



To: Honourable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh

C.c.: Honourable Md. Shahidul Haque, Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)
Honourable Shuvashish Bose, Secretary Ministry of Commerce (MoC)
Honourable Afroza Khan, Secretary Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)
Honourable Md. Nojibur Rahman, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB)
Prime Minister's Office
Old Sangsad Bhaban, Tejgaon
Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh

Topic: Improving and ensuring worker safety in the Bangladeshi ready-made garment sector

Paris (France), December 14th 2018

Dear Honourable Prime Minister,

The Initiative for Compliance and Sustainability (ICS) is a multi-sector initiative of social and environmental audits in the textile, clothing, bazar, leisure, furniture, fixtures, equipment, appliances and food sectors with the aim of improving working conditions along global supply chains. ICS members join efforts by rolling out a shared audit framework in their supplying production plants and by exchanging information on their common factories within the ICS database. ICS enables its member companies to collaborate with common tools, to mutualize audits, contributing to the reduction of the 'audit fatigue' and to share knowledge and best practices. Around 4 500 ICS audits are conducted every year in more than 60 countries.

We, the undersigned members of ICS clients of apparel factories in Bangladesh, acknowledge the importance of Bangladesh in the global readymade garment sector and recognise the determined efforts of the country to create a safer, more secure and sustainable industry. The work undertaken since the tragic collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013 in partnership with the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (ACCORD) and the Alliance, has played a substantive role in improving the factories' safety and enhancing workers' conditions.



The creation of an independent Remediation Coordination Cell (RCC) within the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to regulate safety in the ready-made garment sector represents a foundation stone for an effective national safety monitoring.

At the same time, however, there is still more to be done to complete the remediation in factories: less than half of all ACCORD-covered factories have completed the installation of adequate fire detection systems and less than 60% have completed structural retrofitting, based on approved detailed engineering assessments (DEAs). Having closely monitored the ongoing transition process from the ACCORD to the RCC, including the recent succession of hearings and restraining orders issued by the Bangladesh High Court, as well as the publication of several reports investigating the state of readiness of the newly founded RCC to take over ACCORD missions, we are concerned that all conditions that would allow for a smooth, safe and efficient shift from one system to the other, are not currently met.

We believe that further efforts are necessary in order to absorb the work of the ACCORD into the RCC and that it is in the best interest of all parties that the RCC be provided with further opportunity and time to successfully develop.

We note that there is a clear benefit to everyone; Bangladesh, the global ready-made garment industry and workers in local factories to continue and deepen this successful partnership that has delivered such fundamental positive change and we fear that the safety of Bangladesh ready-made garment workers could be compromised if an effective structure is not in place for complete handover of responsibility.

We respectfully call upon all the parties involved to work together, to take all necessary steps to find solutions to the current challenges facing this partnership in order that the ACCORD may continue to contribute effectively to the growth and development of the sector in Bangladesh and to assist the eventual role of the RCC in taking over the leadership of this work under the guidance of the Transition Monitoring Committee.

Sincerely,
Carole Hommey
ICS Coordinator



In the name of below ICS members sourcing from Bangladesh:

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