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Chapter 3: GBVH in the garment and textile sector

3.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the research carried out in the garment and textile sector. Individual and group interviews were carried out with 26 women trade union leaders and union representatives from unions in four garment producing countries: El Salvador (FEASIES), Indonesia (GARTEKS and SPN), Lesotho (IDU) and in Turkey (Deriteks, DISK/TEKSTIL, Öz Iplik-Is and TEKSIF).

This chapter makes also reference to some of the findings of a parallel research conducted with the support of the DGB Bildungswerk Bund in Bangladesh and Morocco involving women union leaders in Bangladesh (SGSF, BGIW and IBC) and Morocco (SNTHC-CDT, UMT).

In the garment and textile sector, GFAs with multinational companies,ⁱ the integration of GBVH into the recently agreed ILO Code of Practice on health and safety in the garment and textile sector (ILO 2021), and reporting on sexual harassment under the new International Accord for Health and Safety in the Garment and Textile Industry in Bangladesh,ⁱⁱ along with union campaigns, training and awareness raising, have all contributed to much greater awareness of GBVH in the sector.

3.2 Extent of GBVH in the garment and textile sector

Evidence of GBVH in the world of work from existing studies

The garment and textile sector is female dominated and low paid. An estimated 80% of workers in the garment and textile sector are women, who mainly work in lower paid machine and stitching jobs. It is a sector where abusive employment practices and GBVH have been widely reported (AFWA 2020, WRC 2020, Care International 2017, Action Aid 2019, Better Work 2013, FWF 2019).

High levels of harassment and violence are reported in the **Bangladesh garment and textile**. In one study 60% of garment and textile workers experienced violence, harassment or abusive behaviour in the previous 12 months (FWF 2018), and another study found that 74% had experienced or witnessed verbal abuse and harassment in the four weeks prior to the survey (BSR 2016). Women union organisers have also faced sexualised threats by factory managers and supervisors (Human Rights Watch 2015). Garment and textile workers also report that they experience high levels of domestic violence. In one study one-third (34%) of garment workers reported physical domestic violence and almost half (43%) sexual domestic violence in the past year. Interestingly, both workplace violence and domestic violence were found to be much lower in factories based in an Export Processing Zone (EPZ), where there are more stable jobs and where workers have contracts of employment (Naved et al 2018).

The Central American Observatory on Labour Violence recorded 278 complaints of sexual harassment at work in **El Salvador** in 2021, which unions argue grossly underestimates the true extent of sexual harassment. A national survey of women workers with children in the Salvadoran textile factories (conducted by the NGO Asociación Mujeres Transformando 2018) found significant levels of sexual harassment and sexual assault: 10% of women said that they had experienced constant sexual harassment from a male colleague and 8% from their supervisors; 8% of pregnant women reported that they had felt so harassed that they had resigned from the job; 1% reported cases of rape by colleagues and 2% reported cases of rape by supervisors; and 7% stated they knew women who had become pregnant because they were raped. More than half (51%) of women reported being under permanent pressure and one in ten (11%) report that their supervisors constantly shouted at them using bad language. Recommendations were made to strengthen

bipartite occupational health and safety commissions, develop workplace policies to address risks to women's sexual and reproductive health, and improve working conditions to reduce GBVH.

Surveys in **Indonesia** have similarly shown high levels of GBVH. A 2017 survey by the Indonesian women's rights organisation, Perempuan Mahardika, revealed that 56.5 % of the 773 women garment workers interviewed in a Jakarta industrial complex had been sexually harassed. Better Work (2013) found that 85% of Indonesian garment workers were concerned about sexual harassment at work. Participatory research carried out with FSB Garteks, the Federation of Independent unions (GSBI) and the National Workers' Union (SPN) revealed that 71% of the women garment workers had experienced GBVH at work including verbal, sexual and physical abuse. The research was a first step for the unions in the negotiation of agreements for "GBV free zones" (Solidarity Center 2019).

There is limited data on GBVH in the **Moroccan** garment and textile. In a survey of women between ages 18 and 65 by Morocco's High Commission for Planning in 2009, nearly two-thirds of women had experienced physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence. Despite improvements in legislation in recent years there is a gap between laws and the reality on the ground. Some women do not get paid, laws are not implemented and pregnant women have no access to work, while family responsibilities affect women's career opportunities.

In **Lesotho** interviews with women workers at three Nien Hsing Textile factories, which produce clothing for several leading US-brands, revealed repeated sexual harassment and coercion of women workers by male managers, supervisors, and co-workers (Worker Rights Consortium 2019, IndustriALL 2019). A culture of acceptance of GBVH in the factories led to a fear of reporting among women workers. Two-thirds of the women interviewed said they had suffered repeated sexual harassment and all women interviewed stated that it was a concern for them. Some women had been sexually assaulted. An investigation into allegations of sexual harassment at the Hippo Knitting factory revealed a similar pervasive culture of sexual harassment, humiliation and verbal abuse by management (Time Magazine 10 June 2021). These allegations across Lesotho were acted upon quickly by the US-based brands and significant changes were put in place in partnership with the unions (IndustriALL 2020)

Voices of women: Interviews with women trade union leaders

All women union leaders interviewed gave accounts of pervasive sexual harassment and abuse in their factories from supervisors, managers and male machine technicians, with negative consequences for their health, wellbeing and career progression. Gender norms, traditional cultural expectations of women's roles, a culture of victim-blaming and unequal gender power relations mean that women workers are frequently scared of speaking about violence and harassment. Many are silenced because of the fear of reprisals at work, in their communities and from their families.

In addition, women leaders spoke of other forms of GBVH that are prominent in the garment and textile sector, for example, "When fire doors are locked or blocked, we see this as a form of gender-based violence". (Kalpona Akter, President BGIWF, Bangladesh)

Sexual and reproductive rights impacts are a form of gender-based violence, particularly when women face pregnancy/maternity discrimination, work long hours and in working conditions that lead to ill health and miscarriage, and where women are denied access to toilets or have no time to access the toilet because of production pressures.

There are so many problems we women have to face. For those factories that do not produce for the brands it is worse – some require a pregnancy test and they don't have time to go to the female toilet as you have to finish your target. (Union representative, Indonesia)

In Bangladesh, women union leaders cited regular incidents of inappropriate body touching, sexualised gestures, verbal abuse and sexual favours. However, most women remain silent and only report an incident when it becomes very serious.

In one factory the woman was...sexually harassed by a group of male workers to make her quit...But she did a video clip and the union approached the management...Later the male abusers said they were forced to behave in this way by management, following this she got her job back. (IBC Women's Committee member, Bangladesh)

Local factory representatives from the FEASIES union representing workers in 13 textile factories in El Salvador, regularly report that sexual harassment is a concern. One of the problems is that sexual harassment is recognised in the Penal Code as a crime but it does not figure in the Labour Code. This means that although harassment is recognised as a crime, administratively it is very complicated to resolve. Very few complaints are made.

Women often do not identify they are objects of sexual harassment and we are trying to 'denaturalise' it so women do not consider it is just part of normal life...women are also very fearful of making a complaint and the procedures are very cumbersome. (Marta Zaldaña, General Secretary, FEASIES, El Salvador)

In Indonesia, women trade union leaders spoke of a pernicious culture of sexual harassment, verbal harassment, scolding, sexist jokes and sexual favours on the factory production line.

Many times if you want to get your contract extended the supervisor will ask sexual favours, it is difficult for women to say no as they want to keep their job...When the machine has a breakdown and the technician comes and touches them, they can't say no as they want the machine repaired as they have to get their work done and they accept this. (Union representative, Indonesia)

In Lesotho, women union representatives also spoke about the culture inside their factories of sexual harassment, sexual favours and inappropriate behaviour designed to humiliate and belittle the women workers. One woman recounted her experience of being told to crawl on the floor when she arrived late to work in an act of abuse designed to "belittle and humiliate" her. The lack of job opportunities and living wages meant that sexual favours were expected at recruitment and in granting overtime. Refusal led to threats, loss of employment and less favourable treatment at work.

In the factory they used to say that if you would like to sleep with me you can come Saturday for overtime. If you are not able to come on Saturday overtime, you end up getting harassed. (Union representative, Lesotho)

In Morocco, several women interviewees spoke of their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault at work. One woman spoke of having a haemorrhage at work and when she asked for a chair the supervisor humiliated her and "made fun of me". In many cases women were expected to tolerate sexual harassment, knowing that if they complained they would be fired.

I was subject to [sexual assault] in the lift at work, when I made a complaint I was laid off by the head of division, when I complained to the administration they did nothing. I then

complained to court and I am waiting for this to be resolved...I have physical problems muscle and leg pain, and psychological problems. (Union representative, Morocco)

Women union leaders in Turkey similarly reported a high level of violence against women, a general lack of acceptance that women should be working and a culture of victim blaming. Many women believe “I must have done something wrong”. Some women have to endure regular questions from their superiors such as “when are you going to get pregnant now you are married”, which are psychological forms of violence.

3.3 Risks of GBVH in the garment and textile sector

In the garment and textile risks of GBVH identified in the interviews are listed under five interlinked headings.

Risks related to employment insecurity, low wages and lack of enforcement of labour standards

There is a strong link between heightened risks of GBVH when workers face employment insecurity because of short-term contracts, poor working conditions, a lack of living wages, lack of social protection and being unable to exercise their right to organise and bargain collectively. Poor enforcement of labour laws and labour inspection add to the risks of GBVH faced by women at the bottom of the garment supply chain.

The bosses are all men. Workers are treated as cheap labour and...they have to work longer hours to have enough money to live. When you need money, it makes people servile and the boss knows this. When they give an extra incentive they are demanding sex or other favours. (Nazma Akter, President, SGSF)

In Lesotho, 40% of women garment workers are on precarious contracts. Along with low pay this makes them extremely vulnerable to GBVH. Simply put, one factory union representative said “They don’t have the power to refuse the sexual harassment” particularly when getting a contract:

Some people were given contracts, they were fixed term, the supervisor there he has the power and when the contract ends, he asks the woman to sleep with him so that she can renew the contract. (Union representative, Lesotho)

A lack of effective systems for reporting violence and harassment, along with a culture of silence and victim-blaming, contribute to low levels of complaints. The interviews showed the importance of confidential complaints systems that women trust and trade union representatives who can report an incident anonymously on behalf of a worker.

In addition, aggression towards independent unions is commonplace in some garment producing countries. Lack of union recognition and social dialogue, including the right to collective bargaining, and the fact that GBVH is not included as an occupational safety and health risk, adds to these problems. As later sections of this report show unionised factories and women’s representation in leadership in the unions are critical to preventing and addressing GBVH.

Risks related to gender inequalities and discrimination

Women garment workers face multiple forms of discrimination and abuse, many are young migrant women, with limited voice and agency. Women are often fired when they become pregnant or if they report sexual harassment. Fear of retaliation and a culture of impunity mean that women rarely report discriminatory treatment or sexual harassment. Women are poorly represented in

supervisory and managerial positions, they endure gender pay inequalities and the systematic undervaluing of their work and skills. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination are commonplace in the garment and textile. In one interview in Bangladesh an example was given of a pregnant woman who was refused maternity leave and was forced to work until 10.30 at night. These are forms of GBVH. One woman was forced to resign after her employer refused to give her leave and expected her to work overtime.

They were so inhuman they didn't even give her a chair to sit down. She was forced to resign. The union tried to get benefits as provided for in the legislation, and argued that pregnant women should not be working after 5pm. Work pressures for pregnant women should not be heavy. The law is ignored. (IBC Women's Committee member, Bangladesh)

Furthermore, many workers are not aware that GBVH can take different forms. and that work pressure and shouting are also abuse. Many workers believe that sexual harassment is synonymous with rape. Ending GBVH has been challenging in countries where gender inequalities are deeply embedded in a societal culture of silence, stigma, victim-blaming and impunity, and which extends to their family relationships, as is the case in Morocco.

I was psychologically abused by the head of division and I went to the union...But when I told my husband, he became abusive towards me. This made it worse. The union gave me some support. (Union representative, Morocco)

A woman in Bangladesh faced consequences from her family after she reported to her union that had been raped inside the factory:

A young woman was a victim of rape in the factory, when this case came to our notice, we lodged a police report and we asked for a medical report – her family said that this was not possible as she was single and if she reported it she would never get married because of the stigma...We later heard that her family was threatened [and bribed] to keep their mouth shut. The management said they couldn't do anything against the perpetrator. (IBC Women's Committee member, Bangladesh)

Trade unions have helped to break this silence around GBVH. One trade union leader in Bangladesh said that it was only after several meetings and the sharing of her own experience of sexual harassment that women began to feel safe to speak out:

The next week 20 women from 20 factories came to the meeting and after that they started to speak out. One woman said that she knew her co-worker had been raped multiple times by the supervisor and he told her "I will save your job, if you don't do this, I will fire you". Then workers started speaking. It has been a huge positive thing that women are now talking about the problem. (Trade union leader, Bangladesh)

Risks related to production pressures in the supply chain

Unattainable productivity bonuses and unfair piece work systems add to women's vulnerability to violence and harassment (Better Work 2016 and 2018, ILO 2017). Studies show that sexual harassment is found to be more of a concern amongst workers who were paid "by the piece" (Borino 2018). The structuring of power relations means that supervisors are in a position to demand sexual favours in exchange for a positive assessment of a worker's performance.

Sexual harassment and verbal abuse are deeply engrained in the production process, where threats and bribes for sexual favours are common. Interviews with women union leaders at factory level

revealed numerous examples of supply chain related risks and factory practices that result in stress, pressure and GBVH. Supervisors and managers regularly use verbal harassment to coerce workers to increase production targets in order to meet orders. This culture was also reported in factories producing for major brands with whom IndustriALL has signed GFAs.

Piece work systems and excessive production targets can result in long working hours and workers having to stay in the factory until targets are met. As one woman said: “Bullying and harassment happens because of production pressure due to unrealistic expectations from the employer.” (Union representative, Turkey). Some unions have negotiated ways to address factory targets and poorly planned production cycles, including the downward pressure factories face on costs. Interviewees were clear that these risks are preventable and that coercing workers to reach unattainable production targets was against labour laws and ILO Convention 190.

Low pay forces women into financial insecurity, unacceptably long working hours and involuntary and excessive overtime. These are risks associated with a disrespectful working environment and GBVH.

They know that people are desperate for overtime as they are so low paid, then they demand sex to get you the overtime...What the women are experiencing is more or less connected to overtime and if you don't agree with the supervisor he will just remove you and replace you with another worker. (Union representative, Lesotho)

Moreover, long and unpredictable working hours, including involuntary overtime, have negative consequences for the health of pregnant women and it impacts on family life making it difficult for women workers to balance work with childcare responsibilities. Being forced to work overtime is regarded as a form of GBVH.

If there are orders to be completed in a special period of time, it might mean more shifts, more pressure. There is a certain number of hours that a worker is expected to work, but if there is a work to be completed as dictated by brands, the worker is forced to complete on time, and this means longer hours. [This] impacts on their family and it may mean that the neglect of the home environment leads to domestic violence. (Union representative, Turkey)

Risks in public places and travelling to and from work

In some countries extreme risks of GBVH are faced by women when travelling to and from work. Some women spoke of regular harassment, inappropriate touching and fondling on the bus, being called a prostitute after travelling on the bus at night, and sexual assault. One union representative from Bangladesh highlighted the dangers of robbery and assault for women travelling home at night. For some poverty wages and insufficient money to pay for transport adds further risks

Travel is a real issue with the women, they often want to save some money, poverty makes this...trying to get a free ride from workplace, hail a truck or car, if you go by the toll road, many women line the side of the road to get a free ride. I let as many women as I can in my car. It's hard to tackle, they need the money, but it is not safe for them. They have been trying to negotiate with the company to provide transport, but they only do this for the night shift. (Union representative, Indonesia)

In winter when days are very short, women have to leave home in the dark and walk a long distance on foot and they are harassed, raped, beaten, groped...in the evening the same thing happens...Some women have to walk 20 kilometres, the wages are not sufficient for them to pay for transport.... the company should provide safe transport, it would be really

helpful as it would enable women to get to work on time, when they don't get to work on time, it affects their pay. (Union representative, Lesotho)

The problem was less acute for women working in factories that provided transport for workers. Even so, women were also at risk of GBVH at the pick-up and drop-off points.

During the pandemic as there are many different shifts imposed on them, they have to worry about getting robbed or harassed. The shuttle doesn't take them home, it goes to a central place and they have to find other transport home. (Union representative, Indonesia)

Some unions in Indonesia and Turkey had negotiated drop-off points closer to where women live so that they had no more than five minutes to walk to their homes. Even so, women still report safety concerns and often carry tear gas spray.

Risks related to the Covid-19 pandemic

Many of the problems mentioned above worsened during the Covid-19 pandemic. Trade unions reported challenging and increasingly desperate circumstances facing workers. Many workers had to endure work in situations of high risk of infection and ill-health at work and lack of PPE, others experienced layoffs and a loss of income. Economic harm increased significantly during this time. As defined by C190, economic harm is a form of GBVH.ⁱⁱⁱ Women workers have been disproportionately affected by wage theft and irresponsible purchasing practices committed by brands during the pandemic (AFWA 2022). Unions report that this led to suppliers hiring or retaining women workers on low or lower wage rates during lockdowns, costs were reduced by the imposition of discriminatory employment practices and much greater work pressure. Work intensified during the pandemic leading to added risks of GBVH. Increased production targets, more pressure and stress on production lines and the imposition of long hours and involuntary overtime, negatively impacted on workers' physical and mental health, and their economic security. Violence and harassment increased during the pandemic, but economic insecurity and worsening conditions meant that it was even more difficult for women to report violence and harassment. Huge risks were faced by women returning to work from rural areas on crowded buses and trucks despite infection rates remaining high (Guardian 2021). During the lockdown workers in Bangladesh who demanded their wages were physically assaulted by the police with batons and teargas (Daily Star 2020).

The added pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic and fear of loss of livelihoods for garment workers in Bangladesh meant that women not only returned to work early and at risk, but they put up with increasing levels of sexual harassment. In Indonesia, women continued working with Covid, as no system was in place to pay wages to quarantine, and many worked long hours without PPE. Women spoke of needing to feed their families, while also having to put up with an increasingly hostile and unsafe working environment. Work has become more precarious and insecure:

In the factory...when we talk about the contract, the company tells us things are very uncertain and you can get no contract, the supervisor makes use of this situation and they know that employees fear losing their jobs, the supervisor says if you want to go with me, they have to. Now there are no bonuses or overtime, you make very little money and many times you really don't have choice...you probably have a family and maybe your husband lost his job you will have to do this to pay the rent. (Union representative, Indonesia)

We have had many more cases of sexual harassment and there have been frustrations and problems with Covid leading to a lot of psychological and physical violence. Union members have been targeted and mistreated and many of us have seen our rights go away because of the pandemic. (Union representative, Morocco)

Unions in all of the countries surveyed reported that domestic violence increased dramatically (see below). In Bangladesh child marriage and the dowry system became more widespread as young women garments workers lost their jobs. For example, in Turkey when the factories closed for three months and women were confined at home with their husbands and children, domestic violence increased. Illegal practices were also put in place, such as asking women to sign their names on a blank piece of paper:

When the lockdown was announced women were given white paper, forced to sign – some women who had taken the training tried to argue with the management why, they were told they would be dismissed if they did not sign on the white paper [while men were not asked for this]. They use it as proof that she has resigned voluntarily, rather than being forced to resign. (IBC Women’s Committee member, Bangladesh)

3.4 The role of unions and women’s leadership in textile and garment unions

The presence of women in trade union leadership positions has a defining impact. Many women interviewed spoke about the positive impact of the union, some women saw significant changes after the union was formed in the factory. Many unions have made training and awareness raising on GBVH a central union priority, along with workplace negotiations and agreements on the issue. Inspirational women leaders in the garment and textile have helped to bring international attention to GBVH faced by garment workers, faced with low pay, poor conditions, long hours and production pressures, all of which are fertile ground for GBVH.

Being a member of the union has always been a source of strength. (Union representative, Morocco)

In Bangladesh, union leaders such as Kalpona Akter, President BGIWF, Bangladesh, and founder of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity, and Nazma Akter, President of SGSF and founder of the AWAJ Foundation, have brought international attention to the plight of women garment workers. Both unions have been instrumental in organising women workers and ensuring that at least 60% of women factory union leaders are women. Awareness raising, campaigns training and regular meetings with women workers have helped to end the silence around GBVH.

Having women in leadership is an important starting point and it has been a real breakthrough to get women leaders at factory level. We have a training programme for our members, we give a special focus on our women leaders, particularly for the young women coming from rural areas for a job. (Kalpona Akter, President BGIWF, Bangladesh)

Women trade union leaders in Morocco have participated in training and awareness raising and have been an important part of the coalition of unions involved in the campaign for ILO C190. The impact of this work is very visible, with a good level of awareness raising and a strong commitment to transformational change. Union organising has meant that around 85% of women in some factories are union members and women are in union leadership in the factory. Bringing GBVH to the centre of union strategies has been critical to union organising, advocacy and awareness, contributing to reduced levels of sexual harassment.

We have worked hard to fight this issue and we have built a union to fight all types of GBV. At the beginning when we didn’t have a union...we needed to do something about the problems women face...The role of the union has really helped to reduce gender-based violence. We went from a situation of a lot of verbal sexual harassment to very few cases

today. The men were involved as well and it has made a real difference. (Union representative, Morocco)

In Indonesia, union training, advocacy and participatory research have resulted in the greater participation of women unionists, along with a strong commitment to prevent GBVH and support women affected by it. Several women workers interviewed spoke of their experiences of GBVH and how their union had supported them. In one factory with a workforce of 12,000, 85% of whom are women:

My supervisor in the company harassed me and pulled my hair, it was a time when I didn't wear the hijab, he said terrible things and harassed me; I reported to the union and they went to HR, we were interviewed by HR and he was reprimanded. (Union representative, Indonesia)

In Lesotho, where 90% of the 50,000 workers employed in the garment and textile are women, the role of the union has focussed on helping women to stand up for their rights:

The union had to stand up and fight for their rights to work in a harassment free environment...We are building confidence for women to be leaders, that she is leading herself and others at work and in the community...we are changing history. (Malekena Ntsiki, union organiser IDUL, Lesotho)

The IDUL has provided important support for workers affected by humiliating forms of violence and harassment:

On one occasion when I came late to work, the HR manager just told me to work on my knees. I went to the shop steward and reported this; it was the union that really helped and took up the issue. It was inflicted as a punishment; I was treated like a baby to humiliate me. Everyone was looking at me, it was really awful, I was seriously harassed and humiliated and belittled. I am really pleased to have a union in the company because the rules and regulations of the factory will be respected. (Union representative, Lesotho)

Campaigning for ratification of C190 has helped to strengthen union advocacy for stronger laws to protect workers. Central to this has been to reach out to women garment workers, many of whom are young women, through training, meetings, seminars, café events and cultural shows and build their individual and collective power, voice and agency.

3.5 Domestic violence: union roles and support

Domestic violence is the most pervasive form of GBVH faced by garment workers. Unions reported on the stigma, victim blaming and secrecy surrounding the issue, and that the workplace impacts can be significant. In Bangladesh, domestic violence is common, particularly where there is an early age/child marriage. Support from governments is generally quite limited as for example in one EPZ in Indonesia where a women's crisis desk was set up by the government, but it did not function for very long. Women union representatives regularly provide support, legal advice, psychological support, counselling and financial assistance to survivors.

The biggest impacts [of GBVH] on women come from domestic violence, in some cases we can help a woman get a restraining order, and if he is working in the same workplace, we make sure he can't have contact with her. When the court order is issued, the employer takes actions to give her protection in the workplace; when the spouse comes to the gate of the factory, the factory takes precautions. (Union branch chair, Turkey)

Domestic violence became worse during the Covid-19 pandemic and many women have had to face additional pressure from family members when they work night shifts.

They face prejudice from the family when they have to work at night and the family is not pleased with them, and then they face domestic violence, this was even greater during the pandemic. (Union representative, Indonesia)

Although none of the factories where women trade union leaders were interviewed had workplace policies or formal HR supports for survivors of domestic violence, many unions provide support for survivors and often negotiate with management on their behalf so that they can keep their jobs. Women trade union leaders have learnt to spot the signs of domestic violence and talk to women that they see are suffering.

Some union leaders have been successful in raising the issue with HR, for example, in negotiating paid leave or the continued payment of productivity or attendance bonuses.

In one example the victim had bruises all over her body, face and hands. She was in the process of divorce and we approached the management to get leave for the victim until the case was resolved. We accompanied her to the police to make a report. She got all the paid leave she needed. Otherwise she would have lost her job. We had to convince the company that if you force her to work it will be very hard for her to be productive and this affects the whole production line. (Union representative, Indonesia)

In another case trade union leaders advocated on behalf of the survivor and were able to get HR to agree to some paid leave.

We told HR that she was facing domestic violence and if she didn't meet her production target she would suffer even more. We explained the situation [and the risks she faced of further abuse] and HR [paid her production bonus] and give her some paid leave with the attendance bonus so that she could stay in her job. (Union representative, Bangladesh)

Other union leaders were able to negotiate 5 or 6 days paid leave for victims who needed to recover from injuries from physical violence:

When they have this type of harassment and torture, they find it too difficult to come and work in the factory, so we negotiate with the management to give them some time off to recover from their injuries, otherwise they won't come back to work. Thanks to the union, this issue has come to the surface and HR recognises the problem now. (Union representative, Bangladesh)

In cases where women have court decisions such as protection orders, the women often come to the union first for legal and other support. In Turkey unions have been trained about a Vodafone app available for victims, which has geo-location services, and they give information to women about a new government funded help line. Many union representatives help to empower women "and give them courage".

When we empower them it will be easier for them to leave a violent situation and reach out for security protection, information, and services. We refer them to legal services and domestic violence shelters. (Union representative, Turkey)

Union representatives in Morocco regularly support women who have suffered domestic violence which is still considered to be a taboo. They have learnt through experience that domestic violence leads to low productivity, high absenteeism and psychological and physical difficulties.

In the union we have helped women to be strong and for women to speak out and to send a strong message to women that violence is not something that has to be accepted. (Union representative, Morocco)

During the pandemic, the UMT set up an online platform and worked with other NGOs to help survivors access legal and other support. An important part of the campaign for the ratification of C190 is that unions want workplace protections introduced on domestic violence in the law.

We try to break the chain of violence and to address domestic violence effects in the workplace. We are putting more pressure on the government to ratify C190 so that it includes protections against domestic violence in the law. We have a rep who is a woman, a parliamentarian who is helping to put more pressure on the government. We need this in the legislation and we have to work with inspectors to let them know that they have to intervene in all forms of violence in the workplace. (Naima Ambarki, UMT Women's Officer, Morocco)

Financial abuse is a regular form of domestic violence and some unions have given financial support to women affected by financial abuse. In one case the woman's husband took all of her salary and she had to take extra work to have money to feed her three children.

She would come to the workplace with blue marks and scars on the face...some women had to lend her money. We organised a meeting on GBV at work, we invited her and her husband and we talked about how it could be psychologically difficult for her. He changed some of his behaviour, but it still continued. (Union representative, Morocco)

Union representatives in Bangladesh cited examples of ways that they ensured that women did not lose their production bonuses, as this can lead to further victimisation and abuse.

When the woman worker got a lower salary her husband beat her badly... We took the victim to the hospital, then we took her back to her house to talk with her husband. We asked him why are you beating this woman? We said do not touch that girl, if you beat her, she will be weak and she will not be able to be productive (Union representative, Bangladesh)

This union holds regular monthly meetings and has negotiated for a female doctor to come to the factory once a week to give health advice to women, including on domestic violence. Some unions have provided emergency financial help and housing for survivors. For example, women representatives from the Teksif union in Turkey helped a woman draw up a plan that included the union renting and fitting out temporary housing for her, enabling her to stay in her job.

Raising awareness of domestic violence with employers is a further important part of union work. This helps to expose the myth that women are making excuses for poor productivity. This awareness raising is crucial to building trust for women and to make it safe for them to disclose their situation.

Through the factory women's committee, we talk woman to woman, we are trying to get them to open up about what they are experiencing at home...We have seen a great change in awareness. (Union representative, Lesotho)

In Bangladesh some unions have organised meetings with family members of women union representatives. The meetings aim to show family members the importance of women's roles in the union and in improving the lives of women.

3.6 Good practices in ending GBVH

Ending abusive practices linked to production targets and overtime

Several unions have put in place practical ways to monitor and resolve cases of excessive production targets. In Indonesia women trade union reps were trained to identify cases of sexual harassment and verbal abuse on the production line as part of a programme to create GBV free zones:

Workers reps on the production line and the management created a team tasked to monitor and evaluate situations of GBV. They work together regularly to report on these things and the purpose is to reduce GBV. We then work with the company. (Union representative, Indonesia)

In Bangladesh unions have monitored production targets and discussed how to reduce pressure and aggressive behaviour and reduce levels of sexual harassment. In one unionised factory, the union has addressed production pressures with management and this has reduced the levels of verbal abuse and led to better productivity and wellbeing:

If they try to pressurize the women to produce more than the target the women now go to the union and the union takes this up with management to stop this abuse. On each floor they have a welfare officer, when they see this problem they go to the welfare officer and they sort it out with management. (Union representative, Bangladesh)

In another unionised factory training was provided to union representatives on each floor of the factory to monitor excessive production targets and spot the signs of harassment:

So that if there is a problem such as a supervisor shouting...they talk to the supervisor. The union checks and they then count how many pieces she can produce and what she is really producing, to make sure that targets are not too high or above what is agreed. (Union representative, Bangladesh)

In a unionised factory in Turkey the union noted that when they addressed GBVH on the production line, sexual harassment went down and productivity went up:

In one unionised factory, supplying to a major international brand, sexual harassment had led to productivity levels being very low. But after the training sexual harassment went down and productivity went up, and the level of the buying went up as well. We found it was an important part of due-diligence. (Union representative, Turkey)

Negotiation of clauses on GBVH in CBAs

Negotiation of CBAs include clauses on GBVH, clauses on the establishment of complaints committees (Bangladesh), policies on zero tolerance to GBVH (Indonesia) and complaints procedures (Turkey). Unions in Bangladesh have worked strategically to ensure that every affiliated union at factory level with a CBA includes a clause on the establishment of an anti-harassment committee (AHC). For example, the BGIWF union has negotiated seven CBAs containing these clauses, while a further two factories are in the process of establishing an AHC under the CBA. Similarly, the SGSF has organised workers in 68 factories, thirteen of which have CBAs and a further two are pending. All

CBA's include reference to GBVH and to the formation of an AHC. Even though many activities were halted in 2020 during the pandemic, the union still managed to sign three agreements. The unions have provided training on both setting up the committees and their functioning, ensuring that workers on the committee are clear about their duties and roles, and how complaints can be handled.

Now we have had the training, it enables us to handle the issues effectively through the AHC. We have learnt how to deal with complaints properly...We want every factory to have a union so that we can end GBV. (Union Secretary, Bangladesh)

In Turkey, unions have started to bring GBVH into collective bargaining. Some existing CBA's contain clauses on provision of psychological and financial support for women experiencing GBVH, and some contain provisions for garment factories to hire women excluded from the labour market because of domestic violence. Training has helped women union reps to be proactive in bringing GBVH into their CBA's:

We are currently working on the new CBA (for 2022) and we are bringing gender-based violence into the new draft. We want to try to integrate some of the articles from C190 into the agreement. And we are consulting with workers about what they want in the new CBA. (Union representative, Turkey).

For some unions, despite having clauses in CBA's on GBVH, the issue is not always clearly defined. In Indonesia, although GBVH is frequently included in CBA's, one union argued that:

The CBA doesn't go into detailed language about someone touching or touching breasts, we need something in more detail. Not many union officers are aware of different definitions or what is sexual harassment. IndustriALL's programme is very important as it pushes the union to learn about this. (Union representative, Indonesia)

Several unions had plans to ensure that GBVH was included in future CBA's. However, the Covid-19 pandemic had caused delays in negotiations in many factories and some employers were resistant to including clauses on GBVH. In Lesotho, union action to end GBVH in the Lesotho Hippo Knitting factory led the IDUL to sign a recognition agreement with the company in June 2021 to ensure that provisions on ending GBVH are included in collective bargaining.

Coalition building

Unions in Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia and El Salvador are involved in coalitions and alliances with other trade unions, civil society and women's organisations to end GBVH and in campaigning for the ratification of C190. For example, in El Salvador, FEASIES, is part of the Coalition for Decent Work for Women (formerly the Coalition for Decent Work in Textile Factories).^{iv} The coalition has helped to bring a new dynamic to the union's work in addressing GBVH. When the union was seen to be addressing this issue it helped to make the union more attractive to women, leading to the recruitment of new women members. Women have also formed a network of Salvadorian trade union women (CMSSES), which has drawn up 'Trade union guidelines to assist and eradicate all gender violence in workplaces' (2015) in the fight against GBVH.

The role of training and awareness raising

One of the biggest priorities of unions has been training and awareness raising about GBVH. As women repeatedly stated in the interviews, every woman and man should know about GBVH and they should know about their rights. In El Salvador the union's awareness raising, training and

advocacy helped to change perceptions on sexual harassment, resulting in much higher levels of reporting of cases.

Women now have a different understanding of what it is and are able to put it into perspective. Before they would probably think it is best to keep silent or try and request a transfer or resign. Now women are more confident and the union has also changed bit by bit. (Marta Zaldaña, General Secretary, FEASIES, El Salvador)

Prior to this, as Marta Zaldaña explained, many union leaders did not think these cases were important because they were not 'political' and the union just provided advice about what a victim should do. Today the union is much more proactive: "Our position is that we must accompany and support the victim through all the procedures so that she feels safe." The union is also trying to ensure that some men and women leaders become more specialised in the issue so they know how to be sensitive and how to treat a victim. Currently this is being developed through the annual women's training school, although in the future the union believes that the courses should be for both women and men. The courses focus on 'demystifying' sexual harassment and participants are given information about the legal definition and how complaints procedures work.

Training has been critically important in helping to end the denial and silence around GBVH, breaking the myths around victim blaming, and helping women to gradually open up about the problem and take action to address it.

So what we do right now is to raise awareness about gender...People don't feel it is GBV, that is why we are doing a campaign on this now. In our company we have different buildings, in each building we have union reps/stewards, we train them and we call them the 'liaisons', and we communicate with members through the stewards, about GBV, we put up banners. (Union representative, Indonesia)

Some of this awareness raising is focussed on women taking roles in trade unions and shifting traditional views that unions are for men only:

It is not seen as a role for women to be in a trade union, some say it is only for men. We have a project working with women as leaders, we are trying to have women in leadership roles. We have shown that women can be good leaders, it gives value to women. If women are happy in their roles at work and in the family and society, they will be better spouses and mothers, and have more productive work-life. (Union representative, Turkey)

Training programmes have helped workers to understand GBVH and their rights to report it. Some training had a big impact on workplace culture in areas such as anger management and stress management, and behavioural change amongst men.

When we did gender equality training, the men were able to understand how gender norms affect society...The men said they wished they had had this training before so that they can raise their children properly. Before the training with Inditex we did interviews and focus groups with women and men. The women see it as normal behaviour, we teach them what is sexual harassment, and psychological forms of violence so that they are aware of the situation...the men thought it was a normal thing...the men then realised it wasn't and now they have stopped it. (Union representative, Turkey)

An objective of several unions is to have greater involvement of men in ending GBVH. One approach taken in Turkey was that unions involved in a separate project on work-life balance were able to show the intersection with men's family roles and prevention of GBVH. The unions found that when

men in the union play positive parenting roles they pass on positive messages to their children, including on the prevention of GBVH. This is also having an impact in the workplace as more men get involved in campaigns to end GBVH. Involving men in training has also been an important part of the joint training with employers and brands such as Inditex, H&M, ASOS and Esprit. In Morocco, as in other countries, the unions have also been involved in successfully getting male leaders to stand in solidarity with women including a quota for women in union leadership.

Creation of complaints systems that women workers trust

Confidential procedure for complaints in Morocco

In Morocco, the UMT has a confidential procedure for addressing sexual harassment, with union involvement and support at all stages of complaints handling, helping to “break the wall of silence”. Unions are also working with civil society to establish an independent complaints mechanism.

In the union we work with civil society to help reduce this fear and to end the need for proof. We try to address this and break this wall by organising and we work in complete confidentiality. We have one-to-one sessions to listen to women and we have a committee of experts of psychologists, lawyers and we work in complete confidentiality. This confidentiality really helps women to speak out. (Union representative, Morocco)

Independent complaints mechanism in Lesotho

In Lesotho, following the allegations of systematic sexual harassment and abuse in factories in Lesotho (referred to in section 1), a landmark set of agreements were signed by three Lesotho trade unions, two women’s rights organisations and four companies.^v This led to an anti-GBVH programme, including the establishment of the independent mechanism, known as the Workers’ Rights Watch, with the responsibility to investigate and resolve complaints. A Code of Conduct sets out the roles and responsibilities of managers and workers. A confidential information line for workers was also established and is run by FIDA, enabling workers to call about concerns they may have. Union representatives interviewed from the Nien Hsing factories noted that there has been a real change in the behaviour of supervisors, who know they will lose their jobs if they continue to “inflict abuse on workers.” As one woman union representative said: “top management says to the workers, if something happens you must report it.” The measures introduced have helped with confidentiality:

Since the inception of the agreement things have been different. The women are no longer experiencing sexual harassment, things have really improved...Now they know what to do if they experience any form of harassment or sexual harassment. It gives them confidentiality, it helps them a lot, the harassment has declined. (Union representative, Lesotho)

One woman union representative interviewed said that “Having an external body to report to is a good model, and the confidential external line is important”. Another said, “being able to talk to the woman lawyers confidentially really helps”.

Following the success of this model, allowing for both an independent telephone help-line and an independent complaints mechanism, unions are also seeking to replicate it at the Hippo Knitting factory, where there have been similar revelations of harassment and abuse. This started with training-the-trainers for women shop stewards through the women’s committee, and the training is now being given to all union members. The women workers interviewed said that it had helped them to realise what sexual harassment is and that they have the right to complain. As one garment worker interviewed said, “Talking with the women, trust builds up and women speak out”. Other women interviewed were clear about the need for workers to “feel free to complain confidentially”.

We want to ensure that workers feel confident in reporting the issue. There must be confidentiality so that workers can feel comfortable, when the perpetrators are not around. This mechanism will allow workers to report freely without intimidation and harassment. Mostly when the workers report a supervisor, they know there will be retaliation against the worker, so we need a clear approach. (May Rathakane, IDUL Deputy General Secretary, Lesotho)

Anti-Harassment Committees in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, as a result of a High Court judgement, factories are required to establish anti-harassment committees (AHC). Interviews with women leaders from three factory unions in Bangladesh showed the potential that the AHCs have when they are properly constituted (with worker, trade union and external representatives), with women as the majority of committee members, and when committee members are trained to handle complaints sensitively and confidentially. It is also important that the AHCs can play a role in the prevention of GVBH and provide information and awareness to workers. Although an estimated 150 AHCs have been set up in the garment and textile in Bangladesh, many are not functioning effectively because of a lack of training and understanding of GBVH amongst committee members, lack of trade union representatives, and low awareness, which is sustained by power inequalities and a culture of impunity.

In unionised factories, committee members are selected with union participation, with the aim of 60% worker representation and for the head of the committee to be a worker. Good approaches adopted by unions include encouraging complainants to get support from the union, provision of counselling, maintaining confidentiality, suspending the alleged abuser while an investigation is ongoing and the effective use of grievance and disciplinary procedures. Some AHCs addressed domestic violence in the workplace and examples were given of provision of financial support when financial abuse had occurred.

Complaints cited by union leaders that resulted in the sanction or dismissal of supervisors for repeated verbal sexual harassment, sexual harassment and stalking by text messages by a manager demanding sexual favours, sending of pornography to a woman via text, inappropriate touching of a woman's body and breasts by a machine technician, and the withholding of a salary increase due to a woman worker. Unions referred to good outcomes for victims when the union also provided support through the formal AHC complaints process. Training has been critical to this, as highlighted by a factory-level union that had established an AHC:

At first we didn't know what the AHC was, but because of the training from the union and IndustriALL we have learnt a lot about their responsibilities and what is the function of the AHC, and [committee members] pass on their knowledge and responsibilities to others. (Union representative, Bangladesh)

Unions have faced challenges in this work when the management side has a low level of awareness about GBVH and low commitment to addressing the problem. This has often resulted in them not always believing the woman, a culture of victim blaming, and insisting on the need for witnesses and corroborative evidence. Some managers are just complying with requirements from the brands and the AHC have become "tick-box" exercises. However, when there is a joint approach and training for all committee members, they are more likely to function well. In these cases, workers on each floor know their AHC representatives and how to contact them. Union representatives at another factory believe that this approach has helped build trust. And the AHC functions well because committee members have received training and guidance on their roles and they understand their responsibilities. Holding regular monthly meetings enables the AHC to look at wider issues of prevention.

The AHC was established as a result of a demand of the union. Everyone cooperated in its establishment. If there is any incident workers go to the union secretary or president of the committee and explain their case – they go to the line where it has happened and they ask which male technicians have done these things. (Union Secretary, Bangladesh)

Developing internal procedures for complaints in El Salvador

In El Salvador, FEASIES a general union that includes the garment sector, has had some successes. The union worked with the garment factories to develop policies on zero tolerance for sexual harassment and violence. However, there are problems in processing complaints.

At the moment, even when a woman has the courage to make a complaint to the prosecutor's office, the procedures are so slow...they often decide to drop the case. We lack proper procedures to address cases of harassment. Some managers even argue that they cannot dismiss someone on grounds of sexual harassment because the labour laws do not recognise it and the person in question could take a case against the company for illegal dismissal. (Marta Zaldaña, General Secretary, FEASIES, El Salvador)

To try and resolve this, the union held discussions with the former Ministry of Labour about drawing up a model internal procedure for cases of sexual harassment. Working with other women's organisations, the union managed to ensure that Labour Inspectors would include the issue in their inspections when they carry out on-site visits, and if they identify a case, they send the information to the prosecutor's office. The union has also used other mechanisms such as sustainability certification, which some international clothing brands use. An example of this is the Fair Labour Association (FLA) mechanism on Third Party Complaints. A union can submit a complaint and the FLA investigates with their experts and this results in recommendations, including that the factory concerned establishes a policy and an internal procedure. As a result of this two factories have adopted internal procedures. In addition, the union has discussed with the factories about the need to provide additional support for women who make a complaint, such as paid leave for visits to the prosecutor's office and transport costs.

Other approaches include unions pro-actively encouraging workers to make complaints directly to union representatives since many do not want to use the formal complaints process. In Turkey, for example, women trade union representatives have been an important factor in giving women a place to talk about their concerns. Unions in Turkey also note that training on complaints handling is necessary to ensure that women are safe to report, but also recognise the importance of awareness raising amongst managers in handling complaints. Having a union presence in the factory has been important to building trust and to ensuring successful outcomes for workers.

When women want to make complaints they go first to their union representatives who are women and they can be supported by the union to make a formal complaint. The company encourages complaints and these can be received in writing, by email or in person. A dedicated email address has been set up for complaints. (Union representative, Turkey).

One of the problems is that sexual harassment rarely occurs in the presences of witnesses or in view of security cameras. With the burden of proof resting on the woman complainant, cases are not taken forward. Similarly, where an internal or independent investigation is carried out, women are either not believed and/or men in more senior positions are protected. Confidential and independent complaints systems have been established in Morocco and Lesotho as one way to address this problem.

Internal trade union policies and statutes

The Statutes of some trade unions contain articles that state that if a member is a harasser or perpetrator of violence, that person is expelled from the organisation, as is the case of a Turkish union:

We have an article in our CBA and in our union statute that if someone has a violence background they are not able to have any position in the union...they can't be a shop steward or any other decision making bodies. (Pinar Özcan, International Relations Secretary and President of Women's Committee, Textile, Garment and Leather Trade Union, Öz İplik-İş Turkey).

Some unions highlighted the importance of “getting our own house in order” and ensuring there are internal policies on GBVH. As one trade union leader said: “we also need to consider developing internal procedures for the unions as well – that is a pending task!” (Marta Zaldaña, General Secretary, FEASIES, El Salvador)

3.7 The role of ILO Violence and Harassment Convention No.190

The vast majority of women union representatives interviewed saw ILO C190 as a hugely progressive development for workers' rights. A small number of interviewees in Indonesia, Lesotho and Turkey were not aware of either C190 or the campaign for ratification in their countries and expressed a strong interest in knowing more about it. All unions interviewed saw the vitally important role that C190 will play in ensuring that employers implement effective workplace procedures, prevention, risk assessment and support for victims. In some countries, unions were beginning to use C190 and R206 in their negotiations for CBAs, knowing that their governments were unlikely to ratify the Convention in the immediate future. As one trade union leader said:

We can't wait for the government to introduce law or for C190 to be ratified, we are being proactive in CBA clauses and AHC committees. Our federation already has it in our strategic plan to ensure this is part of the next round of collective bargaining. (Kalpona Akter, President BGIWF, Bangladesh)

Many unions are planning to include reference to ILO Convention 190 in their CBAs, and suggest that updating GFAs and gaining backing from brands will also help to give leverage to this.

In our new CBA, which is not yet signed, we have proposed to include C190 into the CBA. With Inditex we are getting used to formulating agreements and we are using this language more and more. (Union representative, Morocco)

We have recently spoken to a brand (H&M) about making C190 a reality...We have worked closely with NGOs and have held discussions with governments...for the first time. (China Rahman, President, Federation of Garment Workers, Bangladesh)

To date there are many examples of successful campaigns for and engagement around C190, which have been held by unions and regional offices of IndustriALL, often as part of annual events such as International Women's Day or the 16 Days of Activism. In addition, in the interviews union representatives spoke about their involvement in campaigns:

- Garment sector unions in Morocco are part of a coalition of unions formed in 2019 with the UMT, CDT, and civil society organisations to raise awareness, campaign and lobby for the ratification of C190. It has led to a movement mobilising around the demand for the ratification of the convention.

- Garment unions in Indonesia have been active in the campaign for ILO Convention 190 and its ratification: a collaboration between the two trade union confederations in Indonesia – KSBSI and KSPSI – led to the formation of the ‘END GBV in the world of work’ alliance with over 50 unions and organisations across Indonesia.
- Unions in El Salvador are raising awareness about C190, as part of the advocacy campaign for the government to ratify C190.
- In Turkey, a project has brought unions in the garment and textile into a dialogue about C190 via a social partner platform organised with the ILO, government ministries, NGOs, women’s associations, amongst others. Women in unions have also been part of a feminist movement in Turkey against the withdrawal of Turkey from the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention on violence against women.

Unions argue that information campaigns, study circles, training and awareness are all necessary for workers to understand C190 and how it will help empower women workers.

3.8 Role of brands and GFAs

Many brands are driving change, for example, by requiring factories to implement grievance procedures and codes of conduct on sexual harassment. At a meeting of trade union leaders from the garment and textile in Turkey, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mauritius and Morocco, held on 3 October 2019, emphasis was given to promoting ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 in the garment and textile and including it in GFAs. Calls were also made for factory-level unions to play a greater role in the monitoring of GFAs. In this light, some unions interviewed noted the importance of the brands:

Buyers...have already introduced the Code of Conduct to the company. We are now free of this kind of violence, and there is no situation where we are forced to work long hours...Brands want to make sure that companies that receive orders comply. (Union representative, Indonesia)

GFAs have been an important lever for workplace policies and awareness about GBVH. For example, unions reported that the GFAs have been extremely useful, giving legitimacy to union roles at factory level. Specific obligations on GBVH have proven very helpful. Regular monitoring meetings were singled out as being important to addressing GBVH, while GFAs can help secure commitments to collective bargaining on workplace policies and CBAs to end GBVH. GFAs generally have had a positive impact on the quality of work.

[The H&M GFA] has been very good example for our trade union as well as the factory...we have made a lot of use of it...if there is something that is not in line with the agreement, we refer to the GFA. It gives strength to our work. (Union representative, Turkey)

Similarly, brands’ policies are important in driving change amongst suppliers, although there is a general view held by the unions that brands need to be more focussed on addressing GBVH in their supply chains, particularly around contracting and pricing. Unions suggested that factory owners and governments could take a more pro-active role, including on the ratification of ILO C190 in garment producing countries. In addition, unions are aware that women very rarely speak to auditors about GBVH. The Turkish union, Teksif, is looking at ways to make the issue more visible to auditors, and unions in Indonesia are exploring how to raise GBVH in brands’ factory audits.

3.9 Recommendations made by unions in the garment and textile sector

Union leaders and union representatives at factory level made a range of recommendations, aimed at building awareness, visibility and union action on ending GBVH.

- Training and awareness raising for all workers so that they are empowered to discuss, report and act on incidents of GBVH. Resources are needed for this and unions expressed a strong need for the IndustriALL global training programme to reach all affiliates in the garment and textile.
- Training for senior trade union leaders on GBVH, to build their understanding and advocacy around GBVH, and to equip them to become champions, including in implementing internal and external union actions to end GBVH.
- Training for senior and line managers on why GBVH is an issue linked to human rights and business abuse, and how to ensure that complaints mechanisms are effective, transparent and trusted by workers.
- More training and guidance are also recommended on gender-responsive collective bargaining, including model language on establishing comprehensive workplace policies, ensuring effective and trusted complaints committees with union representation, and providing support for survivors of domestic violence. Unions recommended more training and support to help them to use the language of C190 and R206 in their CBAs in a meaningful way.
- As there is a relatively low level of awareness about GBVH as an occupational safety and health risk, including processes for gender-responsive risk assessment in the garment and textile, unions would like to see more practical training and guidance about how these risks can be addressed from an OSH perspective, including psychosocial risks. The recently agreed ILO Code of Practice on OSH in the garment and textile gives a good foothold for this work.
- All current and future GFAs should refer at a minimum to obligations on suppliers to prevent and address GBVH, including the full implementation of C190.
- Specific guidelines are needed for the garment and textile on how to effectively include and monitor GBVH in GFA national monitoring committees, enhance processes for raising awareness of and reporting GBVH under the new International Accord for Health and Safety in the Garment and Textile Industry, and ensuring better recognition of GBVH as an issue for supply chain human rights due-diligence.
- Awareness raising and training for union leaders, union representatives and managers on domestic violence, including how to give support to survivors of domestic violence, what can be included in workplace policies, including paid leave, financial support, counselling and temporary reduction in work targets without loss of pay, if needed.
- Living wages, decent work and ending precarious work are of critical importance in to ending GBVH in the garment and textile sector. In addition, strategies to relieve production pressures and ensure women are not forced to work overtime, are essential in ending GBVH.
- GBVH can affect anyone, and LGBTQI+ workers are particularly vulnerable. Specific initiatives and training are recommended on addressing GBVH in all its forms, and to increase awareness of and strategies on the inclusion and recognition of the rights LGBTQI+ workers.

ⁱ See for example GFAs in garment and textiles with ASOS, Esprit, Inditex, H&M and Tchibo. <https://www.industrialunion.org/global-framework-agreements>

ⁱⁱ On 25 August 2021, representatives from international garment retailers and the global trade unions (IndustriALL and UNI) signed an agreement for a new and expanded Accord on Health and Safety, with the inclusion of sexual harassment. The Accord is currently operating in Bangladesh and it is anticipated that it will be extended to other countries in the future. By early 2022, the Accord had been signed by 164 companies. <https://internationalaccord.org>

ⁱⁱⁱ C190, Article 1: “The term “violence and harassment” in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment”.

^{iv} The coalition includes the Organisation of Salvadorean Women for Peace (Organización de Mujeres Salvadoreñas por la Paz -ORMUSA), Mélida Anaya Montes Women’s Movement Association (Asociación Movimiento de Mujeres Mélida Anaya Montes), and Women for Change (Mujeres Transformando) y FEASIES.

^v Independent Democratic Union of Lesotho (IDUL), United Textile Employees (UNITE), the National Clothing Textile and Allied Workers Union, the Federation of Women Lawyers in Lesotho (FIDA) and Women and Law in Southern African Research and Education Trust-Lesotho (WLSA) and Levi Strauss & Co., The Children’s Place, and Kontoor Brands (Wrangler and Lee jeans), and Nien Hsing

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