

 **PRESS RELEASE**

*Dhaka, 8 May 2017*

**Workplace safety in Bangladesh garment industry significantly improved after 4 years of Accord agreement**

***Four years on, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh takes stock of significant improvements and unresolved safety hazards at garment factories in Bangladesh. Entering the final year of the current agreement, a direct financial support program is launched to help factories complete remediation.***

In May 2013, the Accord set out to develop a safety program to make Ready-Made Garment (RMG) factories in Bangladesh safe. The legally binding agreement has been signed by more than 220 global garment brands and retailers and 2 global unions and their national RMG affiliates.

More than 1800 factories have received an initial fire, electrical and structural safety inspection where over 100,000 safety hazards were identified. The Accord has worked tirelessly with the factory owners and its company and labour signatories to remediate these safety hazards and empower workers to address safety concerns through factory level Safety Committees and an independent safety complaints mechanism.

*“The unprecedented model of independent inspections, collective brand leverage, public disclosure, accountability and bi-partite governance has proven to be successful”, says Rob Wayss, Executive Director and Acting Chief Safety Inspector of the Accord. “The achievements are laudable with 65 fully remediated factories and more than 400 factories which have completed more than 90% of required safety remediation. We must remain vigilant to drive remediation to completion as we still see too many factories with major safety concerns unfixed.”*

As the Accord enters the 5<sup>th</sup> year, the signatory companies are committed to support the factories they source from in their remediation. The Accord is launching a direct financial support program for covered factories that have no current business relationships with Accord signatory companies.

*“We need to ensure that major and costly safety measures, such as protected fire exits, fire alarm and fire protection systems and structural retrofitting work can and will be remediated urgently”, says Joris Oldenzijl, Head of Public Affairs at the Netherlands office of the Accord. “The Accord Remediation Fund will provide qualified suppliers with access to direct funding for 50% of remaining remediation costs for covered factories with no current Accord business. This direct support is limited and will be implemented on a first come first serve basis.”*

As the Accord approaches its final year, a major focus will be to establish the Safety Committee and Safety Training program at as many factories as possible and effectively address safety complaints filed at factory Safety Committees or through the Accord safety complaints mechanism.

Looking beyond 2018, apparel brands and retailers and unions are in discussions on how to best ensure that safety regulations and safety rights in the RMG industry in Bangladesh are adequately upheld and further developed.

**KEY MILESTONES**

- Remediation is close to completion at more than 400 Accord factories which have completed more than 90% of the remediation.
- 65 Factories have completed all remediation from initial inspections.
- Over 300 joint labour-management Safety Committees are being trained and equipped to monitor factory safety on a day-to-day basis.
- The independent and credible Accord safety complaints mechanism has resolved more than 90 safety complaints from workers and their representatives.



For more information, please contact:

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