

Cotton On's first impact report captures sustainability and ethical business targets

In its inaugural impact report, the Cotton On Group has pledged to strengthen its commitment to sustainability and purpose-led business by setting goals for carbon neutrality, water & plastic reduction, ethical sourcing, and more.



Source: Supplied

The company has made this pledge public in its first [The Good Report](#), to illustrate achievements made during the retailer's 30-year journey, and detail map out the road ahead.

The Cotton On Group recently [partnered with Unicef](#) to help deliver more than one million Covid-19 vaccines to vulnerable communities. The retail group set a target to be carbon neutral across its entire operations by 2030, achieving 84% of its 2023 target to wash 100% of its denim using water reduction processes, and significantly reduced the use of plastics across its operations.

The retail giant also expanded its Africa Cotton programme into Mozambique to positively impact the lives of more farmers in this area, launching its first range of t-shirts made from the single-origin Africa Cotton.



Source: Supplied

Working towards new milestones

Now, the retailer is ramping up its ambitions to save water, reduce waste and source responsibly. Using the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, *The Good Report* is Cotton On's "blueprint to contribute to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all", the company says.

The retailer states that it intends to make a lasting contribution in the areas of responsible materials and production, plastics and packaging, and carbon neutrality, with a goal of reaching carbon net neutral globally by 2030.

The Ozone wash method of textile care that uses electricity and oxygen in place of chemicals in the traditional washing process, will substantially reduce water consumption, as well as energy, chemical and enzymes.

The retailer has also set a goal to make 100% of its products with a sustainable attribute, by 2030. This means, every product made will include more sustainable components and materials or be manufactured with reduced impact processing. For example, 100% of the denim will be washed using water reduction processes by 2023, while 100% of the plastics, polyester and synthetic materials will be made from certified recycled alternatives by 2025.



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Additionally, standards have been set for sustainably-sourced cotton; responsible wood, timber, cardboard and paper in packaging; recycled cotton, organic cotton, responsible viscose, recycled polyester as well as recycled nylon. Cotton On has further committed to purchase 100% of the cotton produced by the Africa Cotton Program, which has shown remarkable promise in empowering local women and building communities.

The group has pledged to phase out all unnecessary single-use plastic packaging by 2025 and has replaced plastic packaging use for online orders with approved alternatives from responsibly managed forests. Garment swing tags will now be made from 100% recycled paper with care labels being made from 100% recycled polyester.

South African achievements

Locally, Cotton On has partnered with The Clothing Bank to create income-generating opportunities for women in South Africa. Up to 800 women participate in a two-year programme, with support and training to create their own business. Once they have finished the training, participants frequently receive donations from the group's stores to sell in their communities. This programme ensures women are learning valuable skills, as well as earning a stable income for them and their families.

Also in South Africa, the Cotton On Foundation supported the opening of Ethekwini Primary in KwaMashu, Kwa Zulu-Natal, creating 1,280 educational places in 2020. Infrastructure of the school was redeveloped, with additional classrooms prioritised to ensure that children could complete their final year of primary school, Grade 7. The Foundation will soon be announcing plans to begin work on another school.



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"Making a positive difference in people's lives - it sounds simple, but it's something we've always taken really seriously. It's been our purpose since day one, and 30 years later, it's still the reason we get out of bed in the morning. It's who we are and what we stand for," said Cotton On Group CEO, Peter Johnson.

"This values-driven approach is also how we're tackling the other big challenges of our time. Our team members and customers expect us to minimise our impact and create meaningful change for current and future generations - and so they should. It's not enough to only offer great quality product, it must have purpose, it must be sourced and made ethically and, most importantly, it should make a positive impact every step of the way," he added.

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