

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

Deadline Looms for Clothing Brands to Sign Bangladesh Agreement

Brussels, 14 May 2013 (ITUC OnLine): With the 15 May deadline for global clothing brands to sign up to a watershed Bangladesh factory fire and safety agreement, the ITUC is calling on companies yet to commit to the agreement to do so without any further delay.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary said “A host of major global garment brands have agreed to join this agreement, but some have yet to commit. If they really care about the lives and livelihoods of the workers in their supply chains, they should commit to this ground breaking accord instead of remaining behind the façade of sham company-controlled “social auditing””.

Global Union Federations IndustriALL and UNI have secured commitments from H&M, Inditex, C&A, Primark/Penny, Tesco, PVH, and Tchibo to join the agreement, which is also supported by a range of workers’ rights ngos. More than 1,000 supplier factories in Bangladesh are now covered by the agreement, and a final push is underway to convince other multinationals in the sector to join the common effort.

The ITUC is also demanding that Bangladesh reform its labour laws to allow workers to exercise fully their right to form or join a trade union. For years, the government simply refused to register new unions in the garment sector, a practice that has only recently changed due to intense international pressure. Reforms recently passed by the Bangladesh cabinet, yet to be voted on in parliament, are a long-overdue start, but several of the priorities of the trade union movement and criticisms levelled by the ILO remain unaddressed. The ITUC is insisting that the government take this opportunity now to bring its labour laws into full compliance with international standards set by the UN’s ILO <http://www.ituc-csi.org/reform-of-the-bangladesh-labour>

“Workers need a living wage instead of the derisory \$38 per month they earn now, and an industry characterised by dangerous working conditions and exploitative employment practices needs to be transformed,” said Burrow.

See also:

IndustriALL: <http://www.industriall-union.org/final-countdown-for-companies-to-sign-bangladesh-fire-and-safety-accord-before-15-may-midnight>

UNI Global Union:

<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf/pages/homepageEnOpendocument&exURL=http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpByIdHome/EC90FA91A0DB11C0C1257B6B0028A4DE>

ILO: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/activities/statements-speeches/WCMS_212463/lang--en/index.htm

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