

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

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Bangladesh: international actions focus on garment workers' health and safety

Brussels, 11 April 2006 - Today, 11 April, international actions on garment workers' health and safety in Bangladesh are being held around the world. This date has not been chosen randomly. It was exactly one year ago today that the Spectrum factory in Bangladesh collapsed. Sixty-four people were killed and 74 were injured. The victims of the catastrophe are still awaiting decent compensation. Health and safety requirements at the factory were far from met, and played a determining role in the tragedy.

As the Spectrum disaster is commemorated around the world, working conditions in Bangladesh remain a focus of grave concern. No less than four serious accidents were registered in the country in March and February alone. Three fires and a building collapse once again killed and injured numerous textile and clothing workers. The working conditions in the industry in Bangladesh are catastrophic and unacceptable. Many trade union federations have protested en masse against this state of affairs.

The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) recently opened an independent inquiry into the disasters casting a tragic shadow over the textile and clothing industry in Bangladesh. It has also called on the country's authorities to take urgent measures to protect the health and safety of the sector's workers.

The sectoral federation's actions are fully backed by the ICFTU. The international trade union movement supports the programme of action proposed by the ITGLWF. The programme covers a number of urgent measures to be taken, such as ensuring that all production units hold a certificate on structural soundness by 30 June, that premises used to produce textile and clothing be equipped with sufficient emergency exits, and that all production units employing more than 25 workers have a compulsory health and safety committee comprising representatives of the management and the workers, etc.

For more information on this programme, visit: <http://www.itglwf.org>.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. <http://www.icftu.org>
ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions. <http://www.global-unions.org>

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