

STATEMENT FROM THE PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF BETTER FACTORIES CAMBODIA ON THE RELEASE OF THE 34TH ANNUAL SYNTHESIS REPORT ON WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE CAMBODIAN GARMENT SECTOR

1. On December 15th 2017, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) of the ILO Better Factories Cambodia programme met in Phnom Penh to review the 34th Compliance Synthesis Report on Working Conditions in Cambodia's Garment Industry. The PAC comprises representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia (the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Commerce), employers (Garment Manufacturers Organisation of Cambodia – GMAC) and workers (representatives from different confederations and federations).
2. We, members of the PAC, welcome the release of this annual report which presents compliance information based on the findings of 395 factory assessments conducted by Better Factories Cambodia between 1 May 2016 and 30 April 2017.
3. We are encouraged by the fact that the data in this report indicates a sharp reduction on the incidence of underage workers in the sector and important improvements on public reporting issues, as is demonstrated by the increased proportion of factories in compliance with all 21 critical issues as well as the overall reduction of number of violations with the 21 critical issues.
4. We also note that other areas require renewed attention, such as emergency preparedness, and other occupational safety and health issues such as chemical handling and personal protection. We encourage Better Factories Cambodia to continue its efforts in supporting factories to develop better management systems to uphold strong policies and practices around occupational safety and health and human resource management. This is important to continue to drive sustainable improvement in the sector.
5. We recognise the importance and value of sector wide initiatives aimed at improving compliance with labour standards, such as the collaboration around child labour and Better Factories Cambodia's public reporting. These initiatives have demonstrably improved compliance with labour standards, improved working conditions for workers and help the sector increase its reputation. The PAC would welcome increased collaboration, including around Zero Tolerance issues which is necessary to effectively deal with instances of serious violations in the workplace.
6. We recognize that each PAC member has concrete responsibilities for making sector wide improvement happens. This includes:
 - a. GMAC by advocating for and supporting its members in creating a culture of compliance.
 - b. Royal Government of Cambodia by making effective use of numerous enforcement mechanisms to uphold the provisions in the labour law, especially in factories with low compliance.
 - c. An active and constructive role of unions in increasing factory compliance with labour standards. For instance, local unions can work together with factory managers and the ministry of labour



to address the areas that need improvements. Mature industrial relations are of key importance to make this happen.

This is of key importance for the future strategy of the sector, the lives of hundreds of thousands of Cambodian garment workers, their family members and the development of the country as a whole.

7. The PAC calls upon the buyers and international community to continue to support the industry and BFC for further economic, industrial and social development of Cambodia and its workers.
7. The PAC also encourages brands to play a more transparent role in ensuring workplace compliance and in reporting publicly on their supplier list and sourcing patterns in countries.
8. We re-affirm our full support for the Better Factories Cambodia programme and call upon all stakeholders to re-double their efforts to further improve working conditions in the Cambodian garment industry.

Phnom Penh, 15 December 2017