

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
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Dear Philip

Bangladesh sustainability compact

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the Sustainability Compact, I urge you to press the government of Bangladesh to comply with its commitments to respect labour rights and to ensure the safety of garment factories.

Following the industrial disaster at Rana Plaza last year, several governments stepped forward and committed to contribute to efforts aimed at preventing further tragedies in the garment industry in Bangladesh. On 8 July 2013, a comprehensive framework for action, the Sustainability Compact for Continuous Improvements in Labour Rights and Factory Safety in the Ready-Made Garment and Knitwear Industry in Bangladesh ("Sustainability Compact"), was launched with the initial support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Union (EU) and Bangladesh. The Sustainability Compact calls on the government of Bangladesh to make a number of legal and practical reforms to ensure respect for labour rights and to improve building and fire safety. At the time, EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht made clear that failure to comply with the Sustainability Compact would lead the EU to consider "appropriate action" under the Everything But Arms trade preferences arrangement.

To mark the first anniversary of the Sustainability Compact, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), IndustriALL and UNI Global Union prepared a detailed and critical assessment of the government of Bangladesh's compliance with its terms - *attached*. It demonstrates that little progress has been made on implementing its terms. On several points, the government has completely failed to take action while on others the progress has been limited and long-delayed.

The government of Bangladesh's apparent lack of urgency and purpose is shocking given that four million garment workers depend on the successful implementation of the Sustainability Compact. This situation is completely unacceptable - we cannot allow another industrial disaster to claim the lives of garment workers due to the government's inaction and manufacturers' misconduct.

I urge the government to raise these concerns with the government of Bangladesh, as well as with the brands incorporated and/or doing business in Britain which source garments from factories in Bangladesh. Corporations also have a responsibility to ensure that workers' rights are fully respected in their supply chains.

I look forward to hearing from you about steps your government will take to ensure that the government of Bangladesh complies in a timely manner with the terms of the Sustainability Compact.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY
General Secretary

cc. Rt Hon Justine Greening,
Secretary of State for International Development

cc. Rt Hon Desmond Swayne,
Minister for International Development