



## PRESS RELEASE

# THE R CERT MARKS A NEW ERA FOR CONSUMER TRANSPARENCY IN ASIA'S MAINSTREAM FASHION MARKET

*Recycled textile clothing standard reaches new consumer markets*

[June 2013] The R Cert, a consumer-facing standard for recycled textile clothing, was issued for a second time for the 'Recycled Collection by Esprit' in a breakthrough demonstrating a new era for Asia's sustainable fashion innovation. The R Cert is now present in new consumer markets, including Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia before later in the year reaching New Zealand and Australia. Asian fashion NGO, Redress, developed the R Cert last year to encourage brands to up-cycle their textile waste and to educate consumers about the source and impact of their recycled textile clothing.

The R Cert is a consumer-facing standard that verifies that a brand recycled their own pre-consumer textile waste into their own recycled textile clothing, with a minimum requirement of 20% recycled fibres per garment. It provides a traceable supply chain that allows consumers to track their recycled textile clothing's journey from factory to retail by viewing English and Chinese animations on the [www.rcert.org](http://www.rcert.org) website. The R Cert is issued by Redress and includes a requirement for factory level suppliers to be GRS (Global Recycle Standard) certified.

"The R Cert catalyzes brands to move closer to closed-loop production by recycling their pre-consumer textile waste into their own recycled textile clothes. It is a scalable business solution for the industry's excessive textile manufacturing waste rates that has demonstrated environmental benefits. Significantly, the R Cert provides a bridge for brands to communicate complex industry processes with simple, transparent and instant consumer education to engage consumers about the benefits of textile recycling," said Christina Dean, Founder of Redress.

### **Giving consumers confidence in claims**

Increasingly, consumers demand more sustainable commitments from fashion brands and have stronger expectations for transparency and credibility around sustainability claims. The R Cert cuts through complex technical industry jargon with instant and accessible information to provide supply chain transparency giving consumers confidence in their brand's recycled content and source.

Redress' addition of Chinese language animations and content to the R Cert is a significant strategic development to cater to Asia's increasingly dominant and fast-growing mainstream fashion consumer.

Consumers can track their recycled textile clothing's journey from factory to retail by scanning a QR code on the hangtag or by inputting a unique code into the R Cert website. Consumers are then directed to their brand's customized, mobile-friendly animation where they discover how their recycled clothes were produced and learn about their clothes' environmental benefits. Alternatively, consumers can track directly through the R Cert website without the use of a QR code or track code.

### **Environmental savings at the core**

On an industry level, the R Cert underpins Redress' mission to reduce waste in the fashion supply chain and is intended to inspire an industry-wide adoption of pre-consumer textile waste up-cycling.

The process of up-cycling pre-consumer textile waste, such as cut-and-sew, end-of-roll and damaged textiles into *higher* quality clothes prolongs the textile's life-cycle within the fashion loop, instead of being down-cycled or discarded as waste materials. This form of up-cycling slows down the production and need for virgin fibres and, therefore, the depletion of natural resources.

The role of up-cycling is significant for the fashion industry, where an estimated 80 billion garments are produced every year from natural resources<sup>1</sup> and where an estimated 15% of textiles intended for clothing ends up on the cutting room floor<sup>2</sup>.

At the garment level, the recycled textile clothes that have received the R Cert to date are demonstrated to give environmental savings. In the case of the 'Recycled Collection by Esprit', their 35% recycled cotton and 65% recycled PET clothes gave savings of 53% greenhouse gas, 74% water and 18% electricity per garment. Their 43% recycled cotton and 57% virgin cotton undyed denim gave savings of 37% greenhouse gas, 19% water and 17% electricity per garment, as evaluated by independent carbon management company, Reset Carbon.

### **More sustainable alternatives hit the mainstream fashion market**

The issuance of the R Cert to Esprit provides further motivation to extend sustainable fashion options in Asia. Esprit, who have over 1,000 owned and operated retail stores globally, was the first brand to use the R Cert for the 'Recycled Collection by Esprit' last year. Now in their second year, Esprit has expanded their retail distribution of their 'Recycled Collection by Esprit' from just Hong Kong in 2012 to include Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia and, later in the year, New Zealand and Australia.

*"The R Cert translates Esprit's textile recycling programme in a consumer-friendly format that informs customers about our continued commitment to provide high performing and fashionable clothing constructed with recycled textiles, which have a lighter environmental footprint. We're proud that this sustainable fashion breakthrough originated in China and that Esprit is offering Asia's consumers with sustainable fashion and cares for the environment"* said Charles Dickinson, Head of Global Quality Management and Sustainability, Esprit.

### **Asia leading the way**

The R Cert's development and issuance in Asian markets reflects several trends taking place in Asia's fashion market, where transparency and sustainable fashion innovation have traditionally lagged behind the rest of the world.

As Asia's market develops, it is important to educate new consumers and to give them sustainable fashion options. Asia has leapfrogged the U.S. to become the world's biggest retailing market, with regional retail sales rising to \$3.8 trillion in 2011, or 41% of the global pie, from \$3.2 trillion in 2006, or 31%, according to market-research firm, *Canadean*<sup>3</sup>.

On the supply chain side, the up-cycling of pre-consumer textile waste into products of higher quality represents an exciting business and environmental solution for the region that is responsible for 57% of the world's clothing exports to the rest of the world (2010)<sup>4</sup>

For more information about the R Cert and to view the animated supply chain and environmental savings please visit [www.rcert.org](http://www.rcert.org). The R Cert was previously called the R Certificate ([www.rcertificate.com](http://www.rcertificate.com)) in 2012.

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### **About Redress ([www.redress.com.hk](http://www.redress.com.hk))**

Redress is an NGO with a mission to promote environmental sustainability in the fashion industry by reducing textile waste, pollution, water and energy consumption. They achieve this via educational sustainable fashion competitions, shows, exhibitions, seminars, research and by a recycled textile clothing standard. They collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, including multiple fashion designers, textile and garment manufacturers, brands, schools and universities, multilateral organisations, governments, NGOs, financial institutions and media organisations.

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/09/11/living/high-cost-of-fashion>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Timo Rissanen, 'From 15% to 0: Investigating the creation of fashion without the creation of fabric waste' Presenter, Kreativ Institut for Design og Teknologi, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324874204578438343105661244.html>

<sup>4</sup> Source: World Trade Organisation Trade Statistics 2011 ([http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/statis\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/statis_e.htm))