



# BANGLADESH

country study 2015



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## List of Abbreviations

ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra
BDT	Bangladesh Takka
BEF	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BILS	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
BLF	Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation
BNWLA	Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association
CIS-ILO	International Safety and Health Information Centre of the International Labour Organisation
CO	Certificate of Origin
COE	Center of Excellence
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EPB	Export Promotion Bureau
EU	European Union
FOB	Free-on-Board
FWF	Fair Wear Foundation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSP	Generalised System of Preferences
HDI	Human Development Index
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MFA	Multi Fibre Arrangement
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NTPA	National Tripartite Plan of Action
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OSHE	Occupational Safety, Health and Environment
PPEs	Personal Protective Equipment
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RMG	Ready Made Garment
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAPTA	SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement
TTC	Technical Training Centres
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
US\$	United States Dollar

# INTRODUCTION

The Ready Made Garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh has seen a phenomenal growth over the past three decades. In the early 1980s it had about 400 factories, employing 120 000 people, and it exported around US\$ 32 million worth of garments, accounting for less than 4% of the total export value of the country. In 2014-2015 the industry employed four million workers in 4 292 factories registered at the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). Exports reached US\$ 25.49 billion in 2014-2015, accounting for more than 80% of the total export value.

The impressive and rapid growth rate of the sector, with its burgeoning factories, turned out to be a recipe for disaster. Growing orders, and limited government oversight, led to a neglect of safety issues at factories. On 24 April 2013 the Rana Plaza Building in the Savar area of Dhaka collapsed, claiming the lives of 1 134 workers and leaving hundreds injured, disabled and traumatised. Unfortunately, the tragedy, although unprecedented in scale, was not an isolated incident. A number of factory fires, including one at Tazreen Fashion Ltd. in November of 2012 and another one at Smart Export Garments in January of 2013, preceded the Rana Plaza collapse. This chain of disasters created a sense of urgency to address fire and building safety in the garment industry in Bangladesh.

Although there is knowledge about international workplace standards and the audits of international buyers throughout the Bangladeshi garment industry, improvements to labour conditions are still needed. Garment factories in Bangladesh are at high risk of violations such as unauthorised subcontracting, excessive overtime, low wages and the lack of a healthy social dialogue between employers and unions.

In recent years, labour unrest at garment factories has grown. According to local trade unions, this is the result of poor dialogue between managers and workers. Unionisation among workers is very low, fewer than 5% of garment workers belong to unions. There is also lack of trust between factories and unions. There are reports of union leaders who have been discriminated against, attacked or fired from factories because of their trade union activities, which further discourages workers from unionising.

Wage levels in the industry are not enough to give workers a living wage. The legal minimum wage, considered the industry's average, is approximately two-thirds of the living wage estimates of local stakeholders and a mere 20% of the Asia Floor Wage benchmark for Bangladesh.

Excessive overtime remains widespread in the RMG industry. Many workers are dependent on overtime to make a decent living. Low earnings without overtime premiums make it difficult for workers to achieve a decent living standard.

## Fair Wear Foundation

Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) has been active in Bangladesh since 2007. Bangladesh is one of the four FWF priority countries, along with Turkey, China and India. In terms of Free-on-Board (FOB) value produced for FWF members, Bangladesh ranks second, only after China. At the end of 2014, 16 FWF members sourced from Bangladesh, two more than at the end of 2013.

FWF audits in 2014 show that unauthorised subcontracting remains a common issue in Bangladesh. FWF will continue to emphasise the importance of a brand's sourcing practices to address the matter.

Building and fire safety, and the prevention of violence against women are two high-risk topics that are being addressed by FWF. Based on information gathered from stakeholders, and by reviewing literature and audits, FWF has developed a remediation programme called the 'Enhanced Programme for Monitoring and Remediation in Bangladesh'. This programme calls for extra efforts from FWF members around the following issues:

- Protecting women workers' safety and preventing harassment at work
- Ensuring the building and fire safety of factories

The Enhanced Programme was created to strengthen, rather than substitute, existing programmes. It aims to support pre-existing initiatives and efforts, while optimising the impact of the monitoring activities of FWF member companies. FWF requires action from its members in all production countries, to complement FWF's own activities in Bangladesh. The programme addresses issues around sourcing policy, seeks to improve the monitoring and remediation of those issues.

In Bangladesh, FWF implements the FWF Helpline, a phone number workers and stakeholders can call with complaints regarding factory compliance with the FWF Code of Labour Practices (FWF CoLP). FWF also established the Workplace Education Programme (WEP). The WEP focuses on the setting up of Anti-harassment Committees, and builds awareness and knowledge of functional grievance mechanisms for workers and factory managers. The WEP training serves to raise awareness of labour rights and mechanisms that offer access to remedy. It is carried out in factories that are a part of FWF members' supply chains. In addition, FWF has organised trainings on fire and building safety for factory managers and trade unions since 2014.

FWF will continue to provide updated information on Bangladesh at [www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org) and will update this country study on a regular basis in the future.

# 1. HOW TO READ THIS FAIR WEAR FOUNDATION COUNTRY STUDY

*This country study should provide a clear and concise picture of the industry, labour laws, labour conditions and industrial relations within the textile/garment industry. The study is comprised of information about national laws and local stakeholders' views on labour issues in the garment industry in Bangladesh. For more information on the stakeholders that were interviewed for this study, please click [here](#).*

**Chapter 2, *General country information*,** describes the economic, social, political, and governance situation as well as the general human rights situation, using international indicators to compare the country to other garment producing countries.

**Chapter 3, *Stakeholders*,** briefly presents the main stakeholders that are active in the garment/textile industry. The focus is on stakeholders that have actual impact on labour conditions or play an active role in monitoring the situation for workers in the industry. This chapter serves as a reference point for stakeholders and brands that want to engage with or consult a local stakeholder for further information or help concerning their activities in Bangladesh.

**Chapter 4, *Garment industry*,** presents an overview of the situation of the garment industry in Bangladesh, areas of production, products and prospects for the industry.

**Chapter 5, *Industrial relations*,** describes the trade union situation in the country, both in general and for the garment industry in particular. This chapter gives important information for understanding how challenges regarding working conditions could be handled through the country's social dialogue, and how they are currently handled.

**Chapter 6, *Implementation of the FWF Code of Labour Practices*,** assesses the implementation of every standard of the FWF Code of Labour Practices through official statistics on compliance (where available), laws and regulations, as well as the views of different stakeholders regarding their implementation. The main FWF audit findings over the last three years and examples of complaints received by FWF are also presented for each standard. Auditors and brands can use this section as a reference resource for their monitoring activities.



## 2. GENERAL COUNTRY INFORMATION

The People's Republic of Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1972 after a war of independence fought against India. With an area of 144,000 Km<sup>2</sup>, Bangladesh is a relatively small country<sup>1</sup>. But with 150 million inhabitants, it is the most densely populated country in the world<sup>2</sup>.

The total GDP of the country in 2014 was \$173.8 billion, mostly derived from the services sector (56%), industry (28%) and agriculture (16%)<sup>3</sup>. Among the most important industries are textiles and apparel, pharmaceutical, shipbuilding, and electronics. Cotton, machinery and equipment, chemicals, iron and steel, and foodstuffs are the main import products, and garments, knitwear, agricultural products, fish, jute and jute goods, and leather are the leading export items of the country<sup>4</sup>. Ready Made Garments are the most dominant export product, and account for 82% of total export earnings during fiscal year 2014-15<sup>5</sup>.

### 2.1 Economic indicators

The latest World Bank release categorised Bangladesh as a lower middle income country, with a total GDP of US\$173.8 billion in 2014, and a per capita income of US\$ 1 080. Although Bangladesh still lags behind its South Asian neighbours<sup>6</sup>, it has demonstrated impressive performance in some vital areas. For the last ten years its GDP has grown at a rate of more than 6%. Economic growth and stability are fuelled by remittances and apparel exports. Remittances from Bangladeshis abroad account for about 10% of the GDP, while apparel exports are responsible for nearly 80% of the export revenue. A large young population and low production costs allow Bangladesh opportunities for growth in low-cost manufacturing sectors such as textiles and garments, which have been crucial drivers of economic growth. Moving up one place, Bangladesh is now ranked 109 out of 144 countries in the Global Competitiveness Index, yet the lack of adequate infrastructure, corruption and bureaucracy continue to undermine its global competitiveness.

### 2.2 Social, political and governance indicators

Non-economic indicators of development show a poorer performance. Bangladesh now ranks 142 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index (neighbour Sri Lanka ranks 73, India 135, Pakistan 146, and Myanmar 150). The UNDP gender inequality ranking of Bangladesh, 115, is better than that of India and Pakistan (127) but lags far behind Sri Lanka (75) and Myanmar (83)<sup>7</sup>. Bangladesh scores 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 6 in the World Bank's Gender Equality Ranking.

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1 UNDP; <http://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/countryinfo.html>

2 World Bank; <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>

3 World Bank; <http://data.worldbank.org/country/bangladesh>

4 CIA; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html>

5 BGMEA; [http://www.bgmea.com.bd/home/pages/tradeinformation#.Vbni7\\_Qqqko](http://www.bgmea.com.bd/home/pages/tradeinformation#.Vbni7_Qqqko)

6 GNI (2010-2014): India 1610, Pakistan 1410, Sri Lanka 3400, Myanmar 1270, Vietnam 1890.

7 UN Human development report, 2014

These scores are perhaps not unexpected against the backdrop of the poor quality of public administration (3 on a scale of 1 to 6) and even poorer performance in terms of transparency, accountability and corruption in public administration (2.5 on a scale of 1 to 6). Its indicators for political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, and rule of law have become lower, pointing to worsening conditions in these areas<sup>8</sup>. In 2014 Transparency International ranked Bangladesh 145 out of 175 countries, down from 136 in 2013. A lower ranking means higher levels of perceived corruption<sup>9</sup>. Regarding democratisation, the Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) ranks Bangladesh 85 out of 167 countries, labelling it a hybrid regime. This means substantial irregularities occur during elections, and there are signs that the media and judiciary are not always independent<sup>10</sup>.

Performance is dropping further from an already low level in spite of the relative stability, and free from any human or nature-induced strife. Therefore, it can be said that the poor performance in the areas mentioned above has structural causes.

## 2.3 Income and poverty

Income and poverty are not only functions of economic activities and conditions; they are also the result of different levels of availability of economic resources and opportunities. Skill development and an enabling environment increase access to resources and create opportunities. Conversely, low level of human development, poor quality of public administration, degrading rule of law and pervasive corruption impede general economic growth, lower opportunities for individuals and widen the gap between income groups.

In Bangladesh, a large part of the population lives in deprivation, according to different measuring methods. About a third (31.51%) of the population lives below the national poverty line while more than 43% lives below income poverty (set at purchasing power adjusted USD\$ 1.25 per day). According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index, nearly half of the population suffers from multidimensional poverty with deprivations in education, health and other living conditions<sup>11</sup>.

Poverty would increase exponentially in the event of an economic crisis, natural disaster, market failure or similar occurrence. More than three-quarters (76.5%) of the population live with just US\$ 2 a day<sup>12</sup>. and any disruption in earnings would bring many of them into more severe poverty. Thus, despite the fact that there is progress for the economy as a whole, Bangladesh has yet to realise much of its economic potential.

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8 World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/country/bangladesh>

9 Transparency International, 2014

10 The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy 2013 & 2014

11 UNDP, Human Development Report 2014

12 The World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org>



## 2.4 General human rights situation

The human rights situation in Bangladesh is complex. The country's constitution and different laws guarantee certain rights. However, they are not always enough to fully protect human rights, and the limited respect for the rule of law prevents citizens from claiming their rights, making it easier for violations to occur.

Parliament recently passed several laws including:

- The Children Act 2013 to comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The Rights of the Persons with Disabilities and their Protection Act, 2013 as Bangladesh ratified the related UN convention and protocol.
- The Parents' Care Act 2013 that ensures social security for senior citizens.
- The Birth and Death Registration (Amendment) Act.
- The Employment and Migrant Workers' Act 2013.

The government of Bangladesh also officially recognised the Hijra (transgender) community as a separate or third gender, by official publication in its Gazette.

In addition, a Cyber Crime Tribunal was established, and the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, and the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Act 2004 were passed. In a letter to the Government of Bangladesh, a UN special rapporteur expressed concerns that the amended Information and Communication Technology Act could unduly restrict the right to freedom of opinion and expression online, thereby curtailing the legitimate activities of political pressure groups and civil society organisations.

Looking at people's perception, attitude towards, and understanding of human rights also paints a clear picture of the general human rights situation.<sup>13</sup> Half of the respondents in a government survey had never heard the term human rights. Of those who had, 18.1% could not explain what it means. More than half of those surveyed were either unaware or did not believe that human rights (or at least some of them) are legally protected and enforceable in Bangladesh. Respondents who had previously heard of human rights generally were aware that knowing your rights is the most effective way to claim them. Yet only 6.1% of those respondents who were aware of the term knew they are protected by the constitution, while 58.4% had not heard of the constitution before. Since people can only claim and defend their rights when they know and understand that rights can be legally enforced, lack of knowledge around the legal protection of rights is problematic.

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<sup>13</sup> National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh; Perception, Attitude and Understanding: a baseline survey on human rights in Bangladesh

### 3. STAKEHOLDERS

In this section, a number of stakeholders active in the garment and textile industry are briefly presented. The focus is on stakeholders who have actual impact on labour conditions or play an active role in monitoring the situation for workers in the industry.

#### GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

##### Ministry of Labour and Employment<sup>14</sup>

The Ministry of Labour and Employment aims to reduce poverty through creating employment opportunities, establishing Technical Training Centres (TTCs) to train semi-skilled and skilled workers, enhancing factory productivity by creating a friendly working environment between workers and employers, ensuring the welfare of workers in different industrial areas, implementing labour laws, fixing up minimum wages, and ensuring justice through Labour Courts.

##### Ministry of Commerce<sup>15</sup>

The Ministry of Commerce is responsible for overall trade and commerce-related activities. Among its responsibilities are fixing export targets and monitoring performance and compliance. The Textile Cell of the ministry designs strategies to deal with the challenges faced by the textile industry after the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA). It provides policy support towards facilitating and enhancing Ready Made Garment (RMG) exports, and monitors and evaluates RMG related export earnings.

##### Ministry of Industries

The Ministry of Industries is responsible for developing new policies and strategies for the promotion, expansion and sustainable development of the industrial sector of the country. There are several governmental initiatives to strengthen the RMG sector: a Social Compliance Forum, a Taskforce on Occupational Safety in RMG, and a taskforce on labour welfare in RMG.

##### Department of Labour<sup>16</sup>

This department has been continuously working to facilitate effective labour management relations, collective bargaining and negotiation, and to ensure the prompt and efficient settlement of labour disputes in the country's industrial sectors.

##### Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishments<sup>17</sup>

This department is responsible for ensuring the welfare, safety and health of workers in the various sectors that contribute to national development. By enforcing the country's labour laws, the department is working to create a safe and healthy work culture and improving the working conditions of workers. The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments works to ensure legal rights, and safe and hygienic workplaces for a large number of workers.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://mole.portal.gov.bd/site/page/d6ff6af0-fd8b-4f40-8fd6-16ba159e205f>

<sup>15</sup> Extracted from <http://www.mincom.gov.bd/about.php>

<sup>16</sup> <http://dol.gov.bd/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://dife.gov.bd/index.php/en/about-dife/introduction-to-dife>

## **Labour Appellate Tribunal**

The Labour Appellate Tribunal<sup>18</sup> and labour courts deal with labour-related cases in accordance with the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006.

## **Minimum Wages Board<sup>19</sup>**

The Bangladesh Minimum Wages Board was established in 1959. Its genesis lies in Convention No. 26 and Recommendation No. 30 of the ILO. The Minimum Wages Board is the only statutory wage-fixing office in Bangladesh.

## **Export Promotion Bureau<sup>20</sup>**

Under the Ministry of Commerce, this is the government agency entrusted with export promotion. The Textile Division is its most important, as it works to promote the export of Ready Made Garments. It also issues certificates for the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), Certificate of Origin and SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), as well as Annex-III certificates for the export of RMG products. The export oriented garment factories have to be enrolled with the Textile Division of EPB to receive advice and support.

# **EMPLOYERS ORGANISATIONS**

## **Bangladesh Employers' Federation<sup>21</sup>**

The Bangladesh Employers' Federation has been given representation on all national bodies and committees concerning labour-management relations. It is also represented on various committees, such as the National Tripartite Consultative Committee on Labour Matters, the Governing Bodies of the Bangladesh Institute of Management, the Industrial Relations Institute, Minimum Wages Board, Labour Courts, etc. The Federation is also called upon to send representatives to international conferences and industrial seminars, or symposia organised by ILO and its attached units.

## **Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association<sup>22</sup>**

BGMEA is dedicated to promoting and stimulating the apparel industry through policy advocacy towards the government, services to members, ensuring workers' rights and social compliance at factories. Its mission is to protect and promote the interests of the industry, and it is committed to securing the rights and privileges of garment workers.

## **Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association<sup>23</sup>**

BKMEA is the sole representative of the Knitwear sector of Bangladesh at the Apex Trade Body. BKMEA was formed as a trade association to facilitate and promote the knitwear business. Today it counts around 1990 knitwear manufacturers and exporters among its members.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://lat.gov.bd/>

<sup>19</sup> <http://mwb.gov.bd/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.epb.gov.bd/index.php/home/aboutepb/12>

<sup>21</sup> <http://bef.org.bd/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.bgmea.com.bd>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.bkmea.com>

## TRADE UNIONS

The history of trade unions dates back to 1926, when the Trade Union Act came into force.. However, trade unions had a difficult time dealing with restrictions and suppression until recent times. Since the independence of Bangladesh, measures such as the Formulation of labour policy (1972), the Withdrawal of the right to strike and lockout (1973), the Industrial relations (regulation) ordinance (IR(R)O), 1975, and the Industrial relations (regulation) ordinance of 1982, all placed restrictions of different kinds on the formation and activities of trade unions. These measures lasted until 1990 and since then, with the exception of the period from January 2007 to December 2008, workers have enjoyed freedom to form trade unions. The enactment of the Labour Act 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2013 are the most important legal developments in this regard.

Trade unions in the RMG sector gained recognition after a struggle of the workers to organise themselves. In 1994, workers called a strike with the objective of establishing minimum wages and implementing labour laws in the RMG sector. A tripartite committee was formed as a result. In 1997, a bilateral committee, including representatives from the Grand Alliances of Workers and BGMEA, was formed to resolve individual disputes at factory level over wages and other matters between unions and industry managements.

Until 1997, only three trade unions existed in the RMG sector. By the end of 2012, the number of trade unions had increased to 132, and by March of 2015 the number of trade unions had grown to 437. Still, the influence of trade unions in the private export-oriented sectors such as RMG is small. Less than 5 per cent of the garment workers belongs to a union. Most trade unions in the RMG sector operate outside the factories and lack active worker participation

## NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

### Action Aid Bangladesh<sup>24</sup>

The 'Responsible and Accountable Garment Sector' project of Action Aid directly addresses the issues of garment workers. The project seeks to improve the working conditions of women workers in RMG production in Bangladesh. The target population of the project is 200 000 women RMG workers in 1 000 factories.

### Ain o Salish Kendra<sup>25</sup>

A national legal aid and human rights organization, ASK provides legal and social support to the disempowered, particularly women, working children and workers. Its goal is to create a society based on equality, social and gender justice and rule of law. It seeks to create an environment for accountability and transparency of governance institutions.

### Awaj Foundation<sup>26</sup>

This organisation seeks to promote welfare for workers, create awareness and provide education regarding workers' rights and responsibilities, environmental pollution and occupational health and safety, defending the rights-particularly of women-in the social, economic and political

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.actionaid.org/bangladesh>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.askbd.org/ask/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://awaj.info/>

spheres, mobilise workers and support them regarding their rights. Also, it seeks to develop a universal platform for workers, especially women workers.

### **Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies<sup>27</sup>**

BILS is the only labour institute in the country. BILS endeavours to uphold the causes of working people and trade unions in the country. Thirteen major National Trade Union Federations are associated with BILS. Aiming to establish a just and democratic society, and enabling the worker organisations to play an appropriate role as a major force, BILS emphasises capacity building for the trade unions through schooling, research and information sharing. The organisation strives to promote just and worker-friendly policies and laws in Bangladesh, and protect human rights. It also seeks to act as a catalyst, bridging the work of trade unions, civil society and the government on labour market issues.

### **Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation<sup>28</sup>**

BLF is a non-government, non-profit and non-partisan organisation that represents the interests of workers in Bangladesh. BLF works for the welfare of workers, working people, professionals, women, children, employees and families. It shares a common determination to defend human rights and labour standards in Bangladesh, and promote the development of trade unions.

### **Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust<sup>29</sup>**

The mission of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust is to make the legal system accessible to the poor and the marginalised. The organisation deals with many cases of compensation following workplace death and injury and is aware of the limits of the Inspectorates of Factories and Establishments. Its Right to Workers' Safety project aims to increase awareness of the need to ensure safety and security in the workplace and at public places, and help create more effective regulatory bodies. It focuses particularly on the provision of legal services including individual and strategic legal aid, and on advocacy for law and policy reform.

### **Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association<sup>30</sup>**

The BNWLA works to provide access to justice for all women in Bangladesh. The programmes and services target the poorest and most disadvantaged areas of the country, where legal, preventive and protective support in establishing human rights and resisting violence against women and children is most needed.

### **Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation<sup>31</sup>**

A workers' initiative, this is a specialised development organisation that aims to work on issues that touch upon employment, income, the economy, environment and livelihood of workers. This is an umbrella organisation for different national and industrial trade unions working together on workplace problems and development issues, and part of the Collaborative Network of the International Safety and Health Information Centre of the ILO (CIS-ILO).

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.bils-bd.org/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.blf-bd.org/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.blast.org.bd/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.bnwlabd.org/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.oshebd.org/>

## **International Labour Organization<sup>32</sup>**

The ILO works with the government, workers and employer organisations to promote decent and productive employment opportunities for women and men in Bangladesh. Recent technical cooperation activities have focused on improving working conditions and labour rights. Considerable emphasis is being placed on the Ready Made Garment sector. Major projects include the RMG Centre of Excellence project, the improvement of fire and general building safety, the promotion of workers' rights, and labour relations in export-oriented industries in Bangladesh.

## **Karmojibi Nari**

Karmojibi Nari is an organisation of female workers striving to establish rights, dignity and authority for female workers, along with women and labourers. Karmojibi Nari is an advocate for issues in support of female workers at the national level.

## **Nari Uddug Kendra<sup>33</sup>**

This non-governmental organisation is mandated with promoting gender equality, human rights, and the personal and political empowerment of women and girls in Bangladesh. NUK has been working for women, adolescent girls and youths in urban and rural areas. The target groups of NUK include garment factory workers, trade unions, and local women NGO leaders. NUK's Garment Factories Support Program works with management and workers to improve working conditions and protect workers' rights, understanding that securing the competitiveness and sustainability of the Bangladesh garments export industry in a global market increasingly requires adherence to international labour and ethical business standards.

## **Oxfam, Bangladesh**

Oxfam is engaged in development initiatives in Bangladesh in diverse ways. Its programmes and activities, focusing in particular on women, garment workers and the industry, seek the improvement of the material conditions and status of women, support the advocacy initiatives of partner organisations on the issues of consumer rights and working conditions in the informal sectors, including sex workers and women working in garment factories, support basic education for children, especially girls, and promote community participation on non-formal primary schools. They also have launched the "Make Trade Fair" campaign.

## **Phulki**

Phulki develops and promotes low-cost childcare units within factories. The organisation has created a sustainable service model by harnessing financial and other resources from garment manufacturers, mothers (who make use of childcare facilities), garment buyers, donors and the Bangladeshi government.

## **Solidarity Center<sup>34</sup>**

The Solidarity Center aims to advance worker rights and support its partners in the garment industry and in seafood processing. Strong unions capable of protecting workers' rights can ensure safe and productive workplaces and constructive labour-management relations, enabling the overall economy of Bangladesh to become stronger and flourish.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Aboutus/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>33</sup> [http://nuk-bd.org/about\\_nuk.php](http://nuk-bd.org/about_nuk.php)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.solidaritycenter.org>



### **The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh<sup>35</sup>**

The Accord is an independent, legally binding agreement between brands and trade unions designed to work towards a safe and healthy Bangladeshi Ready Made Garment industry. Its purpose is to enable a working environment in which no worker needs to fear fires, building collapses, or other accidents that could be prevented with reasonable health and safety measures.

### **The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety<sup>36</sup>**

The Alliance was founded by a group of North American apparel companies and retailers and brands who joined together to develop and launch the Bangladesh Worker Safety Initiative, a binding, five-year undertaking that will be transparent, result-oriented, measurable and verifiable with the intent of improving safety in Bangladeshi RMG factories. Collectively, these Alliance members represent the overwhelming majority of North American imports of RMG from Bangladesh, produced at more than 580 factories.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://bangladeshaccord.org/>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.bangladeshworkersafety.org/>

## 4. GARMENT INDUSTRY OVERVIEW<sup>37</sup>

### ORGANISATION OF THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

The Ready Made Garment industry in Bangladesh has undergone phenomenal growth over the past three decades. In the early 1980s the industry had about 400 factories, employed 120,000 people and exported around US\$ 32 million worth of garments, or 3.89% of the total export value of the country. By 1990 the export value of RMG surpassed 50% of the total exports from Bangladesh. In 2014-15, the industry employed four million workers in the 4 292 factories of registered members of BGMEA. Over time, the export value of the Bangladesh garment industry has grown more than eight hundred-fold and reached US\$ 25.49 billion in 2014-2015. The export of RMG now accounts for more than 80% of the total export value of the country.

Arguably, the growth of the Bangladesh garment industry is founded on the system of the Multi Fibre Arrangement and fuelled by low labour costs. The industry receives government support for the import of machinery and raw materials as well as cash incentives. Emerging low-cost production centres in Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar, negative publicity, and inadequate infrastructure are noted as future challenges in international surveys. BGMEA, however, expects to double its export volume to US\$ 50 billion by 2021. The garment industry sustained a steady growth rate during the recent global economic slow-down and financial crisis. Even during fiscal years 2013-14 and 2014-15, exports from Bangladesh continued to grow, despite huge negative campaigns following the Tazreen and Rana Plaza disasters. The US\$ 50 billion target may therefore well be achievable. The inadequacy of existing infrastructure, however, remains a concern.

In recent times, issues of environmental sustainability have become more important for the Bangladeshi RMG industry. Entrepreneurs pay increasing attention to carbon-neutral buildings, water recycling and the use of renewable energy. So far, 14 garment factories from Bangladesh have received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, and 50 more factories are in line to receive it, as they have already met the selection criteria. By the end of 2016, more than 150 factories are expected to be awarded this certification. A recent McKinsey report predicts that prospects for the apparel sector in Bangladesh will stay strong for another five years<sup>38</sup>.

### MAIN EXPORTS FROM THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

In the last few decades, the RMG industry in Bangladesh not only expanded, it also evolved and transformed. The industry began mainly with woven factories. Up until the 1990s, woven items were the overwhelming majority of exports, accounting for more than 80% of total RMG export value. In 2014-15, woven items were still the most important, but only by a small margin, as knit items grew to 49% of the total RMG export value.

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<sup>37</sup> Figures in this section, unless otherwise mentioned, are calculated from information provided by BGMEA at <http://www.bgmea.com.bd>

<sup>38</sup> The Daily Star

## MAIN EXPORT DESTINATIONS

The export market for 2014-15 was dominated by EU countries (60%). Among EU destinations, Germany, UK, Spain, France and Italy combined receive 76% of all exports to the EU, with more than a quarter destined for Germany alone. The USA is the second largest (20%) destination for Bangladesh RMG. Bangladesh exports are also diversifying into 'non-traditional' markets all over the world, with emerging destinations like Japan, Australia, Turkey and China. Total export to non-traditional destinations account for 15% of the total RMG export value.

## MAIN AREAS FOR GARMENT PRODUCTION

Industry growth brought about changes in the physical concentration of the industrial units. In the last 10 to 15 years, the size of industrial units has become much larger and the industry began to move out of the metropolis. Factories are now concentrated in areas in the perimeter of Dhaka city (Savar, Ashulia, Joydevpur, Kaliganj, Fatullah and Narayanganj). The second largest concentration is in Chittagong. New hubs are emerging in the Dhaka end of Mymensing, and in Comilla which is close to Chittagong. Some garment hubs still exist within the metropolitan area of Dhaka, including Jatrabari, Uttara and Mirpur.

## PERCENTAGE EMPLOYED IN GARMENT INDUSTRY

RMG has emerged as a leading employment sector, both directly and indirectly. Employment in the industry has increased proportionally to its growth. The number of workers employed in the industry increased from 1.8 million in 2000-2001 to the present four million. Indirect employment is estimated to be around 10 million. Indirect employment is generated through industries linked to the knitwear sector and others, and service providers wholly or substantially dependent on garment industries, such as spinning mills, textile and packaging industries, accessories manufacturers, specialised transport services, and freight forwarders.

## SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE GARMENT WORKFORCE

The workforce in the RMG sector is predominantly female, accounting for 80% of the total employed labour<sup>39</sup>. An estimated 20 million people are dependent on the employment provided by the RMG sector. Commenting on the scale and significance of employment of women in the RMG sector, a World Bank report indicates that 'Mass employment of women and girls in the country's flagship export sector – the readymade garments (RMG) sector – has been one of the more visible and prominent changes in women's lives since its late 1970s' introduction'<sup>40</sup>.

39 Quarterly Review on RMG: January-March 2015, Bangladesh Bank, Research Department, External Economics Division; <https://www.bb.org.bd/pub/monthly/econtrds/mar15/econtrds.php#>

40 Hossain, Naomi (2011) Exports, Equity, and Empowerment: the effects of ready-made garments manufacturing employment on gender equality in Bangladesh, World Bank Background Paper, World Development Report 2012; <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1322671773271/Hossain-Export-Equity-employment.pdf>

## 5. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The history of the industrial relations system of Bangladesh can be traced back to the Trade Union Act of 1926. In 1947, the Industrial Disputes Act placed the conciliation and adjudication mechanism for the settlement of industrial disputes on a permanent footing. The East Pakistan Trade Unions Act was enacted in 1965, repealing the Trade Unions Act of 1926. Subsequently, the Labour Disputes Act of 1965 and Trade Unions Act of 1965 were integrated into one law, the Industrial Relations Ordinance of 1969. Since independence, a number of policies, regulations, and ordinances have been in force at different times. Finally the Labour Act of 2006 repealed all previous measures and unified workers' and industry related laws. The Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006 is a major and comprehensive legal change regarding the industrial relation system.

### ROLE OF THE STATE IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The industrial relations system in Bangladesh is characterised by the predominant role played by the government. The state acts both as a planner and an administrator in the industrial relations system, and government intervention in trade unions remains a feature. The government also plays a predominant role in various tripartite bodies. The success or failure of tripartite consultation or negotiations largely depends on the responsiveness of the government to the demands and aspirations of both employers and workers. The state also provides dispute settlement mechanisms.

### TRADE UNIONS IN RMG

The RMG workers' movement to organise trade unions was suppressed through administrative and political intervention, and vehement opposition by factory owners. In 1994, workers called a strike demanding the establishment of minimum wages and implementing labour laws in the RMG sector. This resulted in the formation of a tripartite committee, headed by the Labour Minister. The committee consisted of representatives of workers, employers and governments. The function of the Committee was to review the demands of garments workers, and monitor violations of labour laws. In 1997, seven trade unions joined forces to form a Grand Alliance under the auspices of the Bangladesh Garments Workers Unity Council. In 1997, a bilateral committee, consisting of representatives from the Grand Alliances of Workers and BGMEA, was formed to resolve individual disputes at factory level over wages and other matters between unions and industry management. Its proposal to resolve disputes through arbitration was subsequently put into practice and was found to be successful. A national tripartite agreement between the government, BGMEA and the organisations representing garment workers was concluded in 2006. Popularly known as the national tripartite memorandum of understanding, it is seen as a landmark achievement towards resolving workers' issues. Most of the demands were later incorporated in the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006.

## NATIONAL TRIPARTITE PLAN OF ACTION

Industrial relations in the RMG sector have been reshaped in recent times. Major industrial disasters like Tazreen and Rana Plaza brought in new actors and expanded the role of existing ones. Following the Tazreen fire, a framework for the improvement of fire safety in Bangladesh was developed in the form of a Tripartite Statement to Enhance Fire Safety. This was signed by the government, and workers' and employers' representatives in January of 2013, and led to the adoption of the National Tripartite Plan of Action (NTPA). The plan shows considerable engagement with and input from unions, brands and retailers as well as development partners. In addition, in 2013 the Labour Act (2006) was amended to facilitate the formation of trade unions, among other things. Consequently, the RMG sector saw a significant growth of trade unions, from 132 at the end of 2012 to 437 by March 2015<sup>41</sup>.

## DISPUTE SETTLEMENT

The settlement of industrial disputes can happen through a non-adjudicatory or an adjudicatory process. The former includes a participation committee, negotiation, conciliation and arbitration. Adjudicatory authorities include the Labour Court, the Labour Appellate Tribunal, and a High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. In case of failure to reach conciliation, the party which began the industrial dispute may serve a notice of strike or lock-out to the other party, a right recognised in the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006.

## PREVENTION OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

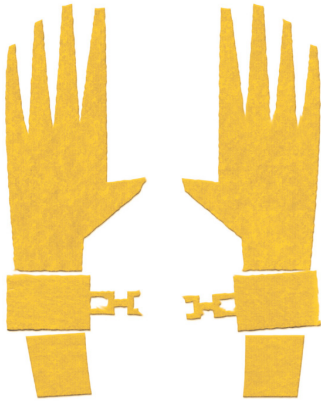
The Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006 provides an important tool for minimising industrial disputes at the very initial stage through the intervention of the Participation Committee. The Participation Committee is a bilateral mechanism comprised of an equal number of representatives of both workers and employers. In an establishment where fifty or more workers are employed, the employer is obligated to form a Participation Committee. The workers' representative in the Participation Committee must be appointed on the basis of a nomination by the trade union or, in the absence of an active trade union, by the workers that are employed in the establishment. The main function of the Participation Committee is to instil and develop a sense of belonging and workers' commitment.

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41 ILO, Rana Plaza two years on: Progress made & challenges ahead for the Bangladesh RMG sector, 2015

# 6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FWF CODE OF LABOUR PRACTICES

## 6.1. Employment is freely chosen



*“There shall be no use of forced, including bonded or prison, labour”  
(ILO Conventions 29 and 105)”*

### OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

The term forced or compulsory labour is defined in Article 2.1 of the ILO Forced Labour Convention of 1930 (No. 29), as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”. No official statistics on the issue are available from

either national or international agencies. This is not unusual, since the definition refers to the nature of the working relation, not to the nature of the work itself. However, working conditions and wage levels in the formal and informal sectors in industries such as shrimp, textile, agriculture, and domestic work are at risk of being in violation of human and labour rights.<sup>42</sup>

### LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Bangladesh is obliged to act against all practices that amount to forced labour, as signatory to the 1926 Slavery Convention<sup>43</sup>, the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery<sup>44</sup>, and ILO Conventions 29<sup>45</sup> and 105<sup>46</sup>. Towards this goal, the constitution of Bangladesh declares that “All forms of Forced Labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence and shall be punishable in accordance with the Law”<sup>47</sup>. This means that forced labour has been prohibited in the country. Similarly, labour laws in Bangladesh, which classify labour into 7 categories – apprentice, replacement, casual, temporary, probationer, permanent and seasonal – clearly state that any worker with a permanent contract can resign from his or her employment with a 60-day written notice. For other categories, the notice period ranges from 30 to 14 days<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 2014, US Department of Labor.

<sup>43</sup> Article 2, Slavery Convention.

<sup>44</sup> Article 1, Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery.

<sup>45</sup> Article 1, [Forced Labour Convention](#) (1930), ILO.

<sup>46</sup> Article 1, [Abolition of Forced Labour Convention](#) (1957), ILO.

<sup>47</sup> Article 34.1, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

<sup>48</sup> Clause 4.1, 27.1, 27.2, Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (amended 2013.)



## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Stakeholders noted that people need work in order to earn a living. In this context, the garment sector offers ample employment opportunities. Employment is freely chosen, but stakeholders added that overtime and production targets are unilaterally decided upon by the employer and are not voluntary, and workers might face expulsion or punishment if they refuse overtime work. Nevertheless, some stakeholders believe that the situation has somewhat improved over the past years.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

According to audit results, 97% of overtime work is not done voluntarily, and is not announced in advance. In 6% of the audited factories, original identity papers were retained in the workers' files. In some factories overtime and maternity payments were somewhat delayed, although this was not common practice.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure acts as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All complaints are published on FWF's website.*

There have been no worker complaints related to 'employment is freely chosen'. However, the worker complaints on excessive and involuntary overtime work that were filed with FWF can be accessed at [www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org).

## 6.2. There is no discrimination in employment



*"In recruitment, wage policy, admittance to training programs, employee promotion policy, policies of employment termination, retirement, and any other aspect of the employment relationship shall be based on the principle of equal opportunities, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, political affiliation, union membership, nationality, social origin, deficiencies, or handicaps"* (ILO Conventions 100 and 111)

## OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

Gender inequality in general is pronounced in Bangladesh. The UNDP gender inequality ranking of the country is 115, in 2014 Bangladesh ranked 68 in the Global Gender Gap index of the

WEF Global Gender Gap Report, and in the World Bank's Gender Equality Ranking, Bangladesh scores 3.5 on a scale of 1 to 6. The average wages of women are 69% of those of men. Female employment is clearly at the lower levels of the wage ladder, and 41.13% of the employed females earn less than BDT 5 000.00 which is 26.11% less than what male employed adults receive. This may be because women are more often employed in the informal sector (92.3%) than their male counterparts (85.5%)<sup>49</sup>.

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Significant numbers of international conventions, covenants and other instruments, including ILO conventions 19, 45, 100, 111, 118, the UN CRPD, CEDAW, CERD, and ICESER state the right to equality irrespective of sex, age, colour, religion, physical ability or others. Bangladesh is among the countries party to these conventions.

In its constitution, Bangladesh also guarantees that all citizens are equal and are entitled to equal protection before the law. Accordingly, every citizen has the right to enjoy the protection of the law, and to be treated in accordance with the law, in all circumstances. Moreover, the constitution stipulates that the State shall endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens and the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Regarding the right to association, the law specifically prohibits discriminating against a worker in employment-related matters on the grounds of trade union (non)membership.

## GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The Constitution of Bangladesh further mentions that women and men shall have equal rights in all spheres of the state and public life<sup>50</sup>. Likewise, the provisions of the Labour Act<sup>51</sup> on the one hand prohibit the discrimination of workers and, on the other, they help ensure sure that the special needs of specific categories of workers are safeguarded. The Labour Act specifically states that, in determining wages or fixing minimum wages for any worker, for work of equal nature or value, the principle of equal wages for female and male workers must be followed and no discrimination should be made based on gender. In addition, it specifies benefits that pregnant women are entitled to, and secures their job during pregnancy and maternity leave. The law also provides protection for women by prohibiting women to be employed:

- in maintaining running equipment, between rotating parts of running machines.
- in work underground or underwater
- in work requiring heavy labour in the 10 weeks preceding and following child birth.

In the absence of adequate and specific provisions on harassment in the workplace, the Bangladesh High Court issued an enforceable guideline detailing what constitutes harassment, and specifying the responsibilities of employers in preventing the harassment of women in the workplace. In response to a 2008 writ petition, invoked by the Bangladesh National Women

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49 Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2012, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

50 Article 12(d), 19.1, 27, 28, 31, & 41.1. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

51 Clause 39,40,42,45,46,109,195,286,332,& 345. Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (amended 2013)

Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), on 14 May 2009 the High court division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh passed guidelines defining harassment and said compliance with the guidelines was mandatory until those were passed into law in Parliament.

Sexual harassment was defined as unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) as physical contact and advances, the use of sexual remarks or gestures, abusive language, stalking, leaving messages of a sexual nature, among others.

The aims and objectives of the guidelines were to create awareness about sexual harassments, create awareness about the consequences of sexual offences, and that harassment is punishable offence. In the guidelines, the Court asked authorities to set up sexual harassment complaint centres at workplaces and educational institutions, and and constitute committees to investigate charges.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

With regard to discrimination in the work place, stakeholders pointed out that the sector is predominantly female, rural and with little access to education. Because of the broader social context which considers women as inferior, garment workers are looked down upon. This creates a climate in which the harassment of women at the workplace has become widespread. In turn, this makes women workers vulnerable to (sexual) harassment and violence. Reportedly, almost 60% of factory workers have experienced some type of harassment at work, including verbal or physical abuse. Workers also reported that the vast majority of problems are with immediate supervisors, who tend to change their behaviour when senior workers or buyers appear on the factory floor. There is also a perception among many managers that, while women may be yelled at, or occasionally hit, the environment is still preferable to other options available to poor uneducated women – such as prostitution.

This situation is exacerbated by the fact that most factories do not use a formal skills test for evaluating performance as a basis for the provision of wage increments or promotion. Workers feel that the informal nature of performance evaluation leaves them vulnerable to arbitrary and discriminatory decisions related to pay raises and promotion. Stakeholders, however, pointed out that the supervisory positions and decision-making positions are mostly held by men.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

- Almost all factories (97%) have a policy against discrimination and sexual harassment.
- In 100% of the audited factories, the number of women in supervisory roles and other high-paid positions is low. In 47% of the factories there were no women supervisors.
- In 72% of the audited factories there is no effective performance assessment system as a basis for determining eligibility for promotion or wage increases. The informal nature of performance assessment makes it prone to favouritism and discrimination.

- Dyeing and washing and knitting/weaving operators are male-dominated jobs and tend to be better paid, while helpers and sewing operations tend to employ mostly women.
- An Anti-harassment committee was in place in 50% of the audited factories. However, very few workers are aware of its existence and activities, or even know the committee members. In some case, even the committee members are unaware of the committee's activities.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All complaints are published on the FWF website.*

Worker complaints received by FWF in Bangladesh regarding discrimination, including members of the anti-harassment committee can be accessed on the FWF website. [Here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## 6.3. No exploitation of child labour



*"There shall be no use of child labour. The age for admission to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, not less than 15 years." (ILO Convention 138)*

*"There shall be no forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour. [...] Children [under the age of 18] shall not perform work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm their health, safety or morals." (ILO Convention 182)*

## OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

Under the Labour Act of Bangladesh a child is defined as an individual not older than 14. For purposes other than work, someone under the age of 18 is considered a child. According to the US Department of Labor, more than 10% of the population aged 5 to 14 is working children. Most of them (45.5%) work in the agricultural sector, followed by the services sector (36%) and industry (18.5%). Farming, domestic work, service work, welding and auto repair are among the activities that employ child labour<sup>52</sup>.

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes children's rights and identifies the obligations of states party in ensuring those rights<sup>53</sup>. In terms of protection at work, ILO

<sup>52</sup> Findings on the worst forms of child labor, 2014, US Department of Labor.

<sup>53</sup> Convention on the Right of the Child.

Convention 59 states that ‘Children under the age of 15 are prohibited from working in any industrial undertaking’<sup>54</sup>. Convention 182 establishes that every country must take immediate action to abolish the worst forms of child labour, including all types of slavery, forced labour, their involvement in illegal activities, and any work that could damage the health, safety or well-being of children (so called “hazardous work”)<sup>55</sup>.

Bangladesh has ratified all three conventions committing to the prevention of child labour. Moreover, the Bangladesh constitution enables the government to take any special measure for the benefit of children<sup>56</sup>.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Stakeholders, including those from trade unions, believe that child workers are not a common sight in the Bangladesh export-oriented garment sector. However, the incidence of child labour rises at sub-contracted factories and supporting industries such as spinning mills and in factories that have domestic-market production. Stakeholders also indicated that factories employ adolescents, which is legally permissible under certain conditions. According to a stakeholder, up to 20% of factories recruit children or adolescent workers. At many factories the system to ensure the authenticity of personal age-verifying identification documents is not applied.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

- In 1 out of 36 audits conducted by FWF in Bangladesh between 2012 and 2015, several child and juvenile workers were found.
- In 31% of the factories audited, no proper age verification system was in place.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF’s complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All the complaints are published on the FWF website.*

In 2015, one alleged case of child labour reported in the media was treated in accordance with the FWF complaints procedure. More information can be found [here](#).

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54 Article 2, Minimum Age (industry) Convention (Revised).

55 Article 3, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention.

56 Article 28.4, The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

## 6.4. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining



*"The right of all workers to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively shall be recognised." (ILO Conventions 87 and 98) "Workers' representatives shall not be the subject of discrimination and shall have access to all workplaces necessary to carry out their representation functions." (ILO Convention 135 and Recommendation 143)*

### OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

Trade unions are mostly active in the formal sector of the economy. But the formal sector employs only a small part of the total workforce of the country (12.5%). Moreover, trade unions are more common in the public than in the private sector. According to one report, there is a total of 7,289 basic unions in Bangladesh, with a combined membership of 2.3 million workers. However, trade union members account for only 3% of the labour force. With 4 million workers, the garment industry is the most important sector of the formal economy, yet the sector only has around 63,000 unionised workers, less than 2% of its total workforce<sup>57</sup>.

### LAWS AND REGULATIONS

ILO Conventions 87 and 98 clearly state that every worker has the right to establish and join the organisation of its preference without the approval of any authority. It bars public authorities from interference that would restrict this right, and from dissolving such an organisation through administrative authority<sup>58</sup>. To guarantee the application of said rights, it is further established that workers are protected against anti-union discrimination in their employment, specifically by not making employment conditional upon joining a union or relinquishing membership of one, and protecting against dismissal or other bias provoked by union membership<sup>59</sup>. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have recognised the right to freedom of thought, expression, assembly and the right to form or join trade unions and strike<sup>60</sup>.

### JOINING A TRADE UNION

Bangladesh has ratified all these conventions and covenants. The Constitution of Bangladesh declares that 'the Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights are guaranteed by the constitution, which ensures citizen's right to assemble, freedom of speech and expression'. It also specifically confirms every citizen's right to form associations or

<sup>57</sup> Bangladesh Labour Market Profile 2014, Danish trade union council for international cooperation.

<sup>58</sup> Article 3 & 4, Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (1948).

<sup>59</sup> Article 1, Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949).

<sup>60</sup> Article 18, 19, 21 & 22 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 8 of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.



unions<sup>61</sup>. To translate these rights into practice, the Labour Act of 2006 specifies issues concerning the right to form and join trade unions, elect a collective bargaining agent, and procedures to apply tools for resolving industrial disputes including calling a strike. Labour law clearly states that no worker can be discriminated against on the grounds of membership status of a trade union. Moreover, the law requires the owner of any establishment employing at least 50 workers to form a 'Participation' committee to ensure the enforcement of labour laws<sup>62</sup>.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

In recent years, there have been several cases of labour unrests at garment factories. Local unions conclude that it is a result of poor dialogue between managers and workers. There is also a lack of trust between factories and NGOs and unions in the country. There are cases in which union leaders have been fired from factories because of their trade union activities, which also discourages workers from joining unions. In the past few years, the situation concerning freedom of association in the garment industry has improved somewhat, according to stakeholders. They indicate owners feel less afraid to allow unions to operate in their factories. Some employers now think that trade unions could be good for business if handled carefully. More than 200 new basic unions have been registered during the last two years, stakeholders pointed out. Recent indications, however, point to an increasing difficulty in registering new unions. Generally, owners still have a conservative outlook and trade union leaders continue to be harassed. Factors that inhibit the growth of unions include the negative image of trade unions, the lack of awareness among workers and basic union leaders, the lax implementation of laws, the complex procedures to organise trade unions and corruption.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

- All of the audited factories had a written policy on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
- Also, workers are not aware of their rights in terms of Freedom of Association.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All the complaints are published on the FWF website.*

Reports of some of these complaints can be accessed at [www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org).

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61 Article 11, 37, 38, & 39, The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

62 Clause 175 – 231, Bangladesh Labor Act 2006 (amended 2013)

## 6.5. Payment of a living wage



*"Wages and benefits paid for a standard working week shall meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and always be sufficient to meet basic needs of workers and their families and to provide some discretionary income" (ILO Conventions 26 and 131, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art 23(3) and art 25(1)).*

*"Deductions from wages for disciplinary measures shall not be permitted nor shall any deductions from wages not provided for by national law be permitted. Deductions shall never constitute an amount that will lead the employee to receive less than the minimum wage. Employees shall be adequately and clearly informed about the specifications of their wages including wage rates and pay period."*

### OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

The poverty situation in Bangladesh reflects the wage level in the country. About a third (31.51%) of the population lives below the national poverty line, while more than 43% lives below the level of income poverty. Measure by the Multidimensional Poverty Index, nearly half the population is multi-dimensionally poor. This is corroborated by the fact that more than 76% of employed women and 65% of employed men earn less than BDT 10 000 per month. The average wage rate of a day labourer was BDT 183 in 2012<sup>63</sup>.

### LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Bangladesh is signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It recognises the rights to 'adequate food, clothing and housing' along with 'the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health'<sup>64</sup>. The constitution of Bangladesh affirms that 'It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State ... securing to its citizens (a) the provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care; (b) the right to work, that is, the right to guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage ...'<sup>65</sup> The labour law in particular doesn't specify any wage structure for workers.

However, the law establishes the procedure to determine the minimum wage in a specific industry. The tripartite Wage Board is required to take into consideration factors such as cost of living, standard of living, cost of production, productivity, price of products, business capability, rate of inflation, and the economic and social conditions of the country. The labour law has made the minimum wage declared by the Wage Board binding upon all employers within a specific industry. Failing to comply with the minimum wage is punishable with both imprisonment and fines.

<sup>63</sup> Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2012, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>64</sup> Article 11 & 12, [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)

<sup>65</sup> Article 15, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The last wage board fixed minimum wage at the entry level at BDT 5 300.00, which raised the previous minimum wages by 77%. The board also included the provision of a 5% annual increment in all categories.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

According to stakeholders, the recent wage increases have had mixed results. While it is considered as a step towards a living wage for the workers, it falls short of attaining real living wages for them. Estimates of local stakeholders of what should be a living wage are considerably higher than the established legal minimum wage. To illustrate, in 2013 BILS estimated a living wage benchmark at BDT 8 114, trade union demands were somewhat similar at BDT 8 000, while Asia Floor Wage put forward a living wage benchmark for Bangladesh of BDT 25 687.

## RISKS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The wage increase has led to a decrease in overtime, even though production targets have remained the same. Recruitment has slowed since the declaration of the new minimum wage, and some factories are using automation to cut down the number of workers, stakeholders reported. One crucial factor mentioned by different stakeholders is that the increased wage rate increased the cost for owners, while order prices did not follow suit. This is in line with the fact that, compared to the previous year, the volume of export has increased while the of exports has decreased. According to stakeholders, 70% of the factories implemented the new wage structure while the sub-contracting factories and small factories have not fully implemented it. Some stakeholders claim that employers downgraded workers before implementing the new wages to keep overall salary costs down. A large group of workers does not have sufficient information or awareness about how their own wages are calculated; therefore they have difficulties to judge whether they have received the right amounts.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

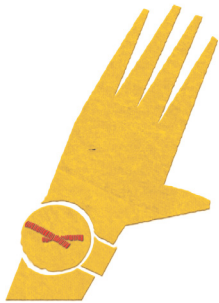
- Salaries do not amount to living wages in any of the factories audited by FWF between 2012 and 2015.
- In 31% of the audited factories, the salaries of some workers were found to be below the applicable minimum wage levels.
- In 19% of the factories, FWF audits founds that overtime was not remunerated in accordance with the relevant legal provisions.
- In 22% of the factories, unlawful deductions were made; often these refer to deductions in days remunerated when a worker was absent.
- In 33% of the audited factories workers did not receive a pay-slip and, as a result, were not aware of how their wages were calculated.
- In 11% of the factories, workers were performing work should entitle them to a higher salary. In one case, workers were degraded when the new legal minimum wage structure was introduced.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All the complaints are published on the FWF website.*

Examples of complaints received by FWF regarding living wage can be found on [www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org) or accessed [here](#) and [here](#).

## 6.6. No excessive working hours



*"Hours of work shall comply with applicable laws and industry standards. In any event, workers shall not on a regular basis be required to work in excess of 48 hours per week and shall be provided with at least one day off for every 7-day period. Overtime shall be voluntary, shall not exceed 12 hours per week, shall not be demanded on a regular basis and shall always be compensated at a premium rate."*  
(ILO Convention 1)

## OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

According to government statistics, average weekly hours worked by employees vary considerably by sex and occupation. The national average for men is 51 hours and for women 35. Men work the longest hours in hospitality and food service activities (56 hours) followed by those in transportation and storage (55 hours). Women work longest in the information and communication sector (54 hours) followed by construction, human health and social work activities, and professional, scientific and technical activities (50 hours)<sup>66</sup>.

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS

A signatory to ILO conventions concerning hours of work and weekly rest periods<sup>67</sup>, the government of Bangladesh is obliged to adhere to international norms of working hours and holidays. The constitution also recognises 'the right to reasonable rest, recreation and leisure.'<sup>68</sup> Accordingly, Bangladeshi labour law stipulates that no worker can be made to work more than 8 hours a day and 48 hours in a week, except when overtime wages are paid. Even when overtime is included, no worker can be employed for more than 60 hours a week, and on average no worker should work more than 56 hours per week over a year. Women cannot be assigned to work between 10 pm and 6 am. According to the law, workers are entitled to one day off every week and 10 days casual, 14 days sick, and 11 days festival paid leave for every

<sup>66</sup> Gender Statistics of Bangladesh 2012, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

<sup>67</sup> [Hours of Work \(Industry\) Convention; Weekly Rest \(Commerce and Offices\) Convention; Weekly Rest \(Industry\) Convention.](#)

<sup>68</sup> Article 15, the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

calendar year. Besides, each worker will earn one day of paid leave for every 18 working days. Any work beyond the 8-hour limit will be paid double the regular rate. This would include 'dearness allowance'<sup>69</sup> and other interim pay if there is any<sup>70</sup>.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Overtime work in the garment industries in Bangladesh, as reported by stakeholders, is very common. Generally, workers work two hours of overtime per day after regular working hours. Excessive overtime, beyond 60 hours per week, is not uncommon either. According to stakeholders, in the garment industry excessive overtime often occurs when a factory has committed to meet emergency shipment deadlines imposed by its clients. Stakeholders also pointed out that workers are to meet higher production targets in a shorter timeframe. As a result, workers are sometimes compelled to work overtime, without overtime payment, when targets are not met within regular working hours. A large number of workers depend on overtime to make a decent living. Overtime therefore has a significant impact on worker income. Without overtime payment, wages are sometimes too low for workers to reach an acceptable living standard.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

- Excessive overtime practices were found in 97 % of the 36 factories audited by FWF between 2012 and 2015. Overtime was not voluntary, and in general it was announced only briefly before it was to take effect.
- In 97% of the audited factories workers performed duties during their weekly days off, depriving them from enjoying 1 day off for every 7 days.
- Compensatory days off when workers performed work on their weekly days of rest, or on festival days were not granted at any of the audited factories.
- Only 7% of the audited factories use consent forms when women are requested to work after 10 pm.
- In 33% of the audited factories, the record keeping for overtime is not transparent. Excessive overtime (above the authorised OT hours limit) is often not registered on workers' time cards, which tend to indicate only legal overtime hours. Double bookkeeping is common, and separate sheets are often kept for excessive overtime records and payment sheets.
- Piece rate workers generally do not receive overtime payment.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All complaints are published on the FWF website.*

The report of a worker complaint on reasonable working hours can be found on [www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org).

69 The Dearness Allowance (DA) is a cost of living adjustment allowance paid to Government employees, public sector employees (PSU) and pensioners in Bangladesh

70 Clause 100, 102, 103, 108, 115, 116, & 117, Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (amended 2013)

## 6.7. Safe and healthy working conditions



*"A safe and hygienic working environment shall be provided, and best occupational health and safety practice shall be promoted, bearing in mind the prevailing knowledge of the industry and of any specific hazards. Appropriate attention shall be paid to occupational hazards specific to this branch of the industry and assure that a safe and hygienic work environment is provided for. Effective regulations shall be implemented to prevent accidents and minimize health risks as much as possible (following ILO Convention 155). "Physical abuse, threats of physical abuse, unusual punishments or discipline, sexual and other harassment, and intimidation by the employer are strictly prohibited."*

### LAWS AND REGULATION

Several ILO conventions deal with workplace safety and special requirements for women and young persons in the workplace<sup>71</sup>. In addition, ICESCR spells out the right to 'work under just and favourable conditions'. Bangladesh is a signatory to those relevant conventions and covenants and thereby commits to ensure workplace safety and healthy working conditions. To do so, labour law requires every employer to follow a comprehensive set of rules. It defines the requirements concerning specific aspects of safety and health including:

*cleanliness, air circulation and temperature, dust and smoke, waste disposal, humidification, overcrowding, light, drinking water, wash room; building and equipment safety, fire safety, safety barrier for machines, working on rotating equipment, toxic gas emission; first-aid, canteen, rest room, child care, permanent health care centre, welfare officer, safety committee, group insurance, etc.*<sup>72</sup>

### FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY

On 24 April 2013, the Rana Plaza Building in the Savar area of Dhaka collapsed, claiming the lives of 1 134 workers and injuring and permanently disabling and traumatising hundreds. Unfortunately, the tragedy, although unprecedented in scale, was not an isolated incident. A number of factory fires had taken place prior to the Rana Plaza building collapse, including one at Tazreen Fashion Limited in November of 2012, and another one at Smart Export Garments in January of 2013. This created a sense of urgency to address fire and building safety in the RMG industry in Bangladesh.

Following the Tazreen fire, a framework for the enhancement of fire safety in Bangladesh was developed in the form of a Tripartite Statement to enhance fire safety. This was signed

<sup>71</sup> Labour Inspection Convention, [Underground Work \(Women\) Convention](#), Night Work (Women) Convention, Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised)

<sup>72</sup> Clause 51-94, Bangladesh Labor Act 2006 (amended 2013).



by the government, and workers' and employers' representatives in January of 2013. Later, the National Tripartite Plan of Action (NTPA) was adopted. In the aftermath of the Rana Plaza building collapse, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (the Accord) was signed. This independent, legally binding, five-year agreement between global brands, retailers and trade unions was designed to build a safe and healthy Bangladeshi RMG industry. Signatories to the Accord are approximately 190 (mostly European) clothing brands, sourcing at roughly 1,600 factories in Bangladesh.

A different initiative, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety was founded by a group of North American apparel companies, retailers and brands who joined together to develop and launch the Bangladesh Worker Safety Initiative, a binding, five-year undertaking created with the intent of improving safety in Bangladeshi RMG factories. Collectively, these Alliance members represent the overwhelming majority of North American imports of RMG from Bangladesh, produced at more than 580 factories. Factories have been inspected on building, electrical and fire safety, and corrective actions plans are in different stages of implementation.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

The stakeholders noticed that the government, BGMEA, and brands have taken several initiatives to improve working conditions in the garment sector. Some specifically mentioned a decrease in harassment and abuse of workers. But stakeholders emphasise that more needs to be done. Stakeholders indicate that the OHS committees required by law have not been established in most of the factories. Furthermore, many factories need to improve services such as the provision of safe drinking water, hygienic toilets, personal protective equipment, air circulation and lighting systems. A large number of factories do not have adequate day care, in-house medical and reproductive health facilities, or ambulance services.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

- Minor and critical issues regarding fire safety were found in 100 % of the 36 factories audited by FWF between 2012 and 2015.
- Minor or critical issues regarding building safety were found in 17 % of the factories audited by FWF. In several cases, FWF audits noted that the buildings did not have proper licenses, i.e. commercial or residential permits are available for buildings that are used for industrial purposes.
- In 25% of the audited factories, minor/critical issues were found regarding chemical safety.
- In 88% of the factories, workers were not provided with proper ergonomic facilities, such as a chair with a backrest or an anti-fatigue mat for workers performing their work standing.
- Fire or evacuation drills are performed in 94% of the audited factories. However, workers often do not follow the emergency evacuation plan during the drills. Lessons learnt or corrective action plans are almost never drawn up. In addition, night fire drills are rarely executed in factories that operate at night.

- In 46% of the factories, workers do not (sufficiently) use personal protective equipment (PPEs), such as respiratory masks, ear muffers, etc.
- In almost all factories, some training is provided on fire safety or first aid. However, the frequency and quality of training is often below par and not delivered by qualified professionals or the appropriate authorities.
- In 19% of the factories, there were problems related to excessive noise, high temperature and insufficient ventilation, and insufficient lighting.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All the complaints are published on the FWF website.*

Complaints report regarding health and safety can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#).

## 6.8. Legally-binding employment relationship



*"Working relationships shall be legally binding, and all obligations to employees under labour or social security laws and regulations shall be respected."*

### OFFICIAL STATISTICS ON COMPLIANCE

According to the Labour Force Survey (2010), 54.1 million people over the age of 15 are employed in Bangladesh. The great majority (87.5%) is employed in the informal sector and only one-eighth of the employed population works in the formal sector<sup>73</sup>.

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The Bangladesh Labour Act (2006), amended in 2013<sup>74</sup> states that formal employment in an establishment constitutes a legally binding relationship. The Act forbids the hiring of any worker without issuing an appointment letter, and every appointed worker must be provided with an identity card with photograph. The employer will also pay for and maintain a 'Service Book' for each worker that contains information such as name, name of parents, address, date of birth, identification marks, name and address of previous employer, duration of service, occupation and designation, wages and allowances, leave taken, and behaviour of the worker. The employer will also maintain a register for all the employees of his or her establishment.

<sup>73</sup> Labour Force Survey 2010, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

<sup>74</sup> Clause 5, 6, 9, 19, 20, 31, 99, 150, 234, & 264, Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 (amended 2013)

This register will mention name and date of birth, date of appointment, nature of work, length of working time, time entitled for rest and food, and day assigned for rest. At the end of the employment period, workers have the right to receive certification of employment from the owner upon dismissal, discharge, termination, removal, retirement or resignation, and a copy of the service book. If, before being terminated on the grounds of redundancy, a worker is employed for at least one year without break, she or he must be given written notice of one month, or pay equal to one month's wage.

In addition to this documentation, the Labour Act imposes certain responsibilities on the employer since employment is a legally enforceable contract. The Act specifies that the owner is bound to pay compensation in a specific manner for any injury the employee sustains while at work. In the case of the death of a worker employed by an owner continuously for two years, the employer will pay compensation to a nominee of the deceased worker in a legally specified manner. Any establishment employing 200 workers or more will have group insurance for its workers. The Act requires every company (where applicable) to allocate 5% of its net profit to a 'worker participation fund' and a 'worker welfare fund', and allows for the establishment of a pension fund for the benefit of its workers if the employer so desires.

## STAKEHOLDER OPINIONS AND ANALYSES ON IMPLEMENTATION

Stakeholders confirm that all factories provide an identity card for every worker. But the same does not apply for issuing appointment letters that state the specific service, duties and responsibilities, and benefits to be received. According to the stakeholders, about 70-80% of the factories issue appointment letters to their workers. Stakeholders explained that neither workers nor employers are aware of their importance or of the legal requirement. Some employers, however, deliberately don't issue appointment letters to avoid legal claims by workers, as they think it would increase their accountability to provide the facilities prescribed by law to their workers.

## FWF MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS

- Although appointment letters are generally found in workers' files, such appointment letters are actually handed out to the workers in only 44% of the audited factories.
- In 94% of the audited factories, service books are collected from BGMEA and maintained for all workers. However, workers do not tend to collect them when they leave the factory.
- In 14% of the factories, no group social security is provided for the workers. In addition, piece rate workers or contract workers are not generally covered by any group insurance.

## WORKER COMPLAINTS

*FWF's complaints procedure serves as a safety net. When a complaint is filed, FWF informs the member(s) sourcing from the production site in question and investigates the complaint. All complaints are published on the FWF website.*

Worker complaints received by FWF concerning legally binding employment relationship, can be found on [www.fairwear.org](http://www.fairwear.org) or accessed [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

# SOURCES USED IN THIS COUNTRY STUDY

## I. GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment.

Inspector, Department of Inspection for Factories & Establishments

Director of Labour, Department of Labour

## II. EMPLOYERS

President, BGMEA

Director, BKMEA

## III. TRADE UNIONS

General Secretary, Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity

General Secretary, Sommiloto Garments Sramik Federation

General Secretary, Bangladesh National Garment Workers Employees League

General Secretary, National Garment Workers Federation

## IV. OTHER

Deputy Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies.

Executive Director, Nari Uddug Kendra

Executive Director, Karmojibi Nari

Annex 1: Minimum wage for RMG workers (2006 - 2013)

Grade	2006	2010	%increase over 2006	2013	%increase over 2010	
Grade 1	5,140.00	9,300.00	80.93	13,000.00	39.87	Pattern master, chief quality controller, chief cutting master, chief mechanic, chief electrician, colour master, Graphic Designer
Grade 2	3,840.00	7,200.00	87.50	10,900.00	51.38	Mechanic, cutting master, Assistant Pattern Master, Color Master, Assistant Graphic Designer
Grade 3	2,449.00	4,120.00	68.23	6,805.00	65.16	Special machinist, Senior Sewing Machine Operator, Senior Winding Machine Operator, Senior Knitting machine Operator, Senior Lisking Machine Operator, Senior cutter, Senior Quality Inspector, Senior Marker, Senior Line Leader, Senior Overlook Machine Operator, Senior kanchai Machine Operator, Senior Auto Cutter etc.
Grade 4	2,250.00	3,763.00	67.24	6,420.00	70.60	Sewing Machine Operator, Winding Machine Operator, Knitting Machine Operator, Lisking Machine Operator, Dryman, Packer, Overlook Machine Operator, Line Reader, Auto Cutter, CAD Operator, Bundling man, Lay man, Rib cutter, Tag man, Printer, Quality Operator etc.
Grade 5	2,046.00	3,455.00	68.87	6,042.00	74.87	Junior Sewing Machine Operator, Junior Winding Machine Operator, Junior Knitting machine Operator, Junior Lisking Machine Operator, Junior Dryman, Junior Packer, Junior Overlook Machine Operator, Junior Line Reader, Junior Auto Cutter, Junior CAD Operator, Junior Bundling man, Junior Lay man, Junior Rib cutter, Junior Tag man,
Grade 6	1,851.00	3,210.00	73.42	5,678.00	76.88	General Sewing Machine Operator, General Winding Machine Operator, General Knitting Machine Operator, Lisking Machine Operator, Auto cutter
Grade 7	1,662.00	3,000.00	80.45	5,300.00	76.66	Assistant Machine Operator, Assistant Winding Machine Operator, Assistant Knitting Machine Operator, Assistant Melding Operator, Assistant Cutter, Marker, Krising Man, line Iron Man, Dry Washing Man, Overlook machine assistant, Button machine assistant, Kanchai machine assistant, assistant fusing machine operator, assistant bundling man, assistant auto spreader, lay man, embroidery operator, printing operator, printer, helper etc.
Apprentice	1,200.00	2,500.00	108.33	4,180.00	67.20	

## Annex 2: Development and economic indicators

Indicator	Bangladesh	How to interpret	Source
Human development index (rank)	142 (2014)	A composite index of life expectancy at birth, knowledge (adult literacy rate and combined enrolment ratio), and decent standard of living (the adjusted per capita income in PPP USD)	UN Human development report, 2014
GDP Per capita	\$1,171 (2014)		IMF estimate, World Economic Outlook Database, 2015
GDP per capita (PPP)	\$3,373 (2014)		IMF estimate, World Economic Outlook Database, 2015
Strength of auditing and reporting standards (score)	3.4 (2014)	Gives a measurement of institutions based on opinion polls amongst business people. Values vary on a 1–7 scale, with 7 being the most desirable outcome.	WEF Global Competitiveness Report 2013-14 & 2014-15
Ethical Behavior of firms (score)	2.9 (2014)	Gives a measurement of institutions based on opinion polls amongst business people. Values vary on a 1–7 scale, with 7 being the most desirable outcome.	WEF Global Competitiveness Report 2013-14 & 2014-15
Democracy index (rank)	85 (2014)	The state of democracy in 167 countries focusing on: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of Government, political participation and political culture.	Economist Intelligence Unit. Democracy index 2013-14
Corruption Perceptions Index (rank)	145 (2014)	The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. A country or territory's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). A country or territory's rank indicates its position relative to the other countries and territories in the index.	Transparency International, 2014
Gini index	32.1 (2014)	The Gini index is a way to measure Income Equality. A value of 0 represents absolute equality and 100 absolute inequality. According to the global labour survey, less income inequality correlates with effective pro-labour institutions.	Human Development Report, 2014
Multi-dimensional Poverty Index	49.5% (2014)	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which identifies multiple deprivations in the same households in education, health and living standards, calculates the share of the population that is multi-dimensionally poor, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations.	UN Human development report, 2014
Population living on USD \$2/day	76.5%		The World Bank <a href="http://data.world-bank.org">http://data.world-bank.org</a>
Population living below the National poverty Line	31.51% (2014)	Percentage of the population living below the national poverty line, which is the poverty line deemed appropriate for a country by its authorities.	Human Development Report 2014

The Global Gender Gap index (Ranking)	68 (2014)	Assesses countries on how resources are divided and opportunities among their male and female populations, regardless of overall levels of resources and opportunities. Ranks countries from 1 to 136 (2013) and 1 to 142 (2014).	WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2014
Gender Inequality index (rank)	115 (2014)	A composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. Out of 149 countries	UN Human Development Report 2014



### Annex 3: List of trade union federations

1. Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation
2. Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Forum
3. Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik League (ICFTU)
4. Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (ICFTU)
5. Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (WCL)
6. Bangladesh Sramik Federation
7. Bangladesh Sramik Kallayan Federation
8. Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra (C P B/ WFTU)
9. Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha
10. Bangladesh Workers Federation
11. Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (ICFTU)
12. Bangladesh Trade Union Federation
13. Jatio Sramik Federation Bangladesh WFTU
14. Jatiya Sramik Federation
15. Jatiya Sramik Jote.
16. Jatiya Sromik Forum
17. Jatiyo Sramik Jote (WFTU)
18. Jatiyo Sramik League (ICFTU formerly with WFTU)
19. Jatiyo Sramik Party (ICFTU)
20. National Trade Union Federation
21. National Workers Federation
22. Samajtantrik Sramik Front

### GARMENT TRADE UNION FEDERATION

1. Akota Garment Workers Federation (AGWF)
2. Bangladesh Apparels Workers Federation (BAWF)
3. Bangladesh Federation of Workers Solidarity (BFWS)
4. Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF)
5. Bangladesh Garment Workers' Trade Union Federations (BGWTF)
6. Bangladesh Garments, Textile & Leather Workers' Federation (BGTLWF)
7. Bangladesh Independent Garments Workers Union Federation (BIGUF)

8. Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Karmachari Federation (BJSKP)
9. Bangladesh National Garment Workers Employee League (BNGWEL)
10. Bangladesh Revolutionary Garment Workers Federation (BRGWF)
11. Bangladesh Textile and Garments Workers League (BTGWL)
12. Federation of Garments Workers (FGW)
13. National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)
14. Shadhin Bangla Garments SramikKarmachari Federation (SBGSKF)
15. Sommillito Garment Sromik Federation (SGSF)
16. United Federation of Garment Workers (UFGW)