

## UK fashion companies need to respond to the shifting landscape of sustainability reporting

*Baroness Young chairs the 2nd All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ethics & Sustainability in Fashion*

**London, 23 November 2011** - Baroness Lola Young chaired a debate held at the [All-Parliamentary Group on Ethics and Sustainability in Fashion](#) in the House of Lords, Westminster. The topic focused on emerging legislation of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting and how it will affect fashion brands. The discussion concluded that there is a considerable body of soft law relating to business and human rights developing at the UN and European level which may increase the pressure on fashion brands to report on the actions they take to manage the social and environmental issues in their supply chains.

The discussion brought together John Morrison, Executive Director of the [Institute for Human Rights and Business](#), Victor Kjaer, Deputy General Director of the [Danish Commerce and Companies Agency](#), [Lord Tony Young](#), Labour Party life peer and Vice Chair for [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI), Lucy Shea, CE of [Futerra Sustainability Communications](#), Sean Ansett, Managing Partner, [At Stake Advisors](#), former CR Director of Gap and former CR Director of Burberry and Rowland Hill CSR, Sustainability Manager at [M&S](#).

**John Morrison**, opened the discussion with an overview of the current landscape on human rights standards at the United Nations, the European level and with the UK government. Understandings of human rights responsibility and due diligence have come a long way since the supply chain labour scandals of the mid 90s. Every member of the UN Human Rights Council have endorsed the "[Protect, Respect, Remedy](#)" framework developed by John Ruggie as UN Special Representative for Business and Human Rights. This framework is being integrated into the work of the European Union and the OECD Guidelines, as well as an increasing amount of national legislation which relates to specific human rights issues, such as Section 1502 of the Dodd Frank Act in the USA and the Californian Transparency in Supply Chains statute.

**Victor Kjaer**, gave an overview of CSR reporting legislation that the Danish government put in place in 2008. The legislation made it mandatory for all large businesses to report on their CSR policies, activities and outcomes. The Danish legislation has genuinely changed the mindset of businesses in Denmark on CSR reporting and is being looked at favourably by the European Commission.

**Lord Tony Young**, shared his knowledge and experiences as Vice Chair for [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI).

**Lucy Shea**, **Sean Ansett** and **Rowland Hill** acted as discussants broadening and informing the debate. **Lucy Shea** drew on her experience at Futerra to say that businesses have to focus on the *why* and be clear on their objectives around CSR and sustainability reporting. **Sean Ansett** gave the room a dose of reality pointing out the labour standards issues that still occur in supply chains, noting that stakeholder expectations on the accountability and reach of companies is growing and listing a range of challenges and questions to companies who want to report effectively including: what's material? What metrics matter?, ensuring data integrity including who provides audit and environmental data, the scope of supply chain responsibility and who is the audience for said reports? **Rowland Hill** drew attention to how people's relationship to fashion has changed as production has been globalised and argued persuasively for addressing sustainability issues such as the consumption of raw materials, water stress issues and climate change.

All left with a greater awareness of new major developments within the industry and attending parliamentarians made notes to raise issues in the chambers to question Her Majesty's Government. We are looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the debate.

MADE-BY was honoured to take on the role of secretariat in the organisation and preparation of this event, in conjunction with the Centre for Sustainable Fashion at London College of Fashion.

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