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ADB Urges Pakistan Textile Mills to Meet Global Standards

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The Asian Development Bank pressed Pakistan's textile industry to align with international conventions to boost exports and ensure sustainability.

On August 7, 2025, Emma Fan, Country Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), led a delegation in a critical meeting with the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) in Lahore, as reported by The Express Tribune. The discussion focused on elevating Pakistan's textile exports by ensuring compliance with global conventions on sustainability, labor, and human rights. The ADB emphasized that adherence to these standards is vital for maintaining competitiveness in the global market, particularly in light of the European Union's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Plus status, which has

driven significant growth in Pakistan's value-added textile sectors, per Business Recorder.

The delegation, including Asad Aleem, Deputy Country Director, Khayyam Abbasi, Programmes Officer, and Shaheryar Choudhry, Senior Investment Officer, outlined the ADB's new Country Partnership Strategy for Pakistan. This strategy prioritizes energizing the private sector, optimizing public sector efficiency, and fostering resilience for long-term economic growth, according to The Express Tribune. Emma Fan stressed that compliance with international standards is non-negotiable for textile exporters aiming to expand their \$20 billion industry, which accounts for over 70% of Pakistan's exports in knitwear, garments, bedwear, and towels, as noted by APTMA Chairman Kamran Arshad.

Kamran Arshad highlighted Pakistan's vision to reach \$50 billion in textile exports within five years by establishing 1,000 garment plants in dedicated apparel parks, per Business Recorder. He sought ADB support for these parks, which could generate millions of jobs and bolster foreign exchange reserves. Asad Shafi, APTMA Chairman North, underscored improvements in labor and environmental compliance since the GSP Plus status was granted, enabling Pakistan to meet United Nations conventions, according to Business Recorder. However, challenges remain, including high energy costs and outdated machinery, which hinder competitiveness against regional rivals like Bangladesh and India, as reported by Fibre2Fashion.

The ADB's call to action aligns with global demands for sustainable practices, such as those under the Pakistan Accord on Health and Safety, which covers over 500 factories to ensure worker safety, per International Accord. Failure to comply risks losing market access, particularly in Europe, where environmental and social governance standards are stringent, according to APTMA. The meeting signals a pivotal moment for Pakistan's textile industry to modernize and thrive globally.