



Summary Report - Steering Committee Meetings

Monday 7th April – Thursday 10th April, 2014

Dhaka, Bangladesh

The Steering Committee of the Accord are committed to four face-to-face quarterly meetings annually with at least one of these in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Steering Committee were in Bangladesh the week of 7th April 2014 for their latest quarterly meeting and during the week met with signatories and various stakeholders.

This report is a record of those meetings and outlines the key topics of discussion

Attendees:

Steering Committee

Brand Representatives: Andy York (N. Brown Group), Aleix Gonzalez (Inditex), Lisa Fairclough (Debenhams), Philip Chamberlain (C&A), Jenny Fagerlin (H&M)

Labour Representatives: Christy Hoffman (Uni Global Union), (alternative; Ben Vanpeperstraete for Alke Boessiger Uni Global Union), Jenny Holdcroft (IndustriALL), Monika Kemperle (IndustriALL), Roy Ramesh (IndustriALL), Amirul Haque Amin (NGWF)

Witness Signatory: Scott Nova (Workers Rights Consortium)

Accord

Accord Executive Directors: Brad Loewen, Alan Roberts, Rob Wayss

Accord Staff: Tatiana Delany

Apologies:

Accord Steering Committee

Melanie Steiner (PVH), Dan Rees (ILO), Alke Boessiger (Uni Global Union)

Agenda

Time	Mon. 7 th April	Tues. 8 th April	Wed. 9 th April	Thurs. 10 th April
09:00 – 11:00	Meeting with IBC Federations at Hotel Rigs Inn (Chair; Rob Wayss)	Meeting with Ambassadors & High Commissioners Radisson Hotel (Chairs; Rob Wayss & Philip Chamberlain)		Steering Committee quarterly meeting
11:00 – 13:00	Buyers Forum Meeting at H & M Gulshan Office	Meeting with BGMEA (Chair; Md. Atiqul Islam, President BGMEA)	Steering Committee representatives & Executive Director Bangladesh Operations at Ministry for Labour	Steering Committee quarterly meeting
13:00 – 14:30	Meeting with ILO at ILO Gulshan Office (Chair; Srinivas Reddy)	Lunch with BGMEA		Steering Committee quarterly meeting
15:00 – 17:00	Meeting with Accord Engineers, Arup, WSP, Woosun & Hughes Associates at Rigs Inn (Chair; Brad Loewen)	Executive Director Bangladesh Operations & Chief Safety Inspector at PVH supplier summit	<i>Dinner with the Advisory Board of the Accord</i>	Steering Committee quarterly meeting

Meeting Summaries

Meeting with IBC Federations:

The Steering Committee met with the IBC Federations to engage their continuing support in communicating with workers about the Accord with specific emphasis on communication surrounding 'critical findings' cases where temporary or partial closure of a factory building is necessary to carry out immediate remedial action to ensure the safety of workers in the building.

Key Messages & Talking Points:

- Need to identify IBC members, either union members or solidarity members who can accompany and observe inspections. Understood that no union member can be punished for doing so & the Accord would be obligated to intervene if this was the case.
- Evident need to identify alternatives to accompany inspections if no union member or solidarity member is present

Buyers Forum Meeting

The Steering Committee attended the monthly buyer's forum hosted by H&M and participated in a Q&A session on the Accord. Rob Wayss, Executive Director of Bangladesh Operations and Brad Loewen, Chief Safety Inspector updated the brands on the Accord's latest progress.

Key Messages & Talking Points:

- Roles and responsibilities of the lead brand in the inspection and remediation process
- Fair distribution and nomination of lead brand, with specific discussion on supporting brands if they are lead in a tier 3 factory with low leverage
- Financing remediation; specific request from brands to investigate ways in which funding for remediation can legally be brought into Bangladesh and ensure the funds only go to remediation

Meeting with ILO

The Steering Committee met with the ILO to discuss ongoing co-ordination between the Accord and the National Action Plan

Key Messages & Talking Points:

- Need for ownership from BGMEA & BKMEA especially regarding communications issues surrounding 'critical cases'
- Arup have been hired for NAP/BUET inspections to ensure they meet Accord standards & co-ordinate for same format for inspections and reports
- Importance of national capacity development
- Potential options for remediation financing discussed
- ILO continue to push Bangladesh government for publication of legislation regarding OHS committees
- Agreement that there will not be duplication of inspections (Alliance/NAP/Accord), but awaiting clear communication from Alliance regarding remediation
- Challenges surrounding worker communication throughout inspection process

Meeting with Accord engineers

The Steering Committee also met with the engineering firms carrying out structural, electrical and fire inspections for the Accord; Hughes Associates, Woosun, Arup and WSP. All four engineering firms presented their inspection protocols, inspection methodologies and most common findings finishing with a Q&A session.

Key Messages & Talking Points:

- Discussion on protocols on opening and closing meetings
- Structural inspection methodologies using Rana Plaza signals e.g. buildings with additional floors, cantilevers and quality of concrete
- Prior structural surveys in the Bangladesh garment industry are not comparable with Accord structural inspections because there is a much greater wealth of data and experience to support findings today
- Common electrical findings include arc flash and hotspots (loose connections and overloading), sub-standard panels & unprotected wire joints, all high risk but relatively easy to fix
- Potential for misinterpretation of inspection results

- Discussion about worker participation and involvement in the inspection process and awareness by the engineering firms of this central element of the Accord

Meeting with Ambassadors and High Commissioners

The Steering Committee facilitated a breakfast meeting with over 40 representatives from 13 different missions at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dhaka. The Accord provided an update on progress and plans to-date and led a discussion about how their international effort can support the ongoing work of the Accord.

Key Messages & Talking Points:

- Clarification that the Accord covers the RMG sector only, e.g. footwear and household textiles are not covered
- Accord/Alliance co-operation & commitment to not duplicate inspections
- If a factory is found to be sub-contracted for an Accord brand then it is covered by the Accord.
- Discussion on the prioritisation of factory inspections e.g. starting with shared buildings
- Issue & challenge of re-locating a factory and workers vs. remediation of building
- Challenge of managing payment for remediation if the factory is a rented building
- Update on Accord media strategy for Rana Plaza & the 15th May Accord anniversary
- Discussion on how the international community present can support the Accord;
 - Push the Bangladesh government for publication of (BLA 2013 amendments) implementation rules of the health and safety rules & labour law
 - Support the Bangladesh government in their commitment of duty free entry of fire doors and sprinkler system components & other equipment
 - Need for directive or regulation by government in order to bring remediation finances legally into the country e.g. loan (and getting the finances back out)

Meeting with BGMEA

The Accord Steering Committee met with the BGMEA to discuss Accord progress followed by a Q&A session and lunch.

Key Messages & Talking Points:

- Increased communication needed to factory managers/owners on the Accord
- Challenges surrounding worker communication throughout inspection process, with specific concern over 'critical findings' cases & how to prevent unrest
- CSI explains why the Accord building standard involves sprinkler requirements in buildings over 23 metres (75ft)
- Discussion about remediation timelines and Accord tolerance on issues where remedial actions may take longer than recommended
- Clarification of how fire doors work and ability to lock them to prevent outside entry
- Request that BGMEA support the Accord in accessing low cost funding options for remediation actions
- Update on the Accord worker participation program and training program
- BGMEA requests that Accord brands exclude common safety issues from their social compliance audits to prevent duplication and confusion
- Clarification that Accord and Alliance will not be duplicating inspections