



Bangladesh: strong voice for garment workers

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Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) congratulates the international clothing companies and trade unions on the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. FWF warmly applauds the fact that workers in the clothing industry will have a key role in identifying problems.

With the announcement this week of a series of concrete measures, the signatories have demonstrated their willingness to make a serious effort to improve working conditions in Bangladesh. Safety checks, remediation of serious defects and the establishment of an inspection agency represent a major step forward. One of the most important points in the accord is that clothing industry workers and their representatives, such as local trade unions, will have a major role in identifying problems. This is also a central issue in the work of FWF. "In the end, the best thing for the workers is to have their own voice", says Erica van Doorn, director of FWF. "The stronger their voice is, the less need there is for organisations like ours."

Together with more than 90 affiliated brands, Fair Wear Foundation has been working for over ten years to improve working conditions in the countries where clothing is manufactured. FWF has its own inspection teams in eleven manufacturing countries. These teams carry out independent audits, not only on health and safety but also on wages, the position of women and the freedom of trade unions. In all these countries, FWF also has complaint hotlines: factory workers can call a local number anonymously to report violations of their labour rights.

In response to the recent disasters, FWF is setting up a special programme for its members (currently numbering thirteen) that buy products from Bangladesh. All their suppliers will soon undergo a risk inventory evaluation for fire and building safety. Immediate action will be taken at the factories bearing the greatest risk. This means the FWF brands will have to collaborate intensively with their suppliers to resolve the problems, and they will have to bear a proportion of the costs.

Fair Wear Foundation is in close contact with the signatories of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh with the aim of ensuring cooperation and avoiding double inspections. When different brands are purchasing from the same factory, these must work together to ensure that the necessary improvements are implemented. "The more clothing brands that work with their supplier to bring about improvements, the faster those improvements will be made", confirms Shatil Ara, head of FWF's Bangladesh office.

[FWF on fire and building safety in Bangladesh](#)

END OF PRESS RELEASE



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Note to editor (not for publication)

For more information and interviews, please contact Margreet Vrieling,
vrieling@fairwear.org, +31 (0)20-408 42 55 / +31 (0)6 4660 1072