

Enhancing traceability and transparency of sustainable value chains in the garment and footwear sector

Recommendation No. 46



**United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation
and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)**



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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

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of sustainable value chains in the garment
and footwear sector**



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Foreword

The garment and footwear industry is one of the most polluting sectors on the planet and has a vital role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to ensure that the world limits global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, in line with the Paris Agreement. Human exploitation is also a significant challenge in a sector where opaque international chains of production make it difficult to find out how—or even where—our clothes and shoes are being made. Consumers, governments and many companies are calling for change. But, until now, it has been very difficult for clothing and footwear vendors to vouch with authority for the sustainable and ethical production values of their goods. Improving traceability and transparency has therefore become a priority for the industry. By tracking and tracing goods through the supply chain, producers and brands have the information they need to make verifiable sustainability claims that consumers, governments and regulators can trust.

The aim of this recommendation is to establish a mechanism that enables governments, industry partners, consumers, and all other relevant stakeholders to make risk-informed decisions, overcome information asymmetry, communicate, and achieve accountability for sustainability claims (including those for regulatory compliance) and anchor business models to responsible business conduct. It does so by providing industry actors with a set of internationally agreed practices for the harmonized collection and transmission of data for tracking and tracing materials, products, and processes across an entire value chain, including all involved facilities and intermediaries, and includes related information about the sustainability performance of these value chain participants.

While specifically developed for the garment and footwear industry, such internationally agreed practices for advancing traceability and transparency have applications in cross-industry value chains, thus contributing to the achievement of several goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 on responsible consumption and production. The recommendation includes implementation guidelines to assist policy and decision makers to better understand tracking and tracing, and provides an implementation framework for all stakeholders in garment and footwear value chains. The accompanying Call to Action (ECE/TRADE/C/CEFACT/2020/6/Rev1) provides a mechanism to monitor and track the implementation of the recommended measures and to facilitate the exchange of good practices and lessons learned.

It is my hope that this recommendation will be of assistance and benefit in going further, doing better, and delivering more on this shared journey. The decade of action to achieve the SDGs by our 2030 deadline began under the shadow of COVID. Let us draw lessons from this period and seize opportunities to rebuild by working together as countries, as businesses and as citizens.



Olga Algayerova
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)

Simple, Transparent and Effective Processes for Global Commerce

UN/CEFACT's mission is to improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transitional economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contribute to the growth of global commerce.

Participation in UN/CEFACT is open to experts from United Nations Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations recognised by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Through this participation of government and business representatives from around the world, UN/CEFACT has developed a range of trade facilitation and e-business standards, recommendations and tools that are approved within a broad intergovernmental process and implemented globally.

UN/CEFACT is committed to ensuring that the gender dimension is reflected in norms, roles, procedures, and access to resources. Government and trade are encouraged to promote equal opportunities for women and men within the scope of Trade Facilitation activities. UN/CEFACT specifically encourages the collection, analysis, and monitoring of gender disaggregated data in order to better understand and support women's engagement in international trade and transport facilitation.

This Recommendation encourages governments, business communities, development partners, international organizations, and other policymakers to follow UN/CEFACT's commitment to ensure inclusiveness for women.

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