

ITMF-IAF Conference in Samarkand highlights industry innovations and challenges

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The joint ITMF Annual Conference and IAF World Fashion Convention, held from September 8-10 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, underscored the country's burgeoning influence in the global textile sector. Hosted by Uztextileprom, the Uzbekistan Textile and Garment Industry Association, and the Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Uzbekistan, the event drew over 350 industry leaders from more than 30 countries, signaling a pivotal moment for the industry.

Uzbekistan, known for its deep-rooted cotton production tradition and significant recent growth in textile exports, was chosen as this year's host due to its impressive strides in sustainable development and its emerging role as a major player in the textile value chain.

Challenges and opportunities

IAF President Cem Altan emphasized the crucial role of manufacturers in driving industry-wide change. "Apparel and textile manufacturers hold the keys to meaningful, positive change," Altan noted, highlighting initiatives like decarbonization, reducing overproduction, and enhancing

transparency. These efforts are essential as the industry faces high input costs, low demand, and regulatory pressures.

ITMF President KV Srinivasan echoed these sentiments, describing the current industry climate as a “perfect storm” of economic challenges. Despite these obstacles, the winners of the ITMF Awards 2024, recognized for achievements in ‘Start-up,’ ‘Sustainability & Innovation,’ and ‘International Cooperation,’ demonstrated the industry’s resilience and capacity for innovation.

Regulatory pressures and shared responsibility

The convention also spotlighted increasing global regulatory pressures on the textile sector. Altan stressed the importance of equitable distribution of the financial burden of sustainability standards across all supply chain partners, from raw material suppliers to end consumers.

Srinivasan emphasized the value of in-person meetings among industry leaders and experts from across the value chain. Such gatherings are crucial for discussing and analyzing both the immediate and long-term challenges and opportunities facing the industry.

Future outlook

The insights and partnerships formed during this historic event are expected to drive significant, positive changes across the apparel and textile industries. Both ITMF and IAF are optimistic that the collaboration and dialogue from the convention will contribute to overcoming current challenges and fostering sustainable growth in the sector.