

PRESS RELEASE

World Environment Day, the 5th June

«Connect yourself for justice» calls for simpler lifestyles and more sustainable habits in our consumption of fashion to minimize the environmental and social impact

- The new "Connect poverty" report reminds us that the textile industry is the second most polluting industry in the world after the oil industry.
- This report closes a cycle of five studies that have analysed the impact of our consumption habits and lifestyles on the planet and on people's lives, and that it is a topic urgent to deal with during crisis of the Covid-19.

Madrid, 28th May 2020. - Facing the celebration of the next World Environment Day and in the middle of the 5^o anniversary of the Laudato si' and in the beginning of the Year Laudato si', the catholic organizations of «Connect yourself for justice» present their last report of the cycle "Connect poverty". During the cycle they have analyzed for more than a year, how our consumption habits and lifestyles affect the planet and people; this includes habits with the water, food, mobiles phones, transport and energy, all of them considered topics very urgent to deal with, in the midst of the crisis of the Covid-19.

On this occasion the fashion industry is analyzed, highlighting that it is the second most polluted in the world after the oil industry. Cotton uses 10% of all the pesticides that affect the planet and 2.4% of the arable land. Making a jeans requires 7,500 litres of water and the 20% of the toxics that are being poured into the water come from the textile industry.

These are some of the data collected in the new and last report "Connect poverty" of the campaign "If you take care of the planet, you fight against poverty" led by «Connect yourself for justice» -Cáritas, CEDIS, CONFER, Justicia y Paz, Manos Unidas and REDES (Network of Entities for Solidarity Development)-. The report analyzes the social and environmental impacts of the textile sector through the five stages of the life cycle of clothing, which consists of the extraction of raw materials, the production of fabrics and their manufacture, transport, consumption and generated waste.

As Laudato si' number 203 points out, "compulsive consumerism is one example of the techno-economic paradigm ". This is because "the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products " and "people end up immersed in the maelstrom of unnecessary purchases and expenditures." As if it were a prophetic denunciation, he warns in point 204 that "the obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction" to recommend in point 215 "by learning to see and appreciate beauty, we learn to reject self-interested pragmatism".

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS

The 80% of staff working in the textile industry are women. They usually start to work at the age of fourteen, they work 12-14 hour days and hopefully they have one day off a week or a week's holiday a year. Their salaries do not allow them to cover their basic needs and they are also exposed to the risk of suffering from various health affections due to the use of the dyes used in the clothing processes.

Bangladesh, as long as India and Cambodia, are the largest exporters of textiles in the world. From an environmental point of view, the consequence of this delocalization of production is the increase in transport requirements, which means an increase in infrastructures and pollution. For example, the T-

shirts that arrive every day for sale in the EU have followed a route through up to seven countries, releasing millions of tons of CO2 in their transport.

In addition, the "fast fashion" model, offered by the sector, favors constant changes in collections at low prices and it encourages frequent purchase and disposal of clothes. It is a business that incentivizes a disproportionate need for consumption, causing us to buy up to 13 times a year and the 40% of what we buy is never used.

Finally, this fashionable consumption pattern increases the generation of waste. In Spain, each person throws away seven kilos of clothes per year, which is 10-15% of the waste in landfills.

EXISTING SOLUTIONS

«Connect yourself for justice» uses the Sustainable Development Goals, promoted by Agenda 2030. They are a call to citizens, companies and governments to take measures to end poverty, to protect the environment and to ensure a full and peaceful life for all people. We are specifically focusing on Goals 12, 13 and 15.

SDG 12: Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. In the first place, to achieve an economic growth and sustainable development, it is urgent to reduce the ecologic footprint through a change in the modes of production and consumption of goods and resources. The responsible consumption in the fashion sector is essential in order not to deplete or waste the planet's resources and to contribute to greater social justice.

SDG 13: To take urgent measures to combat climate change and its effects. The textile sector has a major role, especially focused on production and distribution processes, as it represents 8% of global emissions, emitting as much CO2 as Russia. Therefore, it is important that the sector recognizes its responsibility, making a statement about its work to reverse the current situation and to plan for a truly sustainable future.

SDG 15: It is focused on the sustainable use of natural resources in the face of misuse of land and consequent loss of biodiversity. Land degradation due to deforestation, over-exploitation and a poor waste management continues to increase. The private sector, and in particular the textile sector, plays a leading role in achieving this goal not only by impacting on terrestrial ecosystems and habitats in the company's operations, but also by respecting the environmental regulations of the countries in which companies operate and integrating the conservation of biological diversity into its business strategy.

In addition to other legal frameworks and fair trade labels certifying that certain products were produced in accordance with certain social or environmental principles, the European Waste Directive promotes the transition to a circular economy that enhances the EU's global competitiveness, the sustainable economic growth and it creates jobs.

The circular economy, inspired by the cyclical model of nature, is an economic concept that is interrelated with sustainability and environmental care. The objective of circular economy is to maintain the value of products, materials, resources and raw materials in the economy as long as possible, minimizing the generation of waste, as opposed to the linear economy based on "use and throw away" (extraction, manufacture, use and disposal)

CHANGES ON PERSONAL HABITS

1. **Re-cycle:** Let's end with the waste culture. Stop the use and throw away.
2. **Re-use:** Dare to use second-hand clothes, visit the Re- fashions stores, join the Re- fashion, create family or citizen groups to share clothes.
3. **Re-duce:** Minimize the textile residue, your consumption of clothes, simplify your life. Do you ever used all the clothes in your wardrobe? We propose you to create your "capsule wardrobe".

4. Re-pair: Extend the useful life of your clothes. If each person stretches the life of their clothes from one to two years, the pollutant emissions will be reduced by 24% according to Greenpeace data.

5. Fair trade: It is the standard that guarantees the basic labor rights are not violated.

CHANGES ON POLITICS

It is urgent to get a Due Diligence Law in Spain. This law will force companies to prevent the risk of water pollution and to respect human and labor rights in the countries where clothing production is relocated. It would also contribute to a Binding Treaty within the framework of the United Nations for the respect of Human Rights by transnational companies.

It is necessary to respect the environmental legislation of the countries in which companies operate and to comply with international standards of environmental performance, when them to be more ambitious than local ones.

#ConnectClothesPoverty

More information: <https://www.enlazateporlajusticia.org/en>