

Geneva, 3 December 2012

Honorable Sheikh Hasina
Prime Minister of Bangladesh
info@pmo.gov.bd

Factory fire killed more than 100 garment workers in Bangladesh

Dear Honorable Sheikh Hasina,

I am writing on behalf of IndustriALL Global Union representing more than fifty million workers throughout mining, energy and manufacturing, including textile, garment, shoes and leather industries in some 140 countries throughout the world.

We are saddened and outraged by the death of more than 100 workers in Tazreen Fashion factory. This is not the first deadly fire accident in garment factories in Bangladesh, yet workers are still waiting for measures to be taken to ensure safety in the workplace. Despite the fact that garment industries contribute to 78.15% of the total export of Bangladesh, amounting to 17914.46 million USD, hence being a major contributor to the country's wealth and development, the workers still have to fear atrocious death in the workplace. This tragedy and past tragedies could have been prevented with simple measures of safety that unfortunately most of the factories in Bangladesh do not bother to follow.

Although nothing can tame the horror and the loss that the victims and their family are experiencing at the moment, we are calling on your office to take immediate actions to:

- 1) Convene a multistakeholder consultation, wherein, brands, government, industries and trade unions develop an integrated plan of action to ensure work places made fire proof and that workplace are safe and not a death trap. In this end, national laws on safety issues are in place and that their implementation or failure to do so is closely monitored and sanctioned by the government so that such tragic accidents will no longer occur.
- 2) Compensate the bereaved families and injured following Spectrum Disaster. ie., 1.5 million BDT for the family of the deceased and 500000-1000000 BDT to the injured (BDT=Bangladesh Currency). Free medical support should be provided to the injured;
- 3) Ensure that Government ensure implementation of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 and the strict implementation of existing Labour Law;
- 4) Form a high level Judicial Inquiry into the tragedy and give an exemplary punishment to the criminals;
- 5) Initiate a RMG Workers Trust to be formed by Brands contributing 10 cents to each worker, and Manufacturers/Government/Workers Contributing BDT 5 per month into a Trust Fund to be managed by all stake holders
- 6) Ensure that the workers continue to receive their salary until the relocation of the factory to a safer place or to receive decent compensation if the factory closes completely and they lose their work;

Dear Prime Minister, Bangladesh has during the past years attracted constant negative publicity in the world media because of terrible fire tragedies, extremely low wages and poor working conditions in the textile, garment and leather industries. Industriall Global Union has since its creation been in discussions with a number of major brands who are concerned about the negative impact of operating in such conditions in Bangladesh to their image. There are

real risks involved for all of us. We share the view that ensuring a future for Bangladesh as a growing textile, garment and leather producer requires urgent measures and we are looking at cooperation with your government and the industry. I have therefore decided to personally come to Bangladesh on 21-24 February to discuss with the different stakeholders. I am respectfully proposing a meeting with you in Dhaka on the 22 or 23 February to discuss possible paths towards a mutually beneficial sustainable future. I look forward to a kind confirmation at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line across the middle, and a diagonal line on the right that ends in a small hook.

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary