2021

Year Review
Issue 2021 | Highlights and insights

IN THIS ISSUE:

Garment sector at a glance
Quick overview of the apparel industry in numbers

Garment industry updates
Latest trends and highlights on initiatives and development opportunities

COVID-19 Timeline
Outbreak and stakeholders responses to prevent spreading

BWH Partnerships
Collaboration to strengthen social dialogue, tackle issues, and promote decent work

Inside Better Work Haiti
Program achievements, publications and way forward

For more information, contact us:
Better Work Haiti
#2, Rue Romain, Delmas 33
Tél. +509 2616 2648
Email: haiti@betterwork.org  ·  Website: betterwork.org/haiti
Dear Partners

The year 2021 has been a difficult year with new experiences requiring rapid adaptation skills and dynamic responsiveness to the new demands of the world of work.

The spread of COVID-19 fortunately did not reach predictions in Haiti. This is partly thanks to the awareness-raising efforts of the authorities and several other actors for the application of individual barrier gestures and preventive measures in institutions and in the workplace. All textile factories registered with the Better Work Haiti (BWH) program have adopted preventive measures and implemented hygienic and sanitary infrastructures and practices in their work environment to prevent and limit the spreading of COVID-19.

Given the restrictions imposed by the pandemic in 2020, BWH has worked more closely with the Directorate of Labor of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST). This collaboration was strengthened in 2021 with a hybrid approach in conducting joint in-factory advisory and assessments, which strengthens the in-factory presence and the capacities of MAST labor inspectors with respect to the BWH service model.

The recent socio-political crises and insecurity concerns have considerably affected the socio-economic activities of the country as well as the level and quality of living conditions of workers. The conclusions of the two researches published by BWH on the economic impact and well-being of workers show the economic difficulties and the concerns of employers and workers, but also their voices and expectations in terms of hoped-for improvements.

The BWH program strategies for 2022 and beyond include focusing on improving and strengthening the partnership with key stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of our actions and to promote improved working conditions and competitiveness in the Haitian clothing industry.

Thanks for your continued collaboration and interest in our progress. Here’s to working together in 2022.

BWH Team

---

**Garment sector at a glance**
Quick overview of the apparel industry in numbers

- **7** Government partners
- **39** factories in the programme
- **53,410** workers (63% women)
- **11** Active trade unions
- **1,071mi** apparel exports in usd millions (83% of national exports)
- **8** 2 public industrial parks and private industrial parks and free zones
- **26** international brands and retailers
- **10** international buyers
- **23** compliance reports
- **2** research briefs in 2021
- **13** years of operation in Haiti
- **14** Better Work Haiti staff

---

**Contributing to industry improvements**
Better Work Haiti (BWH) strives to create a garment industry that provides decent work to a projected 65,000 workers, lifting their families and communities out of poverty, empowering women, boosting national income and improving social stability.

The programme builds on the strong partnerships developed with the government, global brands, employers and unions to play a central role in realizing the full potential of the HOPE II Act – a preferential trade program with the US. Ongoing top priorities include convening diverse stakeholders to tackle shared challenges and supporting institutions’ efforts to monitor and safeguard factory compliance with international labor standards.

**Key national constituents**
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MAST)
- Office of the Labour Ombudsman (BMST)
- National Insurance and Pensions Office(ONA)
- Office for Employment Injury, Illness and Maternity (OFTMA)
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI)
- Office of the State Secretary for the Integration of People with Disabilities (BSEIPH)
- Association of Haitian Industries (ADIH)
- Economic Forum
- All Trade unions active in the garment sector
- 18 brand and retail partners

---

Funding is provided by the United States Department of Labor under cooperative agreement number IL-21187-10-75-K for a total of 1.3 million dollars.
COVID-19 Breakout and Stakeholders Responses

Quick overview of the apparel industry in numbers

LATEST FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Death Counted</th>
<th>Cases in Men</th>
<th>Cases in Women</th>
<th>Recovered Cases</th>
<th>Fatality Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26,807</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>52,1%</td>
<td>47,9%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>2.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93,809 fully vaccinated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REDUCE THE RISK OF COVID-19 INFECTION

- Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow and avoid spitting in public.
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold, fever or flu-like symptoms.
- Thoroughly cook meat and eggs.
- Seek medical care if you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing.
- Disinfect equipment and working area at least once a day.

Impact of COVID-19 on the garment sector

In December 2019, the world woke up to a new epidemic, and concern grew throughout the West as the global impact of COVID-19 became clearer in early 2020. The outbreak and rapid spread of the pandemic threatens the Haitian garment industry much as it does across the globe, and it highlights gaps in national social protection systems. It took until March 2020 to detect the first cases of infection on Haitian territory; since then its impact has hit the garment industry in Haiti with force, reducing the number of factories closed in one month. Three companies closed in covid time: Elansia (Juillet 2020), H&B (Aout 2020), Interamerican Woven(Novembre 2020) and Val d’Or closed during this calendar year.

The government initially allowed some factories to work at 30% capacity to manufacture personal protective equipment (PPE). Later, factories were allowed to operate at 50% capacity. Initially, the sector lost approximately 20,000 jobs, and four companies closed their doors permanently. The government stepped in to support the workers by covering one quarter of their salary for one month, but financial stress remains a primary concern among workers (see survey results). Towards the end of the third quarter of 2020, the sector started to recover some lost jobs, both through rehiring workers and creating new positions.

COUNTRY KEY UPDATES

- **July 2021:** Haiti receives the first batch of 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines donated by the U.S. government through COVAX.
- **Aug. 2021:** International media reports that has accepted the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine reconsidering the preference of the Ministry of Health for a single-dose injectable vaccine.
- **Sept. 2021:** Important efforts have been undertaken by the government of Haiti through the Ministry of Health and Population (MSPP) to provide free vaccinations. The MSPP releases a list of 149 vaccination sites (56 in the West, 11 in the North-East and 13 in the North departments).
- **Nov. 2021:** 39 participating factories are now back operating. The insecure situation with gangs, shootings, and kidnapping remains a safety issue for workers’ journey to work. The National Police deploy efforts to protect industrial park areas.
- **Dec. 2021:** The Ministry of Health approves the interchangeability of vaccines used against COVID-19 in Haiti. Indeed, the WHO recommends vaccinating with the same vaccine as an ideal, but in the event of unavailability, interchangeability between the PFIZER, MODERN, and JANSSEN (Johnson and Johnson) vaccines is accepted to complete the vaccination schedule.

COVID-19 Prevention at the workplace

Better Work joined with ILD/AIDS and The World Health Organization (WHO) to provide specific COVID-19 prevention and infection control training to forty-eight (48) factory medical personnel in Port-au-Prince and the Northeast, including (34) women.

Call to Action signed by stakeholders

Better Work brought together National working group in Haiti to sign the “Call to Action” joint statement outlining priorities for the garment sector. This statement includes the role of both unions and employers and lays out the financial impacts and immediate needs of both workers and employers of the pandemic.

Special focus on social security

Better Work is bringing stakeholders’ attention on the need to provide effective social security services to workers considering the importance and the impact of social benefits for workers in the context of COVID-19.

Awareness on COVID-19 vaccination

Better Work is supporting factories to increase awareness efforts to educate workers on COVID-19 vaccines and encouraging workers to get vaccinated.
Although COVID-19 and security restrictions prevented physical visit from Better Work Haiti, the tools and guidelines as well the virtual assistance provided by Better Work Haiti were very useful in helping Hansae to address labor issues during these difficult times."

Michel Hwang,
General Manager at Hansae, a South Korean fashion brand and manufacturer in Haiti

"Thousands of jobs in the textile sector." This is the promising prediction of the new director of SONAPI, Mr. Petrists Justin, who made this announcement during his 1st visit to the SONAPI industrial park on December 7, 2021, one week after installation. This is an optimistic outlook at a time unemployment is at its peak in the country. Through this initiative, Mr. Justin inquired about challenges and opportunities for the country. The funds will be disbursed over a five-year period, starting in 2022. Once the disbursements for this Bank operation are completed, the CIP will be the largest self-sustaining industrial park in Haiti, employing approximately 22,000 workers.

SONAPI to accomplish its mission to creating jobs and wealth across the country. Mr. Justin says he also intends to rehabilitate certain spaces that have been closed for several years, which will make it possible to achieve this objective. He says discussions are underway with potential investors to reassure them and convince them to invest in the country. According to the general manager of SONAPI, the site is open for business.

The new SONAPI director announced the creation of thousand new jobs

October 1, 2021 marks the start of sewing classes for 100 young people at the Caracol Industrial Park. Indeed, after a long period of hiatus, the Clothing Technology Training Center (CFTV) has resumed its activities at the PIC, always with the objective of serving companies in the North in terms of qualified human resources. These young people are already in the sights of the S&H Global Company, which intends to integrate them into an immediate hiring process.

Year review | December 2021
 Better Work Haiti

Haiti among the top apparel sourcing countries in the coming years

Thanks to the HOPE II law, Haiti accelerated its production of clothing and reintroduced the cultivation of cotton to reduce costs and support vertical integration. Haiti is currently the thirteenth leading source of apparel in the US market, accounting for 1.42% of imports by volume (420,778/29,470,972). The Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act of 1983 and amendments thereto by the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA), the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunities Act through the Encouragement of Partnership (HOPE) and the Haitian Economic Assistance Program (HELP) Act have played a key role in the country’s growth as a supply partner.

New trainees begin sewing classes at PIC for job readiness

"Thousands of jobs in the textile sector." The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has approved non-repayable financing of $65 million to contribute to the sustainable economic development of northern Haiti by promoting the conditions necessary for the establishment and expansion of businesses in the Industrial Park of Caracol (PIC), in the north of the country. The funds will be disbursed over a five-year period, starting in 2022. Once the disbursements for this Bank operation are completed, the CIP will be the largest self-sustaining industrial park in Haiti, employing approximately 22,000 workers.

The new SONAPI director announced the creation of thousand new jobs

October 1, 2021 marks the start of sewing classes for 100 young people at the Caracol Industrial Park. Indeed, after a long period of hiatus, the Clothing Technology Training Center (CFTV) has resumed its activities at the PIC, always with the objective of serving companies in the North in terms of qualified human resources. These young people are already in the sights of the S&H Global Company, which intends to integrate them into an immediate hiring process.

Year review | December 2021
 Better Work Haiti

Haiti among the top apparel sourcing countries in the coming years

Thanks to the HOPE II law, Haiti accelerated its production of clothing and reintroduced the cultivation of cotton to reduce costs and support vertical integration. Haiti is currently the thirteenth leading source of apparel in the US market, accounting for 1.42% of imports by volume (420,778/29,470,972). The Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act of 1983 and amendments thereto by the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA), the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunities Act through the Encouragement of Partnership (HOPE) and the Haitian Economic Assistance Program (HELP) Act have played a key role in the country’s growth as a supply partner.

New trainees begin sewing classes at PIC for job readiness

“Thousands of jobs in the textile sector.” This is the promising prediction of the new director of SONAPI, Mr. Petraits Justin, who made this announcement during his 1st visit to the SONAPI industrial park on December 7, 2021, one week after installation. This is an optimistic outlook at a time unemployment is at its peak in the country. Through this initiative, Mr. Justin inquired about challenges and opportunities for the country. The funds will be disbursed over a five-year period, starting in 2022. Once the disbursements for this Bank operation are completed, the CIP will be the largest self-sustaining industrial park in Haiti, employing approximately 22,000 workers.

The new SONAPI director announced the creation of thousand new jobs

October 1, 2021 marks the start of sewing classes for 100 young people at the Caracol Industrial Park. Indeed, after a long period of hiatus, the Clothing Technology Training Center (CFTV) has resumed its activities at the PIC, always with the objective of serving companies in the North in terms of qualified human resources. These young people are already in the sights of the S&H Global Company, which intends to integrate them into an immediate hiring process.

Garment industry updates

Latest trends and highlights on sectoral initiatives and development opportunities

Haiti’s garment sector gets a boost from two initiatives

Through a recently launched advisory project to Create Investment Opportunities (CIO) in the Apparel Sector in Haiti, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group, one of Better Work’s founding partners, has recently pledged to support the garment sector in Haiti by bringing together the key players in the public and private sectors through a new public private dialogue scheme - Technical Secretariat - seeking opportunities and means to expand apparel production to meet a shifting global demand by helping the sector to develop a new value proposition for the industry to improve their competitiveness taking advantage of near shoring with US market, improve government aftercare services with existing companies in the industry, and attract investors by doing outreach activities. This project aims to develop a new value proposition that takes advantage of nearshoring and mobilizing investments to attract new investors and provide aftercare to the existing ones in Haiti.

Fortunately, the renewal of key legislation will aid Haiti’s garment industry in responding to the circumstances of an unprecedented year. The Caribbean Basin Economic Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) was renewed on September 20, 2020 and will extend for another 10 years. The trade pact will support around 30% of Haiti’s exports to the U.S., which will keep providing textile and apparel trade preferences to Caribbean countries through September 2030. Key industry players in Haiti agree that there is still work to be done to achieve the necessary level of stability in the country to drive business opportunities to their maximum.
The overall trend of non-compliances in the Haitian garment industry

These figures present an overview of the non-compliance findings in 27 participating factories, which were assessed at least twice before November 2021. Better Work Haiti conducted hybrid assessments and hybrid advisories during this period with the support of inspectors from the Ministry of Labor.

During this reporting period, Better Work Haiti noted two new allegations on core labor standards violations during assessments. One FOA case falls in the interference and discrimination compliance point. The second case relates to six union leaders who were dismissed for failure to wear a mask during work hours.

The overall rate of non-compliance continues to be high in the Occupational Safety and Health cluster, particularly emergency preparedness and management of chemicals and hazardous substances. The data reveals that factories have made a greater effort to train workers in the use, maintenance and storage of chemical substances.

### Non-compliance rates by Compliance Point

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance Point</th>
<th>Feb 2021 - November 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid Leave</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security and Other Benefits</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Contracts</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals and Hazardous Substances</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Preparedness</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services and First Aid</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Facilities</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Protection</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Environment</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Hours</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### US imports under trade preference program (Millions USD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade Program</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSUS 807 &amp; 809</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>18.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBTPA-TRQ</td>
<td>167.86</td>
<td>216.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBTPA - HOPE/HELP</td>
<td>573.10</td>
<td>639.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for the first 10 months of 2021 - Source: otexa.trade.gov

Overview of trade preferences in the Haitian apparel industry.

After approximately two years of negotiations, the United States Congress renewed the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA), which was originally scheduled to expire at the end of September 2020 for Haiti and other Caribbean countries. The renewed trade agreement guarantees protections for Haitian/US trading partners for the next ten years.

Despite the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business, exports are recovering with 14% of the increase in 2021 (USD 988m) compared to 2020 (USD 849m), and the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) HOPE/HELP and CBTPA continue to be the two key Trade Preference programs. The HOPE/HELP trade preference program concentrates 75% of Haiti’s clothing exports to the United States. In addition to the shocks that Haiti faces chronically and which affect the daily operations of the sector, the clothing sector must now meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has transformed the global value chain. The Haitian garment sector must position itself to highlight its competitive advantages in a context of diversification of supply sources and market rapprochement (the nearshoring strategy) by buyers.
Haitian apparel industry employment summary

On the eve of the COVID-19 breakout in Haiti (March 2020), textile factories in Haiti were employing more than 65,000 workers, and its impact had very heavy consequences on them as well as on their families, due to the dysfunction of certain factories and the significant reduction in the number of workers across the sector. However, towards the end of July, when the factories were allowed to operate fully, they began to recover workers, allowing the factories to resume their lives, with over 50,000 active workers currently.

The Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBTPA) and the HOPEII/HELP Act are giving the sector the much-needed boost to reach its full potential. The chart below provides an overview of employment growth during the last five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>PIM</th>
<th>PIC</th>
<th>CODEVI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>47,386</td>
<td>29,928</td>
<td>8,981</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>51,500</td>
<td>24,988</td>
<td>8,993</td>
<td>8,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>53,500</td>
<td>24,638</td>
<td>12,372</td>
<td>10,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>52,292</td>
<td>29,286</td>
<td>10,356</td>
<td>12,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>53,410</td>
<td>14,495</td>
<td>10,976</td>
<td>13,866</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BWH Partnerships

Collaboration with constituents to strengthen social dialogue, tackle issues and challenges, and promote decent work

ILO/AIDS, ONUSIDA team up with BWH to support 48 doctors to prevent COVID-19 in the garment sector

In 2017, Djerry Princivil join the factory Superior Sourcing, located in CODEVI (Ouanaminthe), to provide medical care to its employees. In those three years, Djerry would not have imagined that he would soon be dealing with the threat of a dangerous virus in a worldwide pandemic. To support Princivil and 47 other doctors and nurses in participating factories, Better Work Haiti partnered with a number of organizations, including the ILO and WHO, to develop specific trainings specially targeted to doctors providing services to factories, to help them better manage the COVID-19 crisis internally. The four-day in-person training provides information and tools to recognize the disease symptoms, treat and manage confirmed cases, and implement measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among garment workers. After attending the training, Princivil felt that he was equipped to tackle the pandemic’s new challenges. He has regained his self-confidence with this preparation and can now recognize and manage COVID-19 symptoms and the resulting situations.

Management Guidance for RMG factories in response to COVID-19

In Haiti, the first COVID-19 case was reported in March of 2020 and, as expected, the number of new cases continues to increase daily. In response to this crisis, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs collaborated with BWH to develop comprehensive management guidelines on COVID-19 to help employers, worker representatives and respective committee members, so they can help protect workers and answer some of the OSH-related questions that factories are facing. This guidance is not a standard or regulation, and it creates no new legal obligations. It contains recommendations as well as descriptions of mandatory safety and health Standards; it is intended for planning purposes.

Employers and workers in ready-made garment (RMG) and plastic factories should use this planning guide to help identify risk levels in the workplace and to determine appropriate control measures to mitigate those risks. In 2021, BWH strengthened its collaboration with MAST by conducting joint activities in the field (including advisory visits and assessments), with a particular focus on overseeing and guiding factories to continue implementing COVID-19 preventives measures. Additionally, the two agencies worked together to disseminate COVID-19-related resources to factories.

Download the guide to read more.
This is Kelonis’ second child, and she has benefited from several services offered by the project. “I was able to have several examinations performed, including urine and blood tests, an initial pregnancy test, pap smear, and an HIV test. It is through this service that my pregnancy was confirmed.”

Despite pandemic conditions, the pilot has been able to reach a high volume of women: prenatal care services were offered to 282 pregnant women in the factories, who benefited from two prenatal consultations, including 276 who benefited from ultrasound and 232 who benefited from routine examinations and prenatal follow-up visits. During her pregnancy, Dieunese used the bus as her primary transportation and was often late to her regular visits to the doctor. “Thanks to the services provided by Profamil, I felt reassured that I would receive medical consultation and an ultrasound examination, which reassured me about the state of my pregnancy. The services were quick and easy. I felt that there was a kind of special attention to pregnant women in the factory.”

Dieunese was happy to have confirmed that she has a healthy pregnancy and would be giving birth to a boy. According to DeCastro, these Better Work-UNICEF services provided through Profamil have eased some of the common worries of pregnant women who are also working. “I know a lot of other pregnant women like me who have been able to have ultrasound exams to check on their babies. I used the result and the certificate that was provided to me at the factory’s HR department to secure my maternity leave. Otherwise, we would have rushed to find the money to pay a private doctor for the paperwork that we instead got for free, and immediately, through this programme.”

With the unique demands of working in the textile sector, where activities in factories during operating hours can have an impact on the production chain, Better Work has engaged with employers and Profamil to find practical, healthy solutions to mitigate negative impacts on pregnant workers.

“The strategy of offering local and mobile services has been an innovative strategy and very much suited to the context,” says DeCastro.

According to Better Work Haiti’s latest compliance report, 67% of monitored workplaces in 2020 do not have medical facilities and onsite staff, and 84% have continuing social security and benefits issues that affect workers. The initial conclusions on this pilot project demonstrate the immediate need for access to health care for a considerable portion of the 65% of women workers in Haiti’s textile sector. These women are at the forefront of providing a boost to the Haitian economy, and Better Work Haiti aims to support access to better health services livelihoods leading to a better quality of their lives.

Read more

Key figures of the Project Performance

| Percentage of factories that have effective HR Management systems | 65% |
| Percentage of factories where Bipartite committee address real worker concerns | 75% |
| Advisory visits in the reporting period | 177 |
| Training sessions that promote gender equality | 8 |
| Evidence based briefs published | 3 |
| MAST labor directorate personnel, including judicial officers trained | 16 |

The programme has emphasized its engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders to reinforce their technical capacities to play their role more efficiently, resulting in a stronger and more sustainable impact.
**Strengthening social dialogue in conflict resolution**

Working relationships in mass employment environments are not always easy. Conflicts, claims, complaints, and disciplinary measures, among other issues, often create situations of tension between parties, which require mediation. Martine Joseph, one of the representatives from the Office of the Labour Ombudsperson, conducted her first in-person visit to a factory in the northeast of the country to help mediate a dispute, which she describes as a success.

Her intervention and mediation work made it possible to successfully reintegrate 79 workers laid off without pay for a period of 30 days, following a strike to satisfy demands on working hours. According to Mrs. Joseph, the Office has received more than a dozen major complaints from factory workers in the north regarding issues including contract disputes, working hours, payment to the social security system and maternity leave payments. This situation attracted the attention of the Office the Ombudsperson which in early September 2021, then carried out its first face-to-face visit to this region with technical and logistical support from Better Work Haiti.

This visit was an opportunity for representatives from the Office to promote the importance of dialogue in conflict resolution and to strengthen the presence of the Ombudsperson’s office in the Northeast of the country, which contains about 46% of the textile sector’s labour force. During this visit, the representative held several meetings to address specific complaints from workers from the three factories in the Caracol Industrial Park. The Office Ombudsperson does not have a physical presence in the Northeast, and according to Mrs. Joseph, it was not easy to manage outreach to the region due to budgetary constraints. Mrs. Joseph and her colleagues use information from Better Work Haiti advisory services during the meetings, to align her work with the methods used by BWH, to which the factories are already accustomed.

**Sustainability and outlook for the Haitian garment sector – Virtual Business Forum**

On 2 December 2021, stakeholders and investors came together to discuss plans and post solutions to the myriad challenges the Haitian garment sector has faced in the past year. The Virtual Business Forum was organized by the Better Work Haiti programme, a collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), under the theme “Sustainability and Outlook for the Haitian Garment Sector.” This event brought together the main players in the textile sector around a discussion of successful initiatives, including maintaining collaborative factory visits between MAST (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) and Better Work during the past year.

Amid sociopolitical difficulties and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted livelihoods and well-being of the population, the Haitian garment sector has shown strong resilience to maintain its operations and contribute to employment. The IFC’s continued engagement seeks to help the industry navigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and work to identify and improve regulatory frameworks that can boost the development of a new value proposition for the garment sector in Haiti. Sectoral sustainability, business continuity and business investment opportunities were also debated, as well as opportunities to address challenges. Claudine Francois, Chief Technical Officer of the Better Work Haiti programme, closed the session with a call for collective action. “COVID-19 and socioeconomic instability have made collective action more crucial than ever. Global brands, governments, factories and workers’ organizations acting responsibly and collaboratively is key to Haiti’s recovery.”
Inside Better Work Haiti

Better Work Haiti COVID-19 economic impact survey findings

Better Work Haiti has been engaging with sector stakeholders, including the government of Haiti, to aid in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s effects. Better Work also plays a role in generating data and insights into working conditions in the sector through its regular compliance assessments, twice yearly reporting of results and implementing surveys among workers to generate insights for the industry. In mid-2020, among 3,330 workers surveyed across 38 factories enrolled, over two-thirds of workers say they have experienced some sort of work disruption. Yet, over 60 per cent of respondents reported “financial stress” as a concern and few workers wish to see themselves in the medium-term future in the sector. This brief provides insight into the key issues and concerns workers have expressed related to their employment, financial distress and the external environment affects the safety and well-being.

Download the brief to read more.

Better Work Haiti 2021 Workers survey results overview

Since the first summary of COVID-19 economic impact surveys among garment workers in Haiti in March 2021, the country has witnessed political turmoil, compounded by natural disasters and security concerns. These economic and social disruptions have compromised the livelihoods and well-being of millions of workers employed in the garment sector globally. This brief provides an update from worker surveys conducted in Haiti seven months after the initial outreach in November 2020. The results show that while there are some areas of improvement related to more consistent working hours and pay, most workers continue to face significant hardships, including economic and food insecurity.

Download the brief to read more.

Better Work Haiti: 23rd Biannual Compliance Synthesis Report

Long before COVID-19, Haiti faced enormous economic hardship. Growth forecasts for 2020 were around -0.4% after a drop of 1.2% recorded during the year 2019. The recent series of socio-political crises and associated instability in the country has exacerbated the already fragile Haitian economy. Despite all difficulties and challenges, the garment sector showed strong resilience and the ability to adapt to the changing environment to continue operating.

This report presents an overview of the non-compliance findings in 27 participating factories, which were assessed at least twice before November 2021 in collaboration with the support of inspectors from the Ministry of Labor. Read more.

In-factory capacity building activities

Better Work Haiti training focuses on building the capacity of the factories’ management representatives and workers to have the appropriate knowledge to address compliance and workplace issues. Most of the training is in relation to addressing issues uncovered by assessment findings and following through with recommendations by BWH Enterprise Advisory.

During the reporting period, 50 training sessions were offered to factories in Port-au-Prince, Caracol and Ouanaminthe. In an overview, the following charts provide a summary of the trainings offered by Better Work Haiti during 2021.

“"The material support and logistical support provided by Better Work Haiti to the Confederation of Haitian Workers (CTH) and Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers (CTSP) was instrumental in helping the unions in the fight to prevent the spread of COVID 19 among textile workers.”

Mr. Yvel Admettre,
General Secretary of Confederation of Public and Private
Key Stakeholder Webinars in 2021
Expanding capacity building activities to other key constituents


April 28th

The 2021 World Day for Safety and Health at Work focused on strategies to strengthen national OSH systems to build resilience, in order to face crises now and in the future, drawing on lessons learned from the world of work.

Better Work gathered stakeholders and key actors of the garment industry to discuss key measures, actions and issues to protect the safety and health of workers, particularly in the textile sector, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Law 3/8 and its implications for working conditions

September 28th

Most questions on the relationship between employees and employers find an answer in Haiti’s Labor Code. However, the law on the organization and regulation of work over the 24-hour period divided into three eight-hour blocks, called Law 3/8, published in September of 2017, changes certain data on the way data on working schedule/hours and related topics such as break time, wages, overtime understood and calculated but also the opinion of some stakeholders.

Better Work Haiti held a seminar to strengthen stakeholders’ understanding of the national legislation on working hours, including Law 3/8.

Introduction to the Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No.206

On December 9th, 2021, 28 participants among the tripartite constituents were introduced to the ILO Convention 190/R206 by a webinar session presented by Better Work Haiti in collaboration with a specialist from ILO-NORMS Costa-Rica. The ILO Convention 190 is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. The Convention was adopted in June 2019 by the International Labor Conference of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and entered into force on 25 June 2021.

This webinar was part of the activities of the awareness campaign against gender-based violence. It contributed to the ILO’s effort in the global campaign to support the discussion towards the purpose of the ratification of this C190/R206 with the government and local political decision-makers.

More content are available to lean more:

- IFC to support Haiti in revamping the garment sector
- Haiti will invest in productive infrastructure with IDB’s support
- US increases annual limit for duty-free apparel from Haiti
- Better Work makes positive strides despite pandemic
- Better Work and COVID-19
- Création d’opportunités d’investissement dans le secteur textile haitien
Better Work – a collaboration between the United Nation’s International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group - brings together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses.

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Swiss State Secretariat for Economics Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
The Government of Australia
Represented by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
The US Department of Labor

Funding is also provided by DFID, Government of France, Government of Canada, Irish Aid, GMAC, Royal Government of Cambodia and private sector donors, including The Walt Disney Company, Levi Strauss Foundation, Gap Inc. and FUNG (1937) Management Ltd

Funding is provided by the United States Department of Labor under Cooperative Agreement No. IL21187. This document does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the US Department of Labor, nor does the reference to trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government. 100% of the total cost of the project or program is funded by federal funds, for a total of $1.3 million.