

# BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE DRIVING POSITIVE IMPACTS IN THE APPAREL AND TEXTILE SECTOR THROUGH TRANSPARENCY AND NET ZERO

*Roundtable with Brands*  
*October 17, 2023*  
Sheraton Grand Bangalore

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**Solidaridad**

 **regenagri**

**CRB** CENTRE for  
RESPONSIBLE  
BUSINESS  
*Enabling Change for Impact*



## Contents

<b>I. Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Alliance of Cotton &amp; Textile Stakeholders on Regenerative Agriculture (ACRE).....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III. Session Discussions.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Session 1: Opening Remarks.....	4
Session 2: Setting the Context .....	4
Session 3: ACRE Alliance.....	6
Session 4: Bouquet of Solutions under ACRE.....	7
Session 5: Feedback.....	8
<b>Agenda of the Program.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Photo Gallery.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Attendee List of Program.....</b>	<b>15</b>



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## I. Introduction:

The global textile industry, a cornerstone of economies and cultures worldwide, has encountered a multitude of environmental and social challenges. The rapid expansion of this industry, while contributing to economic growth, has also given rise to pressing concerns such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable supply chains. This sector is now the second-largest industrial polluter, surpassed only by the oil industry, responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions [MacArthur Foundation (2017)]. Additionally, it consumes a staggering 79 billion cubic meters of water annually, producing 20% of global wastewater [World Bank (2019)]. Cotton farming, a major textile crop, occupies only 3% of the world's arable land but is accountable for 24% of insecticides and 11% of pesticides, significantly impacting non-target biodiversity.

Consumers and regulators alike are increasingly focusing on these issues. A 2019 survey revealed that 87% of consumers believe it is crucial for companies to address environmental concerns, and many are willing to switch to brands that prioritize environmental friendliness [Source: Nielsen (2019)]. Regulatory bodies, including the European Union, have introduced measures to promote sustainability in the textile industry. These regulations demand responsible product production, the use of sustainable materials, and adherence to environmentally friendly standards [EU Circular Economy Action Plan].

The textile industry is not only directly responsible for environmental impact but also indirectly through its supply chain. New regulations are calling for transparency and action planning to clean up these supply chains. As the industry faces these challenges, it stands at a critical juncture where action is not just desirable but imperative. Brands that fail to adapt and act face reputational, regulatory, financial, and market risks.

## II. Alliance of Cotton & Textile Stakeholders on Regenerative Agriculture (ACRE):

To delve deeper into these issues and facilitate industry-wide action, Solidaridad, CRB, and regenagri have established the Alliance of Cotton & Textile Stakeholders on Regenerative Agriculture (ACRE). ACRE aims to promote regenerative practices at the farm level and the adoption of regenagri certified cotton across the value chain. This initiative seeks to create a low-carbon, low-water footprint, biodiversity-positive, and climate-resilient cotton value chain.

The ACRE Alliance envisions offering support to industry players and organized this roundtable for stakeholders to engage in a dialogue on these topics. This workshop, held on October 17, 2023, in Bengaluru, aimed to provide diverse perspectives on the global textile industry's commitment to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and responsible supply chains.



### III. Session Discussions

#### Session 1: Opening Remarks

Ms. Chandrima Chatterjee, General Secretary of CITI, delivered the opening remarks, setting the tone for the workshop. She began by expressing her strong support for the launch of the ACRE platform and highlighted the significance of stakeholders from various sectors coming together to address the pressing challenges facing the textile industry.

Ms. Chatterjee emphasized the urgency of addressing these challenges, particularly in the context of climate change and environmental sustainability. She acknowledged that the textile industry has a substantial environmental footprint, and it is imperative for all stakeholders to work collaboratively to mitigate these impacts.



Figure 1: Ms. Chandrima Chatterjee, Secretary General, The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry addressing the Roundtable

She also stressed the importance of transparency and responsible practices throughout the textile supply chain. She mentioned the growing awareness among consumers and regulators regarding the environmental and social aspects of textile production. This awareness, she noted, has created a demand for sustainable and eco-friendly products in the market. Ms. Chatterjee’s opening remarks highlighted the industry’s need for transformation and the role of initiatives like ACRE in driving positive change.

#### Session 2: Setting the Context

Session 2 was led by Mr. Prashant Pastore, General Manager, Water & Sustainable Agriculture, Solidaridad Asia and Rijit Sengupta, CEO Center for Responsible Business, wherein participants delved into the critical context of the global textile industry’s commitment to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and equity within their supply and value chains. The discussion highlighted the importance of regenerative agriculture and a shared responsibility approach, considering the significant role of agriculture in the fashion and textile industry.



*Figure 2: Mr. Prashant Pastore, Lead, Water & Sustainable Agriculture, Solidaridad Asia, addressing the delegates on the regenerative agriculture framework and in turn, regenagri*

The concept of regenerative agriculture and the need for a shared responsibility approach were central themes. Agriculture itself has faced challenges such as biodiversity loss and soil degradation, underscoring the urgency of adopting regenerative practices. The fashion and textile industry heavily relies on agriculture for raw materials, making it imperative for the industry to align with sustainable agricultural practices. Furthermore, there is a growing consumer demand for sustainability, emphasizing the need for change within the industry.

The ACRE platform, at its core, seeks to bring together various stakeholders, fostering collaboration that extends beyond the industry itself. Government initiatives like the National Mission on Natural Farming are also recognized as vital partners in creating a framework that benefits both the textile industry and farmers. This collaborative approach aims to optimize resource utilization and promote responsible practices.

Solidaridad's efforts within the regenagri framework were highlighted during this session. Solidaridad is actively engaged with over 100,000 farmers in India, particularly in regions like Vidarbha, Telangana, and Maharashtra, to facilitate the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices. These efforts are integral to the broader mission of the ACRE platform and initiatives like regenerative agriculture, which collectively seek to optimize resources and bring about positive change within the cotton supply chain.

### Session 3: ACRE Alliance

Rijit Sengupta from CRB took the stage to present the ACRE Alliance. This session focused on the structure and objectives of ACRE:



Figure 3: Mr. Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business addressing the delegates on the ACRE Alliance

1. *Objectives:* Mr. Sengupta detailed ACRE's core objectives, which included promoting regenerative practices at the farm level and encouraging the adoption of regenagri certified cotton across the value chain. He stressed that ACRE aims to create a low-carbon, low-water footprint, biodiversity-positive, and climate-resilient cotton value chain.
2. *Structure and Governance:* Mr. Sengupta provided insights into ACRE's organizational structure and governance model, highlighting its commitment to transparency and accountability.
3. *Value Proposition:* The presentation emphasized the value proposition of ACRE for its members. This included opportunities for knowledge sharing, capacity building, networking, policy advocacy, and its role as a central hub for all things related to regenerative cotton.

Session 3 effectively introduced the audience to ACRE and its role in catalysing sustainable change within the textile industry.



## Session 4: Bouquet of Solutions under ACRE

In session 4, Dr. Binay Choudhary, Managing Director, Control Union India, and Mr. GC Aravind, CTO, Solidaridad Network India Pvt Ltd, discussed the various solutions offered by ACRE:



Figure 4: Dr. Binay Kumar Choudhury providing his remarks on the certification solution provided by ACRE



Figure 5: Mr. GC Aravind, CTO, Solidaridad Network India Pvt Ltd providing his remarks on SoliTrace

1. *regenagri Certification:* The speakers detailed the regenagri certification, highlighting its importance in promoting sustainable and regenerative farming practices. They explained how this certification could be integrated into the textile supply chain.
2. *Traceability:* The session touched upon the significance of traceability in ensuring transparency and accountability within the supply chain. The speakers discussed how ACRE was working on implementing traceability measures.
3. *Field Implementation:* Solidaridad through innovative solutions like SoliTrace shared insights into their field implementation projects involving farmers and farming communities. They emphasized the importance of engaging at the grassroots level to drive sustainable practices.
4. *Supply Chain Assessments:* The speakers also discussed about supply chain assessments as a means to evaluate and improve the environmental and social impact of textile production. They highlighted how ACRE was facilitating such assessments for apparel and textiles.

### Session 5: Feedback



*Figure 6: Mr. Yogananda Kote attentively listening to the proceedings and who represented Nike Sourcing India Private Limited at the Roundtable*

Several participants attended the session, representing various companies in the textile and apparel industry. Mr. Yogananda Kote, RSC Manager from Nike Sourcing India Private Limited expressed appreciation for the program and highlighted the need to track carbon emissions and connect the supply chain more comprehensively.

Mr. Arshad Basha A, Lab Manager from Indian Designs, a manufacturer and exporter of apparel, commended the program and inquired about specific products related to ACRE. Mr. Balaji, representing the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India, appreciated the program and discussed their association's involvement in regenerative agriculture. He mentioned the importance of traceability and the increasing requirements from international markets.



Mr. Biju KT, Chief General Manager- Sustainability, Texpot Industries, an exporter, saw potential not only for the cotton and textile industry but also for the food industry in the program. He shared his positive experience with regenerative agriculture and emphasized the importance of traceability and sustainability.

Mr. Pravin Jagatram Dalal, DGM Environmental Sustainability, Shahi Exports praised the program and highlighted the low yield of Indian cotton compared to global averages. He suggested involving representatives from the entire supply chain to address challenges comprehensively.



*Figure 7: Mr. Pravin Jagatram Dalal, DGM Environmental Sustainability, Shahi Exports sharing his reflections at the Roundtable*



*Figure 8: Mr. Nikesh Raj, Social & Environment Program Manager, H&M sharing his reflections during the Roundtable Discussion*



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Mr. Nikesh Raj, Social & Environment Program Manager, H&M commended the program’s structure and forward-thinking approach. He mentioned the importance of traceability and expressed willingness to participate in the future.

Ramakrishnan Sabhari Girish, Head Of Sustainability, Sulochana Cotton Spinning Mills Pvt. Ltd., involved in circular textiles and sustainability, discussed their commitment to renewable energy and carbon neutrality. He also mentioned that regenagri certification and the associated environmental impact and savings.

The organizers appreciated the feedback and emphasized collaboration to take the program to the next level. They stressed the need to align the program with global initiatives and standards. The discussion highlighted the potential benefits of the ACRE platform, challenges in the textile industry, the significance of traceability, and the need for a comprehensive and long-term approach to sustainability. Representatives from different companies showed their interest to join the ACRE platform formally but also indicated that they will have to discuss these issues at their company level to get the high level buy in from decision makers.

## Agenda of the Program

Time	Sessions	Moderator / Presenter
9:30 AM to 10:00 AM	<b>Registration</b>	
10:00 AM to 10:05 AM	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	Devyani Hari, Director, CRB
10:05 AM to 10:15 AM	<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perspectives and current priorities of textile industry in relation to regenerative agriculture in Cotton</li> </ul>	Chandrima Chatterjee, Secretary General, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI)
10:15 AM to 10:35 AM	<b>Setting the Context:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment of the global textile industry in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, equity along their supply/ value chains</li> <li>Overview of international and national legislations for promoting sustainable (global) value chains</li> </ul>	Prashant Pastore, Lead, Water & Sustainable Agriculture, Solidaridad Asia Rijit Sengupta, CEO, CRB
10:35 AM to 11:05 AM	<b>Presentation on ACRE Alliance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Platform’s objectives, structure, and governance</li> <li>Value proposition for members (knowledge, capacity building, networking, policy interface and ‘go to’ place for regenerative cotton)</li> </ul> (Q&A – 10mins)	Rijit Sengupta, CEO, CRB

11:05 AM to 11:45 AM	<b>Bouquet of Solutions under ACRE</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. regenagri certification</li> <li>2. Traceability solution</li> <li>3. Field implementation (involving farmers and farming communities)</li> <li>4. Supply chain assessments of apparel and textiles</li> </ol> <p>(Q&amp;A - 10 mins)</p>	<p>Prashant Pastore, Lead, Water &amp; Sustainable Agriculture, Solidaridad Asia</p> <p>GC Aravind, CTO, Solidaridad Network Binay Kumar Choudhury, Chairman, Control Union</p>
11:45 PM to 12:30 PM	<b>Roundtable discussion</b> Inputs and views of apparel and textile brands, suppliers, manufacturers about ACRE	All participants (apparel and textile brands, suppliers, manufacturers)
12:30 PM to 1:00 PM	<b>ACRE Next Steps &amp; Closure</b>	Centre for Responsible Business
1:00 PM onwards	<b>Networking Lunch</b>	

## Photo Gallery



Figure 9: Ms. Devyani Hari, Director, Centre for Responsible Business providing the Introductory Remarks and highlighting the intention behind the Business Roundtable





Figure 10: From left to right, Mr. Prashant Pastore, Lead, Water & Sustainable Agriculture, Solidaridad Asia, Mr. Rijit Sengupta, Centre for Responsible Business and Ms. Chandrima Chattejee, Secretary General, The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry oversee the proceedings of the Business Roundtable



Figure 11: The Business Roundtable proceedings underway with Ms. Chandrima Chatterjee, Secretary General, The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry, speaking at the dais



Figure 12: The Business Roundtable proceedings underway



Figure 13: Mr Arshad Basha A, Lab Manager, Indian Designs, providing his reflections at the Roundtable





Figure 14: Mr. Biju KT, Chief General Manager- Sustainability, Texpert Industries providing his reflections at the Business Roundtable

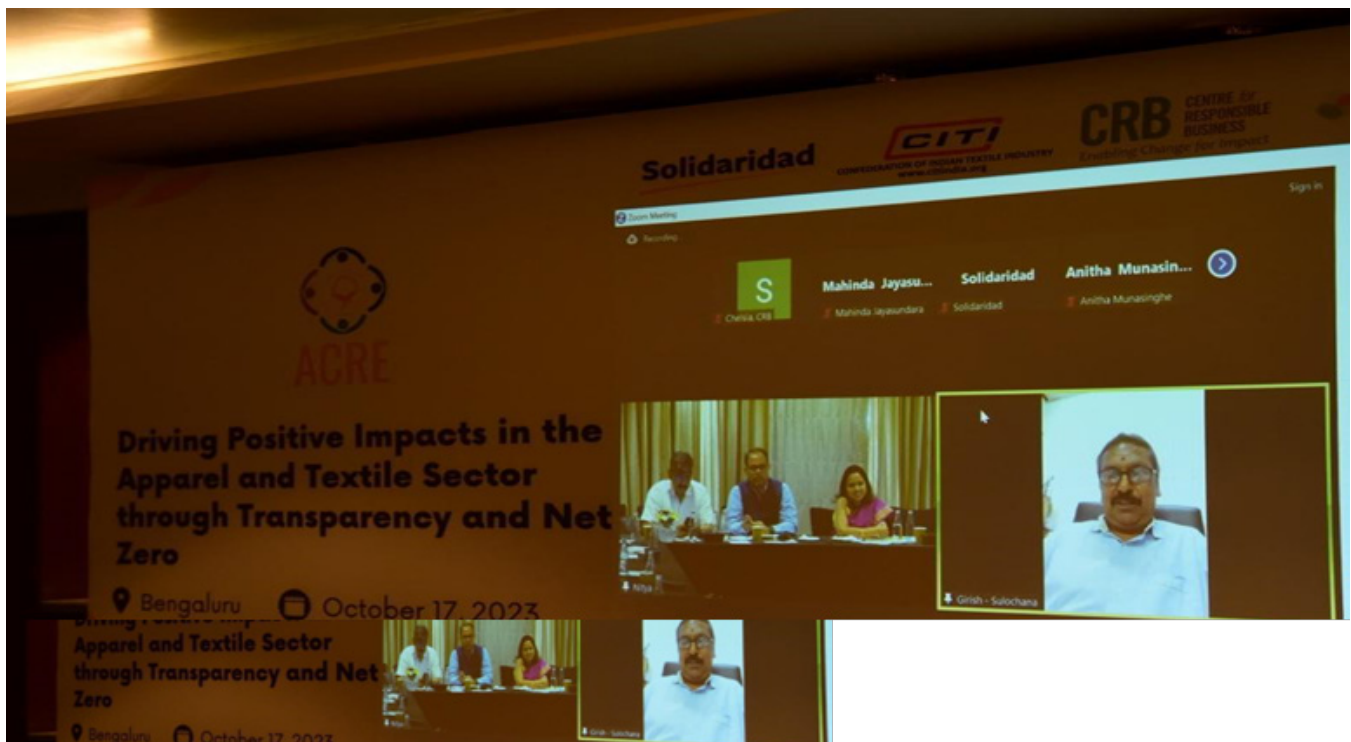


Figure 15: Mr. Ramakrishnan Sabhari Girish, Head of Sustainability, Sulochana Cotton Spinning Mills Pvt limited who joined the Roundtable virtually, sharing his reflections





Figure 16: A group photograph taken at the close of proceedings with both in-person delegates and those who joined virtually

## Attendee List of Program

First Name	Designation	Organisation
Shrinivas J Naik	General Manager -Sustainability	Arvind Ltd
Biju KT	Chief General Manager- Sustainability	Texport Industries Pvt Ltd
Chandrima Chatterjee	Secretary General	The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry
G C Aravind	CTO	Solidaridad Network India Pvt Ltd
Arshad Basha A	Lab Manager	Indian designs exports/NJK Enterprises
Pravin Jagatram Dalal	DGM Environmental Sustainability	Shahi Exports
Yogananda B Kote	RSC Manager	Nike Sourcing India Private Limited
Rijit Sengupta	CEO	Centre for Responsible Business
Nikesh Raj	Social & Environment Program Manager	H&M India Pvt Ltd
Balaji Rajagopalan	Regional Secretary -Southern Region	The Clothing Manufacturers Association Of India
Ramakrishnan Sabhari Girish	Head of Sustainability	Sulochana Cotton Spinning Mills Pvt limited



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Ashray Tyagi	Assistant Manager - Cotton and Water	Solidaridad Network India Pvt Ltd
Pranjal Jyoti Goswami	Chief Sustainability Officer	Gokuldas Exports
Aditya Petwal	Assistant Director	Centre for Responsible Business
Binay Kumar Choudhury	Chairman	Control Union
Veeresh Kadalli	Retainer Asst. Vice President (Sustainable Farming)	Welspun
Nitya Chhiber	Senior Program Officer	Centre for Responsible Business
Devosmita Bhattacharya	Programme Officer - Private Sector & SDGs	Centre for Responsible Business
Thilina Premjainath	Chairman and Country Lead, Sri Lanka	Fibershed
Dheeraj Tagra	Assistant Editor-News, Apparel Online India	Apparel Resources
Anitha Munasinghe	Country Manager Sri Lanka at Solidaridad Network Asia	Solidaridad Network
Devyani Hari	Director	Centre for Responsible Business
Prashant Pastore	Lead, Water & Sustainable Agriculture	Solidaridad Asia
Mahinda Jayasundara	Manager-Operations and M&E	Solidaridad Network
Hilda Peresi	Field Trainer	Solidaridad Network
Apurva Ajmani	Programme Officer - Leather	Solidaridad Network
Shashivendra Singh	Programme Officer - Sugarcane	Solidaridad Network





## Get In Touch

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