

STATEMENT FROM THE PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF BETTER FACTORIES CAMBODIA ON ITS 52nd MEETING on 16 December 2021

On 16 December 2021, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) of the ILO Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) programme met face-to-face. The PAC comprises of representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia (the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Commerce), employers (Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia – GMAC) and workers (representatives from different confederations and federations).

This year, Better Factories Cambodia programme and its constituents celebrate the 20th anniversary of the programme. The programme links trade with labour standards in the garment, footwear and travel goods and bag sector in Cambodia in order to promote compliance with, and effective enforcement of, existing labour law and internationally recognized core labour standards. The programme's approach includes from cultivating social dialogue through worker-management committees, to offering factories tailored advisory services to help them solve their own labour law challenges or using public reporting to spur improvements in factory working conditions and workplace environment across the industry.

1. We, the PAC members of Better Factories Cambodia programme, would like to acknowledge the joint efforts and achievements made together with Better Factories Cambodia in 2021 in jointly supporting the garment sector during the continued COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to our collaboration with the industry stakeholders and the Better Factories Cambodia programme for further improvements in the industry, and congratulate the programme on its 20th anniversary. Together, we have achieved significant improvements in the industry over the last two decades.
2. As the pandemic is not over yet, we acknowledge that collaboration is crucial and we commit to work together on the recovery to address consequences from the pandemic at enterprise and industry level – and commit to solve issues at enterprise level through social dialogue. We also commit to work together to sustain the working condition compliance levels in the sector.
3. We recognize that we together are responsible for improving the competitiveness of the industry. We will therefore continue engaging with the industry stakeholders, including manufacturers and buyers to work for an industry where improvements are continued to be made. Areas we will jointly work on in the next years will include promotion of digital wages in the industry – recognizing also that enough time should be given for awareness raising; prevention of gender based violence and harassment in factories, and work on Industry 4.0 readiness of the Cambodian garment industry. We also recognize the importance of continued efforts in improving occupational safety and health in the industry. For its next strategic phase, we recommend Better Factories Cambodia to focus more on skills development in the industry.
4. As we start working more with the travel goods and bag factories, we commit to contribute to ensuring labour rights and working conditions are also met in this sector. **We call for all travel goods and bag factories in Cambodia to register with Better Factories Cambodia under the mandatory assessment programme (Inter-ministerial Prakas # 364/20).**
5. We would like to emphasize continued commitment towards working in partnership with the ILO that has during the last decades, transformed the Cambodian garment industry including working conditions, and lives of millions of Cambodian garment workers and their families.