Plenary Session: India's Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges

During this plenary session we talked about the Strengths, opportunities and challenges of India from the farm, manufacturing and brand level. The following is what we heard.

Strengths:

- State supported bans on GM cotton
- Price parody between organic and non organic not substantial
- History of textiles, also of natural dye processes that can be tapped to further reduce chemical usage
- Mills establishing farming projects to assure supply
- Inspiring stories about the positive effects of OC farming- great promotional materials
- Very competitive pricing, leads to good pricing for consumer = increased demand
- Availability of many cotton varieties
-

Challenges:

- Disorganized textile section
- Issues around labeling, very confusing
- 5 % Blends don't help build the market
- Trash and quality issues for spinners
- High loss of fiber in processing stages
- Farmers, NGO's have not been able to influence policy, rather big companies
- Soil condition, seed varieties education is lacking
- Need to find a way to certify all/ more of the cotton that is organically grown
- Identify sourcing base and issues with organic cotton
- Growing organically threatened by BT introduction

Opportunity:

- Certifying ALL organic fiber is and IMPERATIVE
- Pollution- help get cleaner air
- Tell the story
- Big potential for sustainable cotton
- Work with key states (cotton) to shift into organic
- Build rotational crop market
- Address chemical / dyes in chain
- Brands connecting to farmers need more
- We need
- Use waste and rejections in mill
- Make up for losses in process chain
- Carbon credits for India textile
- Reduce inefficiencies
- Help make a change at policy level