the textile sector. This approach, which looks at the production process in the round and uses intelligent product design, aims to create closed cycles. That is a concept that is gaining increasing importance in the partnership for sustainable textiles, and in the further development of the Green Button, our government-run label for sustainably produced textiles”, Ms. Flachsbarth concluded.

But within Cradle to Cradle, not only the environmental and

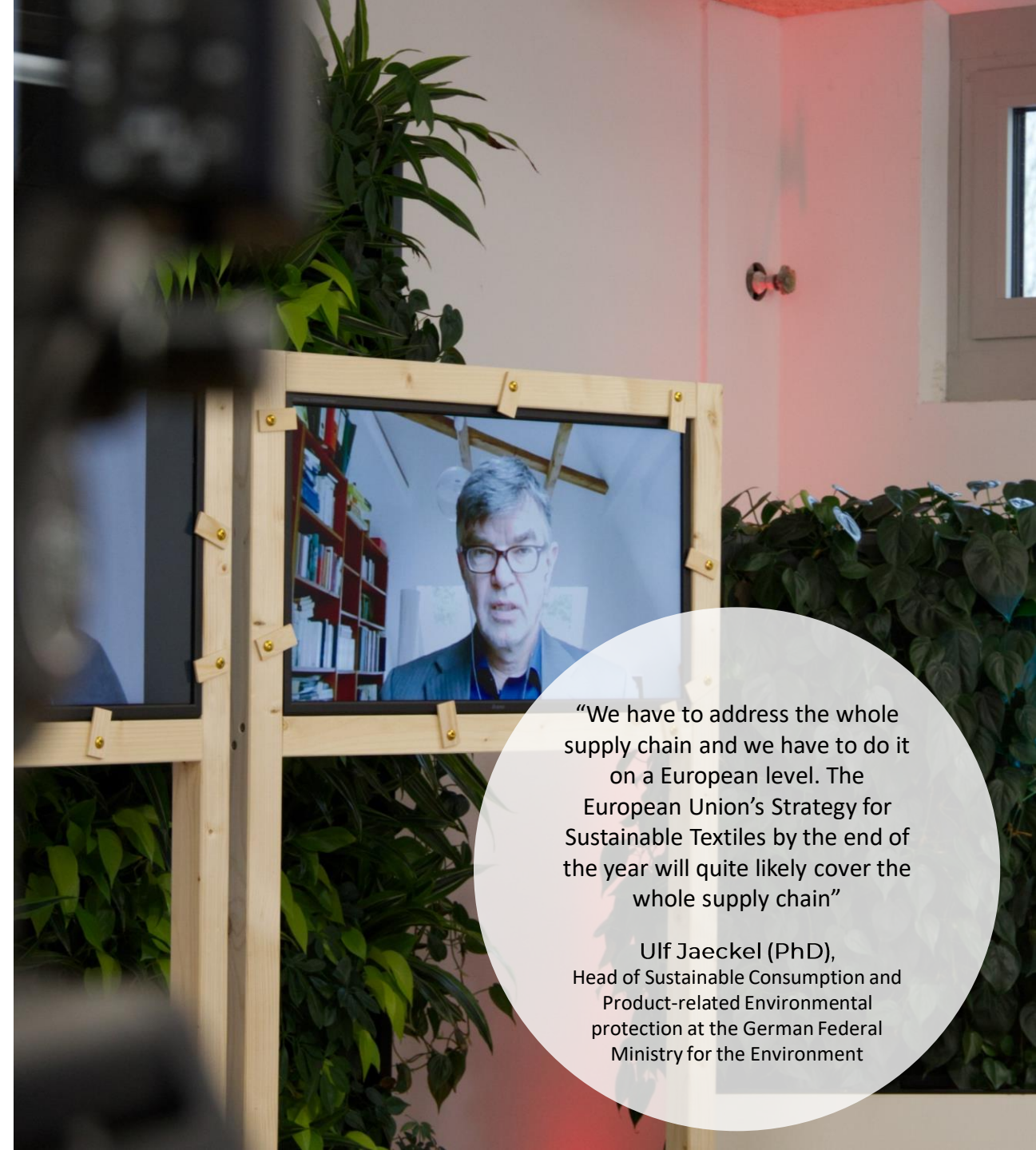
resource aspects are of utmost importance. Raw materials that are made into textiles must be free of toxic substances and pollutants. They should not cause any damage to one’s health, neither by being produced, nor by being worn. As of today, this is unfortunately not the case. Cotton textiles are treated with toxic dyes and process chemicals. Synthetic fibers are processed with harmful additives and catalysts. Altogether, most textiles on the market are not designed for contact with skin.

„Within a global value chain, the quality of all applied substances is important – whether it is fibers, threads, or dyes. We need textiles designed for skin contact and circulating either in the biological or the technical cycle. This way, we can end the squandering of resources and the emergence of textile landfills. This is especially important in the production countries of the Global South, where the environmental harm caused by today’s production methods have a direct negative social impact”, Nora Sophie Griefahn and Tim Janßen, executive directors at Cradle to Cradle NGO, said.

# REAL PRICES AND SELF-INITIATIVE

In our first panel, **Ulf Jaeckel** (PhD), Head of Sustainable Consumption and Product-related Environmental protection at the **German Federal Ministry for the Environment** and Co-Lead at the UN Program for Consumer Information on Sustainability; **Patrik Lundström**, CEO & Founder of cotton and viscose recycler **Renewcell**; **Simone Cipriani**, Head & Founder of the **Ethical Fashion Initiative** and Chairman of the **UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion**; and **Rob Kragt**, CSR Communications and Training Manager EMEA at French flooring manufacturer **Tarkett** spoke about the problems of the textile supply chain and discussed political frameworks that are required to enable the fundamental change the industry needs in order to become sustainable.

“We have to address the whole supply chain and we have to do it on a European level. The European Union’s Strategy for Sustainable Textiles by the end of the year will quite likely cover the whole supply chain”, Ulf Jaeckel said. The strategy is currently in the public consultation process. A study about circular economy in the textile sector by Cradle to Cradle NGO and consulting company Adelphi is included in this strategy. The study was written on behalf of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) for the Federal Ministry Economic Cooperation



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Simone Cipriani is optimistic that this acceptance would be given with circularity and Cradle to Cradle. “Up until now, the industry did not radically change their business model, only put some elements of sustainability in it. This is untenable, because you cannot make the whole supply chain sustainable and circular if you do not change the business model. Now, for the first time, the supply chain is seriously thinking about this, because COVID-19 has increased the problems”, he said. He also mentioned that we need “legislation focused on a different accounting system that takes the internal carbon pricing into account”. The internalization of external costs is crucial to enable a circular economy to function in every sector.

Patrik Lundström added that, as of now, his company Renewcell is the only company that truly creates that circularity when it comes to cellulose fibers. Renewcell uses used textiles and makes them into viscose fibers that can be used for new clothes. The volume of textile fibers will increase from 110 to 160 million tons in this decade, Lundström said. Renewcell, who works with companies like H&M and Levi's, is growing in demand in the industry, but will not be able to provide the required recycling capacity for the whole world in a decade. “We are in a decade of change, but ten

years is a rather short time to change an industry. We need to move fast, from ideas to action. The most important factor that we need to realize is: The technology is there, and we have acceptance from governments and consumers. What we lack is scale, and we must work on that in every sector”, Mr. Lundström concluded. It is positive that the EU is working on better collection and recycling systems for textiles. However, it must also promote the necessary infrastructure.


While Rob Kragt agreed that legislation and investments in technology are needed, he also asked the industry to lead the change. Tarkett offers carpet tiles that are entirely recyclable, takes them back after use and reworks them into new tiles. “We had to redesign the entire product to achieve this. We did it without legislative endorsement. And we did it on the risk of losing money. But this is the way forward”, Kragt said. “I think we need legislation, taxes for pollution and materials that are not safe. But the initiative must come from within the industry”, he concluded.

## REPORTS FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The second panel focused on the regions in which the raw materials for the textile market are cultivated and processed. **Aneel Kumar Ambavaram**, Founder & CEO of **Grameena Vikas Kendram India**; **Tina Stridde**, Managing Director of **Aid by Trade Foundation/Cotton made in Africa**; **Mansoor Bilal**, VP Marketing, Research & Innovation at **Soorty Enterprises (Pvt) Ltd**; and **Ebru Debbag**, Director Global Sales & Marketing at **Soorty Enterprises (Pvt) Ltd** discussed the situation for small cotton farmers in the Indian province of Andhra Pradesh and in African countries as well as the setup of circular denim production by Soorty in Pakistan. The panel was moderated by C2C expert and member of the board at Cradle to Cradle NGO, **Katja Hansen**.

Today's textile production and consumption patterns lead to environmental damages and negative social impacts, especially in the production countries, Aneel Kumar Ambavaram and Tina Stridde stated. Grameena Vikas Kendram India and their RESET program (Regenerate the Environment Society and Economy through Textiles) as well as Cotton made in Africa (CmiA) want to

change this by offering small cotton farmers a chance to join a network in which they can cultivate cotton sustainably, without GMO crops and the use of harmful pesticides. In the past years, the average household income of the RESET farmers has increased by 30 %, mostly because of lower costs for cultivation, Mr Ambavaram declared. Lakshmi, a farmer who owns 3 acres of land, 2 of which she uses for cotton cultivation, joined Mr. Ambavaram in the discussion. She said that her yield has increased since she joined the RESET program in 2019. Furthermore, biodiversity has increased through the initiative, which is beneficial for the soil in Andhra Pradesh. "We started with a few farmers, and it took time until it worked. For the farmers, it was a great risk to change. They thought it was very labor intensive, that it would be easier to just spray pesticides", Mr Ambavaram said. But the results show that RESET and their farmers can contribute to thinking in cycles at the very beginning of the supply chain.



“The future is in the Global South - consumption will emerge where production already is.”

Ebru Debbag,  
Director Global Sales &  
Marketing at Soorty Enterprises

“Consumers are thinking more about the effects of their activities and their consumption. They have a very important role. They push retailers and brands.”

Tina Stridde,  
Managing Director of Aid by Trade  
Foundation/Cotton made in Africa

“Our success shows us that we can make a contribution to thinking in cycles right at the beginning of the value chain.”

Aneel Kumar Ambavaram,  
founder and CEO Grameena Vikas  
Kendram

“For Cradle to Cradle, the inclusive, cultural aspect is really important. We can only make a circular supply chain work, if we share our learnings and benefits”

Katja Hansen,  
board member at C2C NGO

Aid by Trade Foundation with its CmiA initiative aims for the same in African countries by acting as a link between small cotton farmers and big retailers. “The initiative is a mass market approach to feed sustainable raw material into the global textile value chain”, Tina Stridde said. The initiative also benefits from the increasing demand for sustainable clothing. “Sustainability will not go away anymore. It is here to stay. Consumers are thinking more about the effects of their activities and their consumption. They have a very important role, they push retailers and brands”, Ms. Stridde added.

One of these brands is Soorty Enterprises, the first denim producer worldwide with an entire Cradle to Cradle-certified products range, from threads and fabrics to entire garments. “The quest for a

transparent product offer is why we picked C2C. C2C provides a holistic approach because it brings life cycle and design into question”, Ebru Debbag said. Establishing Cradle to Cradle took Soorty two years, Mansoor Bilal added. “Speed-to-market sometimes restrained us. Customers expected us to implement milder standards because C2C was too restrictive, but that is not the goal of sustainability”, Mr. Bilal said. The panelists also called on governments worldwide to tackle the problems in the production countries, as they believe the issue should not be addressed by private initiatives only. “Legislation, also in Europe, does have to reflect more on the consequences for the Global South”, Debbag concluded.



# CRADLE TO CRADLE ON A LARGE SCALE

The third panel discussed the scalability of Cradle to Cradle in mass production with **Friederike Priebe**, Team Lead Cradle to Cradle Textiles at EPEA – part of Drees & Sommer; **Alexander Meyer zum Felde**, Partner & Associate Director Impact & Sustainability & Circular Economy at **Boston Consulting Group** (BCG); **Andreas Bothe**, Head of CSR & Sustainability at **Bay City Textilhandels GmbH**; and **Mesbah Sabur**, founder of tech company **Circularise**.

Friederike Priebe is working on establishing Cradle to Cradle in the textile sector on a large scale. EPEA advises companies on their way to Cradle to Cradle-certification and supports them in changing their production processes accordingly. Since the 1970s, a lot of knowledge about material health has disappeared in the textile industry due to the fast growth of markets and because profit has been put above quality, she said. “One of our main targets is not only creating a Cradle to Cradle product but to scale up the process and brand strategies on how to market these products”, Priebe mentioned.

“As long as you can sell t-shirts for 2 € and consumers rather buy them than shirts for 8 or 9 €, nothing is going to change. We as consumers vote with our wallets.”

Alexander Meyer zum Felde,  
Partner & Associate Director at  
Boston Consulting Group

“We have seen that with the idea of Cradle to Cradle you are really looking into the details, more than with other standards.”

Andreas Bothe,  
Head of CSR & Sustainability  
Bay City Textilhandels GmbH

“One of our main targets is not only adding to a Cradle to Cradle product but to scale up the process and brand strategies on how to market these products”

Friederike Priebe,  
Team Lead Cradle to Cradle  
Textiles at EPEA

“Transparency is a very important topic in our quest towards a more sustainable world, to have more data and more insights in what is happening with material flows and how things are manufactured.”

Mesbah Sabur,  
founder of Circularise



Alexander Meyer zum Felde added that it is already possible to scale textile production according to Cradle to Cradle-criteria. BCG supported the C&A brand with producing and marketing their C2C collection. “In the past 3 to 4 years, for the first time, we can see that commercial success is directly linked to responsible and sustainable behavior”, Mr. Meyer zum Felde said. If a brand, for example, uses compostable bleach instead of conventional bleach, it may double the cost in the beginning. But on the other hand, the costs for water treatment and labor health are much lower in consequence. This also led to the fact that C&A was able to offer their healthy and circular C2C collection at the same price as other collections, Mr. Meyer zum Felde said.

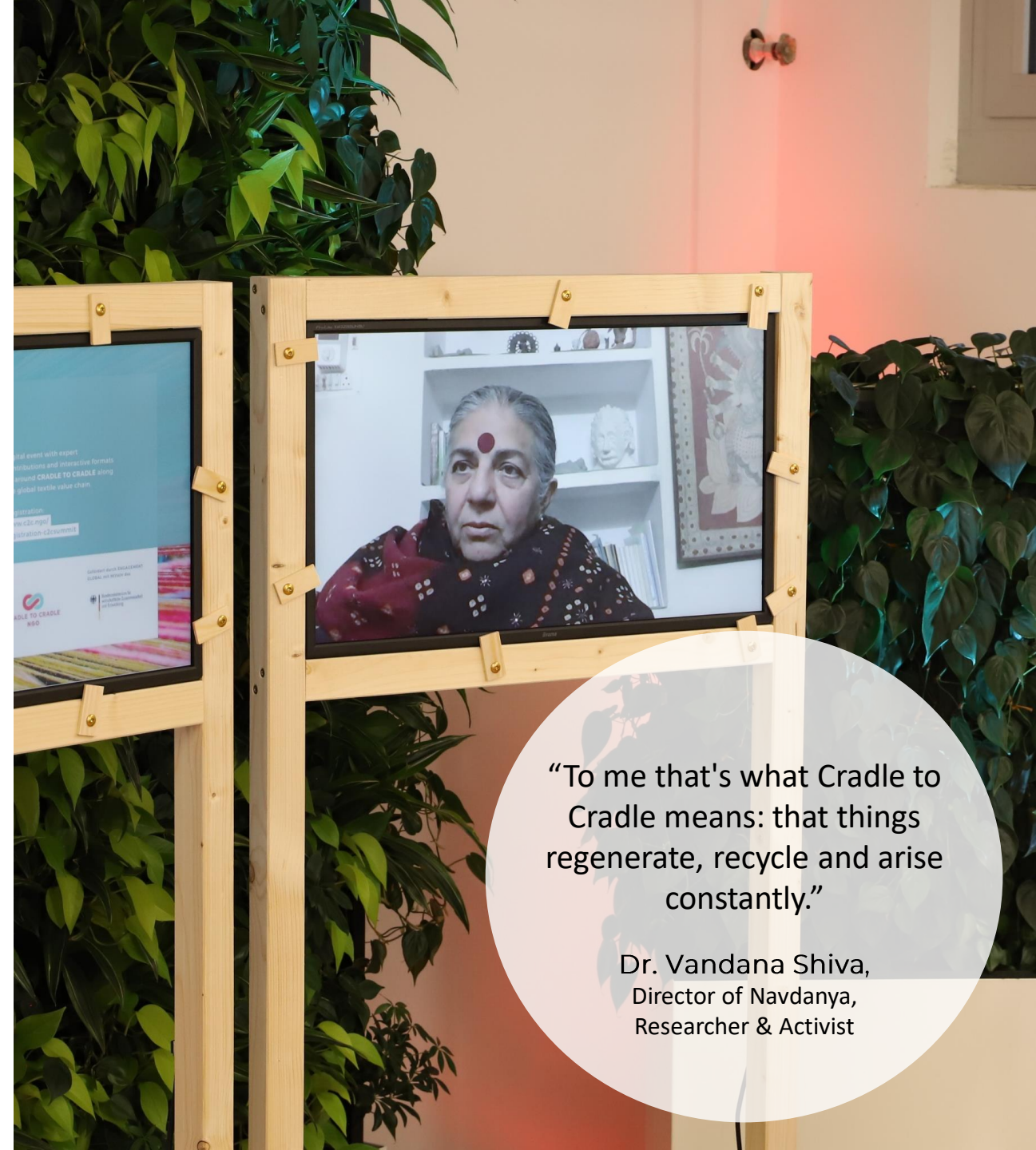
Andreas Bothe said it took some persuasion to take the suppliers of Bay City on the journey towards Cradle to Cradle and sustainable mass production. Bay City is included along the entire textile value chain, produces for third parties and their own brands and has more than 2000 customers worldwide. Bay City started engaging with Cradle to Cradle in 2016. “Factory owners were laughing at us as we requested more sustainability in dyeing and cotton treatment. But we were able to follow up with our

demands because management and our directors backed us up”, Mr. Bothe said. Now, the suppliers know that a larger investment in, for example, sustainable dyes results in lower costs in the end. Bay City already took part in a large retailers C2C-certified collection and will be marketing a C2C collection for their own brand by the end of the year. Mr. Bothe stressed the importance of transparency and collaboration between brands and suppliers to be able to make the entire supply chain more sustainable.

Mesbah Sabur and his company Circularise want to support this transparency through technology. Circularise offers a blockchain to facilitate a circular economy by tracking materials throughout the entire supply chain of a product. While the decentralized blockchain is not the only way to bring transparency to supply chains, it is “a secure and open platform to monitor the origin and quality of resources and materials, and to verify this information at the same time”, Mr. Sabur said.

# VANDANA SHIVA: WE NEED A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN THE GLOBAL TEXTILE INDUSTRY

In her inspirational keynote, activist, scholar, and author Dr. Vandana Shiva mentioned the importance of internalizing external costs of environmental and health damages in production methods to be able to reduce production costs for sustainable products and stop the squandering of resources. Therefore, a circular economy with the appropriate political framework on a global level is needed. Humanitarian issues, health issues and the climate crisis are “different symptoms of one common crisis. The main problem is that our planet’s boundaries are broken. We need to break the habit of separation, which is an artificial concept, and need to think in systems again”, she said. “We need to develop Cradle to Cradle models to maximize production systems that generate biodiversity and reverse climate change”, she concluded.



“To me that's what Cradle to Cradle means: that things regenerate, recycle and arise constantly.”

Dr. Vandana Shiva,  
Director of Navdanya,  
Researcher & Activist



All video recordings of the C2C Summit:  
Textiles and Supply Chain are available on  
YouTube:







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