



Sola pattern 'Durban' is also available in the hollow handle version, which won the 2018 Mercury Award in the category Equipment - Passenger

Conscious cutlery

Sola Netherlands' discusses its focus on social and environmental ethics as it forges a path toward sustainable inflight cutlery solutions

by JEREMY CLARK

More than a trend

For inflight cutlery supplier Sola Netherlands, addressing climate change goes much beyond its commitment to its customers. The Gerritsen family started silverware production and supply in 1868 and went on to found Sola in 1922. The private-owned company is now the supplier to more than 80 of the world's most prestigious and leading airlines. With nearly 100 years of success, Sola Netherlands is now sharing how it plans to manage its environmental responsibilities in the coming years.

"We are more than just knives, forks and spoons," Sola Netherlands Export Manager Hans Engels tells *PAX International* Asia Correspondent Jeremy Clark in February. "We are acutely aware of the need to address climate change issues as well as best business practices, fair trades and environmental and social care," says Engels.

This is not just a trend; it is a necessity.

"We demand it, our customers demand it, and increasingly, the public at large and end-users of our products demand to know we are doing our bit to ensure a sustainable future," Engels explains.

Sola Netherlands took two major steps forward in 2019 to support this: it became a full member of amfori BSCI and made a commitment to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A uniform code of conduct

As a Dutch family business with its design house and management team based in the Netherlands, a large majority of Sola products are manufactured overseas in contracts with thoughtfully selected manufacturers. This requires particular diligence



Sola Netherlands design house and management team is headquartered in The Netherlands



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in ensuring that the kind of standards and values that Sola upholds are maintained in supplier factories around the world.

Sola Netherlands became a member of amfori BSCI to reinforce this diligence, an organization that enables companies to trade with purpose and strive to improve the social performance in their global supply chains by applying a uniform code of conduct across all suppliers.

amfori BSCI lays down a series of conditions that manufacturers must adhere to in order to attain certification and the right to manufacture for Sola Netherlands.

These include:

- The Rights of Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining
- Fair Remuneration
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Special Protection for Young Workers
- No Bonded Labor
- Ethical Business Behavior
- No Discrimination
- Decent Working Hours
- No Child Labor
- No Precarious Employment

17 Sustainable Development Goals

Last year, Sola Netherlands also committed itself to adopting the United Nations SDG's into their business strategy. The SDGs is a collection of 17 global goals that "emphasizes a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development for all," according to the UN website. The goals were established in 2015 at United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by the year 2030. The board-based goals are interdependent and have a list of targets that are measured with indicators. A variety of tools exist to track and visualize progress towards the goals.

"Sola Netherlands has selected the most applicable SDGs to our sector," says Engels. "This year, we intend to develop our systems and data processes to reflect the United Nations' goals and be able to report individually on each of them."

In the years ahead, Engels says Sola Netherlands will continue to innovate in the industry. "As airlines themselves embrace the modern culture of health and doing all they can to reduce their impact on our world's eco systems, both environmentally and socially, Sola Netherlands sits very comfortably in this portfolio of solutions providers." [📄](#)

