

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ITUC OnLine

ITUC Calls on Apparel Brands to Join Transparency Pledge

Brussels, 21 April 2017 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has called on garment companies to sign a new supply chain Transparency Pledge launched today by a coalition of trade union organisations and NGOs. Of 72 companies contacted by the coalition, 17 are expected to have fully implemented the pledge by the end of 2017, meaning that they will have published information that will enable consumers, workers and advocacy groups and others to find out where the company's products are made. A report <https://www.hrw.org/node/302113/> prepared by the coalition sets out the details of the pledge, and includes information on the extent to which each of the 72 companies have responded to the call to join it.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said "With a hidden workforce of 94% in global supply chains, transparency is a crucial step towards due diligence on workers' rights in every aspect of a company's operations. With the Rana Plaza tragedy and other workplace disasters in recent years, the global apparel industry has become identified with exploitation and abuse of workers. We call on all companies in the sector to join this pledge, as a step towards ensuring safe work, living wages and decent working conditions throughout their entire operations."

The Transparency Pledge establishes a floor for supply chain transparency, through companies publishing important information about supplier factories and authorised subcontractors. This is especially important in garment-producing countries like Bangladesh and Cambodia, where governments continue to suppress workers' rights and hold down minimum wages at the behest of powerful factory owners.

"While transparency is a foundation for accountability, companies still need to do more. Due diligence requires identifying the risks of violating human rights. Most importantly, they should ensure that workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are respected throughout their supply chains, and also make agreements with Global Union Federations to ensure that local practices match commitments which they have made," said Burrow.

The coalition consists of Clean Clothes Campaign, Human Rights Watch, IndustriALL Global Union, the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable, the International Labor Rights Forum, the International Trade Union Confederation, the Maquila Solidarity Network, UNI Global Union, and the Worker Rights Consortium.

For more information, see: <https://www.hrw.org/node/302113/> and <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/20/more-brands-should-reveal-where-their-clothes-are-made>

The ITUC represents 181 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 340 national affiliates.

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