

**SOCIAL COMPLIANCE**



**round table**  
গোল টেবিল বৈঠক

Third Bangladesh Round Table on Social Compliance  
9<sup>th</sup> August 2010  
Dhaka Sheraton Hotel

Documentation



Conveyor



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BSCI is a leading system aiming at improving social compliance in the supply chain of companies sourcing globally. Created in 2003 and with headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, the BSCI provides its member companies a uniform methodology and tools to involve their suppliers in a continuous development oriented process. In addition to this, the dialogue with stakeholders on different levels plays an important role in BSCI's approach.

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LIFT Standards e.K. is a consultancy firm providing advisory service on social compliance with audit, remediation and enhanced productivity service to improve the working conditions.

LIFT Standards has been established 2001 in Dhaka and has a proven record to intensively worked in Bangladesh with suppliers and buyers in the interest of improved working conditions.

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## I. Participants List

Name	Organisation	Position
Eng. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain	Ministry of Labour and Employment	Minister
Adv. Lutful Hai	Parliament of Bangladesh	Chairman, Standing Committee on the Ministry of Commerce
Sarah Begum Kabori	Parliament of Bangladesh	Member of Parliament
Md. Moinur Rahman Chowdhury	Police, Dhaka Range	Deputy Inspector General of Police
Mokhelesur Rahman	Police, Dhaka Range	Deputy Inspector General of Police
Dr. Dietrich Kobschull	BSCI	Representative in India
Aslam Sunny	BKMEA	Vice President
Md. Shahidullah Azim	BGMEA	Director
Adnan Nafis	BGMEA	Deputy Secretary, RDTI Cell
Md. Emdad-ul Haque	BGMEA	Deputy Secretary, Social Compliance Cell
Basirun Nabi Khan	Hennes & Mauritz AB	Regional CSR Manager
Neelanjana Khan	Hennes & Mauritz AB	CSR Project Coordinator
Bibekananda Majumder	groupe carrefour Global Sourcing	Production Manager
Md. Nazrul Islam	MQ Retail AB, Dhaka	Country Manager
Zia Ahad	PVH	Regional Leader
Abu Arshad Khondoker	Wal-Mart, Global Procurement	Supplier Development Manager
Alam Zahangir	Wal-Mart, Global Procurement	Supplier Development Specialist
Sajedur Siraj	Elite Group	Deputy Managing Director
Zaman	Elite Group	Executive Director
Ahmed Ullah	Han Apparels Ltd.	Director
Chowdhury A-A Quaseed	Ananta Apparels Ltd.	Associate Director HR, Compliance & Welfare
Fazlul Haque	Sterling Creation Ltd.	Managing Director
Debasish Kumar Saha	Fakir Apparels Ltd.	General Manager
Jahangir Alam	Knit Concern Ltd.	Executive Director
Aminur Rahman	French Fashions Knitting Ltd.	General Manager
Md. Quaimul Islam	Monno Group of Industries	Manager-Compliance
Stefan Frowein	European Union Delegation to Bangladesh	Ambassador Head of Delegation
Zillul Hye Razi	European Union Delegation to Bangladesh	Trade Advisor

Damian Harzheim	German Embassy	Intern
Md. Manjur Morshed	GTZ	Senior Social Compliance Advisor
Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed	BILS	Assistant Executive Director
A.K.M. Nasim		Advocate & Legal Advisor
Md. Borkot Ali	BLAST	AD Legal
Roy Ramesh Chandra	Jatiya Sramik League (JSL), United Federation of Garments Workers	General Secretary
Dr. Wajed-ul Islam Khan	Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra (BTUC)	General Secretary
Lutfar Rahman	BTUC	Vice-President
Amirul Haque	National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF)	General Secretary
Zafrul Hasan	Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal-BJSD	General Secretary
Shamima Nasreen	Shadhin Bangla Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation (SBGSKF)	President
<hr/>		
Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad	Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation	Chairman
<hr/>		
Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul		Moderator
	Boishakhi Television	Editor-in-Chief & CEO
Christian von Mitzlaff	LIFT Standards e.K.	Organizer and Facilitator
Farhana von Mitzlaff	LIFT Standards e.K.	Organizer Team, Photographer, Compliance Consultant

## II. Reasoning of the Round Table

Following the Formation of the Round Table on Social Compliance in March 2010 the third Round Table held on August 9, 2010 at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel to continue the dialogue from directly involved stakeholders on labour related aspects in the garment industry.

The Round Table dialogue aims to support the understanding among the participants on sector-level and thus contribute to practical approaches to the implementation of Social Compliance in the industry. In this process it is expected that an ownership emerges of a 'Bangladesh – based consultation process'.

Participants are this Round Table are the business partners, associations, trade unions, NGO's, academia, Government representatives, law enforcement agency and Members of Parliament.



The first Round Table articulated the interest to form a dialogue platform, meet regularly and gave themselves a set of dialogue rules enabling frank discussion in a constructive and respectful manner.<sup>1</sup> The second Round Table addressed the topic "Communication and collaboration among stakeholders in times of labour unrest" to discuss escalating mechanism in labour conflicts and possible de-escalating strategies.

The third Round Table emphasised on the role and responsibility each stakeholder carries in particular in a period of violent labour unrest, which repeatedly happened in Bangladesh during the first half of 2010.

The Business of Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI) sponsors the stakeholder dialogue on Social Compliance and LIFT Standards e.K. is the organiser and facilitator.

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<sup>1</sup> See documentation Formation Bangladesh Round Table 7. Oct. 2009, page 16

### III. Agenda

**“Strategies to minimise labour unrest in the RMG sector: The role and responsibilities of institutions and other stakeholders.”**

held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2010, 9:00 –14:00 p.m.  
at Palash Room, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, followed by a lunch.

#### Programme

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- 09:00 Registration
- 09:15 Opening part with addresses by key participants,  
Notes by Economist Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad
- 10:20 Address by Chief Guest Hon’ble Minister of Labour & Employment  
Eng. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain
- 10:45 Tea break
- 11:00 Working part: the path towards social compliance:  
• Role and responsibilities of institutions and other stakeholders  
• Other issues raised by the participants
- 14:00 Closing and lunch invitation
-



## IV. Address during the opening session

For the opening session the press has been invited and participants from each stakeholder group has been asked to briefly address the Round Table on the question of implementation of Social Compliance in Bangladesh. Which relevance do they see in this initiative and how to contribute towards the objective of Social Compliance in Bangladesh.

On behalf of the stakeholder group the following person addressed the Round Table (in chronological order) after a brief welcome by the Organizer and introduction to the local moderator Mr. Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul:

1. Dr. Wajed-ul Islam Khan, BTUC
2. Mr. Abu Arshad Khondoker, Walmart
3. Mr. Ahmed Ullah, Han Apparels
4. Mr. Alam Sunny, BKMEA
5. Mr. Md. Shahidullah Azim, BGMEA
6. Dr. Stefan Frowein, EU Commission
7. Dr. Dietrich Kebschull, BSCI (India)
8. Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Polli Kormo Somobay Foundation
9. Adv. Lutful Hai, Chairman of Parliament Standing Committee
10. Hon'ble Minister for Labour & Employment, Eng. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain

### Address by Dr. Wajed-ul Khan, (BTUC)

Bangladesh Trade Union Centre  
(BTUC)

Thank you and good morning. I welcome this Round Table meeting and particularly the very timely agenda has been taken to discuss today the in the RMG sector about the unrest situation. The minister is well informed and updated about the situation. However from our side we want to state that the origin of the unrest needs to find out. Origin is that the workers are low paid and their right of trade union does not exists. There are two major points why the workers are not happy with the situation. The low wage was so much low that after





12 years in the year 2006 it was fixed at 1.662 Taka gross salary which is about 22 Dollars only a month. It was so poor that the workers can not live with this money even they can not feed themselves even for one time. This is the main reason and therefore the wage increase is one of the major issue of the workers. Here you find also why the situation went beyond control. To my knowledge everything is happening very spontaneous. We the Trade Unions do not believe in this unruling situation and what is shown in the media. But we can strongly say that the workers are not involved with this sort of activities. It is true that the workers are coming out very spontaneously. It was beyond control in particularly of any Trade Union organization. As the workers are not allowed to form Trade Unions, workers are not united. So if the workers would be elected to form Trade Unions, I think and believe that many problems could be solved across the table. So that is a big problem and it is also known to our minister and he very much affirmatively pointed out in the parliament and openly states that the workers should be allowed to form the Trade Union. It is true, that the wage, which has been declared or proposed this time by the Minimum Wage Board is not up to the expectations. But it is much better than the previous wage structure declared by the previous two times (1994 and 2006). In comparison this wage is better but it's not up to the expectation of the workers and their minimum living standard, which cannot be maintained. Therefore we have proposed that beside the wage structure, the Social Safety Net should be existent. The ration system which is given to the Police, the Bangladesh Riffle, the Army should be introduced into the garment sector. Rations like rice and all other essential commodities and also another important is housing system, which is very expensive in Dhaka. Government in collaboration with the employers have already committed to set up dormitory system with low interest rate. If the housing system could go with the dormitory system, the low cost housing provided for the garments workers would be one of a social protection.

Beside this, Health Care which is very costly and low price with full health care for the garments worker provided by the employers is important. If this Social Protection can be taken care, then the wealth can be protected and the worker can live with some good situation. Thank you very much.

### **Mr. Abu Arshad Khondoker, Walmart**

Good morning. We think this Round Table is mostly important for all the stakeholders to come up with different solutions. From the side of Walmart we like to inform, what we are doing with our suppliers beside ethical sourcing audit. Our 'Supplier Development Program' is a long term joint project between our suppliers and Walmart. Through this project we develop policy procedure, compliance vision policy, a partnership relationship policy, internal audit team, capacity building of the supplier conference team members and finally the suppliers become self-manage enabling to handle their factory independently. Regarding the mid level management training, we are already conducting mid-level management training with our suppliers focusing on the workers basic rights and responsibilities, giving mechanism, work

ethics verbal abuse and workplace harassment, sustainability and energy efficiency, workplace clean and the environmental health and safety. Beside that we have one program that is *Orange School Plus*, where we try to analyze the root cause of the



high risk issue in the factory. Root causes of the high risk issues will come up in the future audits. Following activities are to educate the suppliers and factories on the root cause report findings involving the senior management on a commitment level.

Our approach is to work supplier based in a partnership, where we want that suppliers should become capable of handling their industries. The mid level management need to be really trained how to handle their factories. Regarding the Workers Participation Committee and the workers representation, we feel this is really important. Thank you

### **Mr. Ahmed Ullah – Han Apparels Ltd.**

Ahmed ullah- bismillahir rahmanir rahim. Hon'ble Minister and my distinguished guests and my colleagues in the garments sector. At first I gives thanks to LIFT Standards, for organize this kind of Round Table meeting at this moment. Everybody knows that we are passing a very crucial time in the garments and textile sector with a very unpredicted future we have now.

First, we know that the problem is between garments owners and workers. But we have forgotten that some other agencies are involved in this matter that is buyers or buyers' nominated agents and some financial institutions. So at this moment we have to make all this three groups to understand that they have to sacrifice for the garments. Like the buyers they have to increase the CM or the cost. With the lowest CM at the moment they {buyers} are earning lot. And most dangerous is the middle man, which is the agent. From my personal experience, I know sometimes they are earning 20-25 percent whereas they are only allowed 5%. So I'm requesting the concern authority, the government, to check this matter.

2<sup>nd</sup>, the financial institution: They have to reduce their interest rate and their service charges. I know this 3000 Taka declared wages is not enough but how can the garments owners can give the money? My personal prediction that within very short time 50-60% factories will close.

Remember the *indigo farming* - a long time back in the colonial time called "nill chash" - we called it *the blue*: The owners and the workers, we doing the same thing. We are cultivating the *indigo* and we are as the *indigo farmers*. And we know how we were affected in that time. And the same thing is happening now. We have

to realize now that after 30 years from this sector, what benefit we get. In my opinion we affected the same way like that time when we cultivated the *indigo*. Thank you very much.

*Bulbul*- thank you Mr. Ahmed Ullah. Now I request another trade union representative Mr. Roy Ramesh Chandra, General Secretary - Jatio Shromik League (United Federation of Garments Workers)

Thank you Mr. Moderator. To begin with, I would like to differ first with the Organizer – “*The violent unrest the garments sector.*” This not the truth.

As you know the Wage Board has recommend a new wage structure. Out of 4.700 factories only 4 or 5 factories there are some unrest. Out of 3.5 million workers, all together it might be only two to three thousand workers come on the streets. Even if we would compare it with Germany or in any western world, this demonstration is insignificant. I therefore differ from the word “violent unrest”.

Number 2: The industry is facing an uneven competition with the global scenario. But as on of our employers said that 50 percent of the industry will decrease, but so far we understand with the global scenario, the industry will increase. Because these commodities, this clothes and textiles it is very important, nowadays in China or Vietnam, the buyers are now moving towards Bangladesh. And there are various reasons for that.



As the moderator – a professional journalist - wants to learn something from this Round Table, I like to share a personal observation: It is the first time, the occurrence happened in diplomatic zone, in Gulshan area. In normal practice in our country, even in any political demonstration, there is no demonstration in this Diplomatic Zone. So there is a question why? So there might be some conspiracies to create image crisis of industries of the nation to this incident.

Yes, the wages even the declared wages is not adequate but it is comparatively much more better than the previous one at least on an average 80 percent of wages have been increase which is really remarkable not only in our country but all over the world. And it only was possible for the hard labour of our Hona'ble Minister and the firm determination and commitment of our Prime Minister, daughter of the father of the nation Sheikh Hasina to the workers particularly to the women workers in the sector.

Here I like to draw attention of the buyers community: They are telling about the Compliance. In fact this compliance is nothing to respect - it is the existing Labour Law, to respect the international labour standards. If the employers and the industry respect the existing labour law to respect the ILO Convention 87 and 98 with the international labour standards, the issue of Compliance would not have come up.

The buyers need to understand that when they are the talking about social compliance and ethical sourcing, they need to practice ethical buying practice also. They need to raise the price of the commodities as they used to get it from China, Vietnam or some other countries like Brazil, Mexico. Buyers are telling to the industry that we are coming to your country as labour is cheap. *But cheap means how much cheap?* You cannot make profit out of the blood and hunger of these poor workers. You need to come up with the some prices.

As you mentioned the law and order situation in southern labour intensive industry, it is very difficult to tackle the situation through the law and enforcing agencies. Dialogue and compromising attitude is important and that is only possible if we can build a healthy industrial relation that ready to introduce the right to bargain collectively. Employers and workers need to negotiate in a peaceful manner, which is the precondition is to implement ILO Convention 87, the workers' right to organize. Thank you very much.

### **Mr. Aslam Sunny, Vice President, BKMEA**

Hon'ble Minister, Good Morning. All of our guest. I will talk today about Social Compliance. Only one thing I want to request for our factories: How many compliance are we requiring in our country? We face difficulties when we work with different buyers from different countries. Factories need to apply many compliance standards like BSCI, GAP and for other audits. In the presence of our minister I request that all countries should follow one standard of compliance, which would be



more effective and less costly. In case of the European Union I need to comply with BSCI, if I work with Next, I need to comply with another standard and if I work with GAP, I need to follow a third standard. I need one compliance standard for the country which is the Labour Law and ILO Conventions to follow. It is said by everybody that one standard will minimize efforts as one factory have too expenses for several buyers. I request to the Minister and related bodies to have one compliance standard.

No 2: Labour Unrest: what we saw in last few years? Which factory is really compliant?

Factories pay well each month, have doctors and have day care centre. Good factories with the nice glasses in the front and those factories have been affected. But the small factories with real problems are not the target like, not paying well, only for working sub-contract, really labour problems according to our monitoring



through our sales. Actually two of the best factory, which I noticed in Narayanganj when monitored with our minister and BGMEA. One produce for Levis and the other one factory is Liberty. Although Liberty allows Trade Union this factory has been very much affected with thousand and thousands of dollars loss. I requested our labour leader. The factory by itself permitted TU independently from our concept of BGMEA or BKMEA to allow Participate Committee. This factory pays well and have all facilities but nevertheless has this factory been affected. The Metro factory is also a very good factory and among the 300 factories in Narayanganj those two of the best factories suffered.

I am questioning now whether the unrest is linked with the problems of those factories or something else is behind, like Mr. Roy Ramesh Chandra pointed out. I think something happened in behind and against our RMG sector. Thank you.

### **Mr. Shahidullah Azim, Director BGMEA**

Hon'ble Minister, Engineer Khandkerr Mosharraf Hossain, Labour Leaders, Buyers, Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmed, Christian von Mitzlaff, Moderator and participants. Very good morning.

To minimize the labour unrest, the concern party should act responsibly and with liability. We as the manufacturers have our responsibilities with our international commitments, we have liabilities to the workers - because they are the driving force of the industry - and to the banks. As we have created the industry, we know our responsibilities. We create jobs and the whole economy centers on our industry. And here our question is: Have the other parties have responsibilities?

We have to sort out those who benefit out of vandalism and the unrest makers in the RMG sector.

We like to also request to the buyers. Youth know problems we are facing for the wages problem which has already been increase about 80 percent in average? Therefore you have to come up with a good price because you know the total situation of our country. As my friend told he is scared that about 50 percent of our factory will shut down. I'm scared it may be one-third of total factories to shut down as they can not afford the new wages. However we are trying to make them understand to go ahead because we face the global recession. We also face a situation of withdrawn Quota. With the support from the stakeholders, the government, the labour leaders and all parties we can come up. I will



remain brief and will give statistics and other things after this round of address. Thank you.

### **Dr. Stefan Frowein, Ambassador European Union**

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Congratulations that you started so much on time and my apologies for having been late.



I'm very pleased that this Round Table is taking place and I'm very pleased that you invited me to be a part of it at least I'll be there for the opening session and have the chance to say a few words here about the EU's position. EU has always considered core labour standard and decent working conditions as integral to the fundamental Human Rights approach. This is our value system in EU and Core Labour Standards are the part of Human Rights. The European Commission as the competent institution on trade matters, remain active on this issue within the WTO and in corporation with ILO. It is important to see that we see it in this framework. In Bangladesh the EU trade related technical assistance

with the government and non-government actors reflects its emphasis on improving the labour standards which are essential, if development is to be achieved with trade in a sustainable manner. The successive efforts of BSCI and LIFT bringing together the stakeholders on labour right issues is very commendable. I am very pleased to be a part of it and I am very pleased that you do it regularly. These engagements are expected to reduce the tensions within the different sections of the society and allow them to know each other's view in a more congenial atmosphere. This is particularly more relevant considering the current differences in some labour related issues in Bangladesh. LIFT actions are also very relevant and complimentary to what we are doing in Bangladesh bi-laterally and with the ILO. I hope that today's Round Table will pave the way for better understanding of this issues that I have stated. Thank you very much.

### **Dr. Dietrich Kebschull, BSCI Representative in India**

Hon'ble Minister, Ambassador, Ladies and Gentleman. Let me also thank you for the invitation to this meeting, I am very happy to be with you and I am not in a position to give you any wisdom from my country, where I live for more than 23 years in India as we are facing more or less the same problems.



No day passes in my home country Germany where the public is not informed about the miserable situation of workers in so called *developing countries* who are making shoes or garments for the Germans, for the European Union as well as for the United States. Just on last Friday there was a long film in the 1<sup>st</sup> program of the German TV where one company was criticized heavily for getting cheap products from Bangladesh and the German audience had to see among other workers who are working for 25 Euro per months, which is unbelievable for any German's. Working day and night and the film showed for example a kid worker of 9 years, who is badly sick and the parents could not afford to go to the doctor because of lack of money. As this is repeated daily in newspapers and heavily discussed and the consequence is that everybody in the western countries has a lot of hope and maybe also confidence in social labour standards looking for solutions. I think nobody will deny it - only the question is, how to do it. And the NGO's do there level best to heat up the situation with their own stories.



Consequently are many people with good or less good intentions asking for 'pushing through' those standards and if they are not 'pushed through' to campaign for a boycott of these countries.

Ladies and gentleman this is just that what we have to avoid. With no orders following a boycott would mean the situation goes even worse and improvements are not thinkable. BSCI is one of the possibilities to avoid long audits having currently 540 members - the Who is Who of the buyers. These members accept one audit. Speaking about my country India, the minister of Labour in India is thinking about making one standard mandatory for India, which is currently discussed.

I like to say one thing about the labour unrest. Everybody is in favour of Workers Rights, everybody is in favour of paying higher wages. But the point is to remember is the so called 'international competition' or a market economy. If someone is not buying at the lower price, his competitor will do. Therefore we have always to look at the situation with a clear eyesight. How much can we improve the situation and how can we improve the situation without losing the international competitiveness? We are all in favour of ethical business, we all are in favour of social standards and better worker rights. I think we must discuss *how* we can implement it.

## Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad

Honourable Minister, distinguished participants. It's difficult to summarize this round of brief address. I think the relevant issues are all put on the table by the various stakeholders. I will try to summarize in a different way, not *summarizing* what have been said but summarize in a frame work that we should follow.

The first comment refers to the BSCI Representative in India. He said One Standard for India is now being talked about which might become mandatory and that probably would be good for Bangladesh as well. We then may follow this lead and try the same here.

The 1<sup>st</sup> point I like to make is, the main topic is "Strategies to minimize labour unrest in the RMG sector." it is partial - partisan I would say. Perhaps we can call it "Strategies to establish a healthy environment in the RMG sector" for all stakeholders to have responsibilities that will come through. Otherwise the burden seems to be on the workers - the whole burden of compliance on the workers. I suggest that we call it *Establish a healthy environment*.

I like to look back too the last workshop in March. The topic was "Communication and Collaboration". The idea was all parties talk to each other, which will lead to collaboration so that you can create healthy environment. We discussed many of the issues, which have been placed on the table today. This time it is the "Roles and Responsibilities of the Institutions and Stakeholders". Each stakeholder has to understand its role: the Suppliers, the Buyers, the Workers, the Government and the Banks, which has been mentioned and all the others. They must understand *their* responsibilities to do *what?* To establish a healthy environment in the industry to be internationally competitive while at the same time everybody gets his or her the due share. This is the purpose as I see it.

If we try and understand possibilities and communication, we must have a mechanism. Which is this mechanism? Now we have as mechanism the governments intermediates and there are labour leader of various types. We are lacking organized labour representation, which is critically missing.

On the supplier side you have BGMEA and BKMEA, who organize themselves to be



able to articulate their side of the story. But on the workers' side there is no mechanism to articulate their side of the story. There are many workers leader and some of them have just caught up, I don't know how. Somebody declares himself or herself as the *leader*. This is part of the confusion. I have been observing this sector for a long.

The critical issue is to find a way for the workers to be able to come together and have their own representatives who can speak for all of the workers. Its not sufficient to say that one factory has a union. That does not represent the industry. If there is a union, it's good, but there are many other problems and that can not be resolved within one factory. I will strongly suggest, and which is in our constitution, that trade unions are allowed.

I have hard recommends that the workers have to be trained for this. If you look at the industrial history of UK and the West you will see that the trade unions are developed and at one point they became very powerful. Eventually their powers had been cut through mechanism, not by fear, but through mechanism and discussion and someone who has power. There has to be a balance of power - no party shall become too powerful. If the suppliers are too powerful and workers are not, we have a serious problem. On the other hand, if the workers are too powerful than there is a problem. Therefore hast the mechanism to be right, and the mechanism has to be built on *give and take*.

The burden of adjustment in the global context can't be on the poorer countries only, which wouldn't be the right thing to do. I have been opposing it and been



talking about it, nationally and internationally. All the burden can not be on the poor developing countries of adjustment to the international system. Equally can all the burden not be put on the shoulder one party: the buyers, the suppliers and the workers. As long as the workers are not organised, the burden is on them. However there is an improvement recently because of the intervention of the minister and the goodwill of all the parties and the Prime Minister of course: The raise of the minimum wage to Taka 3000.

Although I have heard that some of the factories may not survive but on the other hand you have to be also concerned about the workers to survive. If they won't survive, they can't give the output. Taka 3000 is not nearly enough as the cost of living has gone up. However, I suggest that since it has been increased by almost 100 percent, this is a good increase and that has to be accepted right now. May be you both Mr. Engels Rainer and Ramesh Candra have said that. I think they accepted it and I think it should be accepted in this point of time and in future that can be negotiated again.

On the other side of the compliance story, the work environment, ILO's Decent Work Program, negotiations are ongoing. The ILO has been acting and trying to help the process along as far as I know as well as the EU is also helping. Still a lot of gaps remain in that process. We have to identify those gaps for example in relation to Health. Some of the factories don't have fire extinguishers and not sufficient way out in case of fire. These basic things everybody takes for granted in the western countries but here we still have those to be negotiated. Although those issues shouldn't be something which have to be negotiated on, those should come automatically. It rather should be in the *culture of industrial development*.

To the factory and some are internal to the industry, some are external to the industry, and others are external to the country. here u have bought all the stakeholders who can talk about those which are internal to a particular factory in the RMG industry and outside. Because the government is present, government can look after and then the banks and so on and then the buyers from the international community. If we have good will and if we work within this structure, which I just tried to outline, then I don't think we won't be able to make progress. I'm not saying that we will solve all the problems - it will take time. Referring to the last workshop, I think it was successful in highlighting the problems in terms of the need for communication, so that everybody talks to everybody else. But there has to be a mechanism for all stakeholders to be able to talk to other stakeholders. After the last workshop, there was a cartoon in one of the newspaper, in which the workers were saying: "I can't even reach the owners by going up the ladder, how can I communicate?" That says the basic thing - there has to be a mechanism. This mechanism has to be established. I hope this workshop will help establishing that mechanism so that we can go for work. I will stop here. Thank you.



## **Adv. Lutful Hai, Chairman Standing Committee on Ministry of Commerce**

Thank you very much for inviting me to this conference, to say something about the social compliance. Honourable chief guest the Honourable minister and other special guest, the representative from European countries, India and all the distinguished representatives who came from industries, various organizations, labour front. As you know the readymade garments exports of Bangladesh, it made 12.5 billion in 2008 and 2009 which is 79 percent of our total export and 80 % are less privileged women. The RMG sector is playing a very significant road to empower the less privileged women in our country. This is why the government of Bangladesh is working very hard to improve the labour right situation in RMG industry. Labour right issues are mostly dealt and executed by different departments of different ministries.

Taking to consideration the export earnings, ministry of commerce is engaged in coordinating and thereby facilitating the activities on labour right issues in export oriented RMG sector of the country. The safety labour right situation in RMG is not very well. That is due to some issues specially the minimum wage. There are other reasons as such not payment of salary at due time, fixation of the piece rate, the appointment letter, ID card, weekly holidays, maternity benefits etc. The government and the stakeholders such as BGMEA, BKMEA, NGO and labour leaders are trying to minimize the unrest situation. A crisis management committee by State Minister of Labour and Employment Ministry with representation of concern stakeholders associations and ministry and departments including the law enforcement agencies have been formed in order to address labour unrest situation at the factory level. Crisis Management Committee sits every month provide necessary instructions to BGMEA, BKMEA, concern ministry departments to avoid labour unrest in the garment industry.



Present ladies and gentleman, in order to provide policy guideline for Occupational Health and Safety, labour welfare, improvement of working condition, readymade garments industries, government founded the Social Compliances Forum for RMG. In July 26, 2005, with Commerce Minister as the Chairman and honourable State Minister for Labour and Employment at that time. The decision of the meeting is being implemented by two Task Forces: One on Occupational Safety and another on Labour Welfare in RMG. The Compliance Monitoring Cell under the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB). The Two Task Forces hold together regular meetings. RMG factories attended and make suggestions to stake holders associations to address particular

compliances issues. Ministry of Labour and Employment and the stakeholders regularly collect information on compliances issues with unified format. The two Task Forces, on Labour Welfare in RMG headed by Joint Secretary of Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Task Force on Occupational Safety in RMG headed by the Joint Secretary Development in the Ministry of Housing and Public Works designed responsibility to formulate compliances related work plans for RMG sector and to report on progress of the Work Plan and implementation activities. All related associations, ministry departments etc. are integrated in the Task Forces. Task Force (TF) on Occupational Safety deal with fire related work place safety and enforcement of the countries' building related regulation while the TF on Labour Welfare (compliances on labour rights) according to the country where applicable to both sectors. Task Forces hold regular meetings and make suggestions to address particular compliances issues etc. The Ministry of Home Affairs is working to assure safe working environment and fire safety in RMG factories. To improve the skill of the workers in RMG, the government has already created a fund of Taka 20 crore. The income of which is being utilized to develop workers and management of the factories like in-floor training and motivation. Building Code is mandatory for the factories so that physical infrastructures are built safe. - I will cut short as our Minister has to attend the cabinet meeting.

I like to address to the gentleman Mr. Aslam Sunny on his comment regarding the various compliance standards: The social compliance standard, which has been agreed by all concerned ministries and organizations has to be followed, not other standards to follow in this sector. RMG is a very vital sector with a life or death question of 4 millions workers. It is also the life or death question of our country. We have to put all affords in it and we have to solve the problem through discussion. Thank you very much.

### **Hon'ble Minister Eng. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain**

Respected Chairpersons, BSCI Reprehensive in India, Dr. Kebschull. Special guest Mr. Lutful Hai. Honourable most respected economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman in all respect of our economy and with all of our confidence a authority, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen and specially our friend from embassy from the European Commission, whom I meet at working sessions like this only yesterday.

The subject of today's seminar "strategies to minimize labour unrest in RMG sector. This subject could not have been *more appropriate than anything else than during the present situation*. A lot of this has been generated on this RMG sector. There has been threat of consumers boycott from the EU but also threat from Americans, if the situation is not improved they will consider twice before importing any RMG from Bangladesh if the situation is not tackled.

I am afraid I have a very little time right now to deal with this very important subject, which is very close to our heart. As our representative from EU was mentioning that the labour issue is the main issue. If we historically look into our



economy, we are still in the early stage of our economy with 80 % of our workers in the informal sector. ILO had been dealing always with the organized sector of workers. We are now seriously considering looking into our informal sector. About 80 % of our workforce are outside of the organized sector and even the organized sector which we claim is not also that organized yet as doctor Kholiquzzaman was mentioned, that the supplier side is much more organized as one unit. But on the workers' side, there is nothing. We should look at this historical background that our industrial sector and their organizations have not yet been developed as compared to our western partners. Mr. Kebschull also mentioned that industrial sectors in India is much more organized compared to Bangladesh with at least 100 years ahead of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is relatively a very new country. We are facing this problems and as the labour Minister, I must admit that we are not yet fully organized.

The today's subject reflects the concern of Labour Unrest. There is no deny on the fact that is there is serious labour unrest with much violence like road blockages, bloody situations of brick throwing and you can name it. The most important is that all this factories are situated on the main life-line of our communications and whenever a situation of unrest arises it is the roads which are affected at first. People find it very convenient to come on to the road, take few tires, put the tires on fire and start breaking whatever they find in the road, starting from buses to private cars. In the process, in the name of protecting human rights, these people are breaking the human rights. However labours, as a worker, as a person or as a group of person, have the right to be on the road, but not violating the human rights in all its forms. Our friends of the NGOs are always crying about human rights. *But which kind of human rights?* Pushing these people from a situation where they are working and push them on the road to interfere with other's human rights. I will request the NGOs to refrain from trade union activities. It's not their business at all - not at all *their business*. If there could be any business {activities}, it could be on the welfare side of the families, their education, their health and other social aspects. But for the trade union demands, they are not the appropriate authority and they don't understand it.



As the labour minister, I'm very much concern that in the name of NGOs, involving themselves into the trade union activities, there are serious possibilities of misunderstanding. It needs serious understandings to be established in this sector between the suppliers and the workers – not on the basis partisan but on the basis of partnership. A factory can not run without workers, no matter what sophisticated instruments you have, no instrument has been developed to eliminate human element and it will never be so. People have tried with the robots who can cook, who can drive cars but to eliminate human element of any organized activities is rather very impossible. If we talk about *partnership*, the whole body language changes. If you talking like you are a worker - I as an owner, we are partner in this development. If this attitude is established between the two parties, then the tone of the whole discussion process changes. I will request therefore to let us look into that. Instead of demanding something and forcing the demand, by bricks is not the way to push on the negotiating table. Rather let's discuss on a partnership level as a human being – *I am a human being*.

We from the government side, we are always willing to work as a moderator as Mr. Manzurul Ahsan is doing now. We play the moderator's role because everybody is close to our heart. As the Labour Minister this doesn't necessarily mean, that I'm the target of the suppliers. I won't only look at the interest of the labourers. If the suppliers wouldn't exist, what would be the position of the workers - *nothing*. Therefore we have to look it on a very composite manner. I have passed during recents weeks a very serious time, as Professor Kholiquzzaman mentioned - is it not an easy job at all! I have negotiated many times in my life, not only inside the country but also in the international arena. Never before in my life, I faced such difficult situation to fix a minimum wage of the people the bulk of our employment areas in RMG sector. There is no other industry liable at this present moment in this country. Around 3,5 million people are working in this sector and one simple decision from my side, from our government side, will affect 3 to 4 million people. Believe in me, we have to put and there has been many, especially me spending many, many sleeplessness nights. At the end of my life, if a judgment goes against 3 to 4 million people, *what do I answer to the other world?* So I had to face serious problems and believe, we have put all the consideration available at our hand to fix this minimum wage.

Although I must admit and agree that this is not the most appropriate rate but things can be reviewed; things can be easily reviewed. The minimum wage was first declared in middle of 80s of around 850 Tk. It was then reviewed after 9 years in 1994 to 940 Tk. and after 12 years it has been raised to 1662 Tk. This government considered that the wages in all the sectors, not only in the RMG sector became useless, no longer relevant in our society and in our economy. Consequently have we reviewed 46 sectors. The garment sector is the biggest employer and when we talked to the factory owners, as Mr. Ahmed Ullah told us that he estimates 50-60% factories will close down because of this raise, I was thinking what would happen if

the wage level would be higher than 3000 Tk. It is very true that already it is an increase of more than 100 percent. The apprentices were paid 1.200 Taka only and we increased it to 2.500 Taka and the apprentices are very large in number in the factories. Noticed that the new wages are insufficient, but this is what we could have done, so let us accept it. This is a respectable wage raise given in present situation and as Dr. Wazed was mentioning, that this salary should be protected through other safety nets. We are very seriously considering building dormitories. Our Prime Minister, the father of the nation's daughter, in June 1996, she has earmarked a fund of 200 crore<sup>2</sup> Taka loan for the factory owners to take on only 1% interest and create this dormitory facilities or residence facilities for their workers. We shall not forget that 80 percent of their workers' are coming from rural areas and most of them just pass the age of being a child. They are very young girls and came here and they really work hard with their head down. Those dormitories will help 50 percent of them having a decent place to stay with a minimum cost, then most of their many miseries will be over. We could even talk about much lower salaries because of those and other facilities.

Government is really seriously considering this and I think we can find funds. We will do it and I am very serious to looking for funds to create health facilities nearby the



factory sides at a very reasonable cost. Regarding the food ration, after this cabinet meeting and arriving at my office, I'm going to write and give a official letter to my colleague, the Food Minister, to arrange "organized rationing" in the RMG sector factories. I will personally pursue this.

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<sup>2</sup> 200 crore = 2 billion; approx. 22 million Euro (exchange rate 1 € = 90 Tk.)

Trade union is another issue and unfortunately I think I have to leave now for the cabinet meeting this morning. But this is very, very important topic we are discussing and I wish, I could have been with you for the whole day. Those subjects we should discuss and discuss in a very open mind. About multiple standards we are also discussing about, there is a question about affordability. Our suppliers should be in a position to afford it. We can not push them to do something above their own social income and this topic needs to be dealt with from real aspects. The government is trying our best to provide all the facilities, which will protect the salary of our workers. Not to struggle anymore for accommodation. A girl coming from distance area like Rongpur, coming all the way to down to Dhaka only to find that she has nothing, nobody - not even a place to live in. We are considering this matter very seriously.

One important remaining issue: Our friend Mr. Sunny from BKMEA raised a very critical issue, which standard we should follow? Which type of compliance we are talking about? Everybody has a compliances issue. This is a very true and you have a very strong point. What I am going to do is to set up a committee to review the 2006 Labour Act. The labour act should be comprehensive. All compliance issues will be dealt in the Labour Act. We are taking a little longer to revise while we should take proper time. What I have done, I have published in the newspapers to obtain opinion of everybody. I received something like 1000 suggestions for every clause and we had to we reduced it. After we have formulated our ideas we put it onto the website and obtain views from everyone. Nothing is static; with time goes on things will change. The laws have to be changed. We attempt to do it and if we finish, I think we will be talking about *One Standard*. There are not many serious standards, India is also trying to put. I met the current labour minister and I was the chairman of the International Labour Conference last year so I met all the labour ministers of the world. Ethical buying practice which is very important.

One other very interesting point raise here is the observation that the compliant factories are being attacked. The factory owners who can not even pay the salaries of the workers and even if they pay the salaries, it's always at a very low price. Their factories have never been affected in the disturbance. We have to think that it is not the labourers but some external elements involved in creating this violence. The violence is attributed to not only the workers but also to external agents. The compliant factories should not have been affected, they are given the health facilities, they are paying the salaries within 1<sup>st</sup> week of the month, the women workers have the facilities for their children in the factories, things are well. This is a consideration, I put it on the table and for you to discuss in detail.

What should we do about the industrial police force? Our law enforcement agencies are present today. Our friend from the trade unions have serious reservations, very serious reservations. They think police labour will be created to subdue the workers, punish these workers and beat them up. No, there is a leader from trade union here. He knows far better the issue, which I discussed just before that the



external agent is involved in creating disturbance. The industrial police force will be dedicated force for the industries. They won't do any other work. In absence of this industrial police force, it takes longer to organize police force, bring them from other area to face the crowd on the street. If there is a dedicated force, they can be mobilized within few minutes. This the whole purpose - this should be never misunderstood! I think I could have discussed on this and I would have been much more informative, if I would have time to spend with you a whole day.

I look forward for the solutions you make, the outcome of the discussion with you and hope it comes in a very summary format. If would ask me to read 40 pages or 100 pages report, I won't be able to do that. I am sorry, I must confess I don't have time to do that. But if it comes in a summery form like one page or one and a half page, I think I will be able to act on it. I wish u all the success and apologize for not being able to continue with you. I have two another seminars two attend, and when they invite you as a chief guest, you are always the last speaker and I have developed a practice that I can sleep. You will not even realize that I'm sleeping. Thank you very much, wishes you all the success.

End of Opening Session

- Tea break -



## V. Working session

### Introduction of group tasks – Brainstorming Circuit

The working session will be moderated by Christian von Mitzlaff, who will give us the working instructions how to proceed in this session.

The topic for this 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Table is to discuss on strategies to minimize labour unrest respectively having a healthy industry according to Mr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman's words. I propose to work according the professional groups: buyers, suppliers, business association, trade union, labour activist and experts and government. Each group would get the same question to reflection on:

*“Brainstorming Circuit”*

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What is in your perspective your role and in your manageable interest to enable working conditions, matching with national legal requirements while ensuring a smooth running of this industrial sector?

Which strategy do you have to avoid violent labour conflict / respectively run a de-escalating strategy?

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Other group perspectives'

(contribution of 'visitors')

Any missing elements on the above group's reflection?	What can the 'visiting' participant contribute from his side to the role / function to the above reflection?
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The set-up is a 'brainstorming circuit' and the participants visiting the other group to exchange their reflections. Each group starts with the above first question among them. Which is in your perspective the role you can contribute for 'healthy working conditions' and avoidance of violent unrest?

I'm very happy that the police followed our invitation which is the 1<sup>st</sup> time we thought of having the police participating at the Round Table. The second questions ask you for about an eventual existing (de-escalating) strategy when it evolves to an 'unhealthy situation'.

In the second round each group will be visited and you might contribute of any missing or just to avoid elements and your suggestions on how to support that group function.



Before starting with the group work, the Trade Union Group made remarks by Mr. Ramesh Chandra.

### **Comment from Trade Union on statement from opening session**

I like to make a few remarks regarding the opening session. The question has been raised that the main attacks is on the compliant factories and not on the non-compliant factories. From the trade union point of view it's very difficult to find a real compliant factory in our country. Because of the compliance, particularly the buyers, I will like to knock the buyers group to give more emphasis on the infrastructural part of compliance. Yes, that has improved a lot. But buyers, are not concentrating on the workers' life.

From the trade union it is our clear message to the NGO, to the buyers, to the industry and to the government that NGO are not in the position to represent workers. It is only the trade unions who can represent workers. We are concerned regarding the formation of the industrial police and the honourable minister has recognized it. As there is police administration, I would like to think twice before forming the industrial police because the consequence of this formation may create problems within the police administration that can threaten the workers and can give a bad smell to the global community as the RMG sector is a business with a global supply chain. The issues are related from a factory in Ashulia up to a shopping mall in USA of Walmart - altogether is correlated. Hence, I would request the government to think twice before taking such important decision about the consequences within the industry & outside the country. It is not a matter of joke. Of course within the police administration there might be some intelligence group to find out the problems in these sectors. The formation of an industrial police may give a wrong smell to the global community like a Gestapo process in Germany in World War II. This may hamper the industry as well.

Number one. So the buyers' comments what I see is enhanced capability & capacity of self-assessment. Its a bit of big term I think, because the buyers are giving a different form of code of conduct to the suppliers. I think the buyers should also be trained on how to

make compliance and how to discharge their Corporate Social Responsibilities because always the buyers say everything depends on the markets, but it can not happen. So the buyers should come forward to make sustainable industrial growth because buyers & capital always move towards



cheap labour, country. Thus they are earning a lot at the cost of the hungry, poor, depressed workers. Therefore buyers should maintain a minimum standard when paying the price to suppliers so that the industry can pay living wages to the workers.

Number two, we have seen in our country that if an incident has occurred at an individual factory, some buyers are coming to support the victims just like charity. I think it is not charity it is their responsibility to support the workers from where they are sourcing. Suppose the case of Garib & Garib factory, H&M have come with some support but the best example in our country and all over the world is the Spectrum Sweater disaster. The agreement with B&C and ITGLWF really came forward for a complete compensation procedure. I think BGMEA has in the meanwhile also agreed with that formula. Some other factories are also benefiting from support. My request and my recommendation is that "prevention is better than cure". In the fire incidents, all the buyers should come forward and put all their support, expertise and resources together on a tri-partite basis. The government, the employers and the trade union should work together to prevent such fire incidents rather than coming to support injured or burned workers.

Number three, my recommendation and request is that buyers should come forward to support these workers to form a well-fare fund, which we are advocating. The workers of course will pay an amount each month, the employers have to pay same amount. Our government is earning a lot of foreign currency and shall contribute as well as buyers with only simple 50 cents per piece. Poor victims could get a lot of support from those funds.

Fourth, advocating for the Participation Committee. Before the formation of trade unions ... standards which is absolutely absurd. In fact the buyers are ignoring the trade union rights of the workers because of the Participation Committee is being workers' representative is being nominated by the trade unions. If there are no trade unions how can the Participation Committee be formed? When you are talking about compliance, you have to look at the total spectrum of compliances - not only to the infrastructural basis, not only on the basis of your rate, you have to take in into consideration the human being. Yes, for the suppliers and buyers profit is important, but they need to think that human beings are more important than the profit itself. The humans working in the industry are the base for your business. And in these cases, to form a unified, integrated, concrete code of conduct, we shall involve the ILO to call the meetings on a tripartite basis, the trade union – the suppliers as well as the buyers, to form a common integrated code of conduct which can be followed in each and every factory and for each supplier. The industry should get a bit support to pay more to the workers.

Just another things by the buyers is immoral and unethical: When bargain with the industry the buyers used to say that, "if you don't take order with this lower price, we'll move other countries. That is the natural phenomenon of so called globalize economy. But you need to think that the people, the poor worker who are working for your business for your interest, you have to look at their problems, address their issues. You have to increase the prices to the industry and as well as you have to invest capital for the improvement of the industry in our country so that the industry can raise up to a certain standard which you need to compete internationally. For the buyers the time has come to give more attention to address these issues. The buyers wrote to Prime Minister in January 2010 and requested her to increase the wages. Yes, the government has increased the wages. I will request from the workers side that the buyers should also raise the price paid at the same rate so that our industry can survive. That's all!

## Working group results

### Trade Union

- Decent Work
- Fair living wage
- Trade Union rights/ ILO L.S. and Bangladesh Labour Law
- No industrial police
- Organize the worker
- Build up responsible trade union movement
- Represent workers properly
- Collective bargaining

### Suppliers

- We should agree and implement the revised minimum wage structure within the given time
- Buyer's participation with positive attitude and support as per value and concern
- Participation of power sector authority and others logistic support by the government
- Flat incentive on export value by government
- Awareness of the worker regarding rights at the same time responsibility
- Common code of conduct

### Others, gtz

- To raise awareness on Bangladesh labour laws
- To provide training, workshop
- Strengthen capacity of MOLE inspectors in inspection techniques
- Strengthen capacity of training institutes / PSP's
- Improve industrial relations through dialogue

### Diplomatic Missions

- Contribution of information about ongoing trends
- Linking matching partners
- Reliability
- Sustainability

### Government

- Property → policy → politicians
- Specialized i.e. industrial police
- Proper labour organization / Body
- In times of crises we are missing proper, legal bodies – labour sector to address common workers no coalition – coordinator
- In case police is called into, we want to go there as a specialized unit to solve with minimum damage
- Police prefers not enter industry area (not to intervene)
- Police calls on genuine labour bodies to talk
- Outsider involved
- Waste business to solve (jute)
- A 'Body' to talk, labour body necessary
- Low enforcing attitude of act from inside the employers
- Miscreants influence in the sector problematic
- Training to emphasize on middle management level

## Legal experts and labour activists

- Create awareness among workers regarding their legal rights
- Support trade union to act properly and capably
- Research based contribution support for policy formulation
- Act as catalyst to organize social dialogue
- Legal dispute settlement mechanism in workplace/ factory level:
  - Trade Union
  - Participation committee
  - Labour officer / shop steward
- Formation of permanent tripartite consultation committee and a legally recognised arbitration committee for RMG
- Strengthening Labour inspector system to solve labour dispute

## Buyers

- Align business with compliance
- Enhance capability and capacity for self – assessment (to ensure compliance at factory)
- Encourage functional of worker management dialogue (through participatory committee for E.G.)
- Promote worker management interactions as part of code of conduct / F.O.A. requirement
- Consult and lobby stakeholders to learn and response appropriately
- Intervene in individual factories and engage with stakeholders for resolving issue(s)
- Develop consensus among buyers

## Business Associations

- ❖ Industrial police
- ❖ Unified code of conduct
- ❖ Ethical Buying
- ❖ Productivity
- ❖ Workers awareness, responsibility and rights
- ❖ National crisis management committee; Strengthen zone wise
- ❖ Labour arbitration

## Comments in regard to Buyers' presentation by the Trade Union

- Buyers to form welfare fund including employers, workers, Government (50 cent)
- Advocating participating committee, buyers are ignoring the Participation Committees and that Trade Unions are necessary: "workers are human beings"
- Buyers and unions need come forward for full compensation
- Prevention better than cure
- Not put investment in the infrastructure only
- Unified and concrete CoC
- Tripartite sector wide consultation
- Negotiation, global economy, looking at human being, not only thinking about price
- Appeal: Invest in the community

## Group presentations

### Trade Union

Not exactly missing, as we were advised reviewing the recommended points of the others groups and make comments on the missing points. Regarding the promoting of the workers management interaction, I want to mention that when we call a society civilized, this society don't resolve the disputes through conflict, this society resolves through certain rules. Maintaining certain ethical standard. It depends on how we see ethic, what is our understanding and the buyer's understanding about a congenial re. healthy industrial environment.

When you mentioned that formation or operation of a participation committee will resolve the conflicts in a peaceful way, I will differ a little. A *right* is an issue, which cannot be negotiated. One has to understand it very clearly, that the right of the workers has been ensured through the provision of the constitution and through international labour standard as well as our existing national law. So here we wish to mention that there should be clear understanding among all the stakeholders about what the workers want. One major reason of this industrial dispute is the lack of confidence. The employers don't have confidence on the worker and the workers have no confidence on the employers. If we can minimize this mistrust respective the lack of confidence I believe, that a peaceful environment can be ensured. Here the workers should be given a free environment, where they can exercise their already established rights. Many times I have seen a good number of stakeholders particularly the employers, even some of the government officials, they mention that the formation of Participation Committee might resolve the Trade Union problems or the workers grievances. I fully disagree with this and I request the particular buyers community to understand that we should clearly distinguish what the provision of the participation Committee is and what Trade Union rights are. If we just mingle it, I think we will be wrong. What is my concrete recommendation in this regard is, that when the buyers talking about sound industrial relations, they may kindly emphasize on the formation of Trade Union. The basis of free trade union rights are provided in the ILO Conventions and national laws. Thank you very much.

### Comment by Suppliers

We have the different stakeholder from the RMG sectors. We have to act responsibly with liabilities. Our leaders from the labour side have already pointed out something for the buyers and we have some observations and suggestions for the buyers. As number one, we are facing a terrible problem with the code of conduct. It was already addressed by my friend from BKMEA. We need a unified code of conduct as different customers are coming and asking for different codes of conduct, for which we have to pay a lot of money. Of course in US dollar to different auditors. We have to work out such kind of problem by making one unified code of conduct. Ethical buying: customers always emphasize on the social compliance and ethical environment. We would also like them to come up with ethical buying. They are not only making goods in Bangladesh, but also in Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam and China. Yes, it right that they are coming to Bangladesh for cheap labour but my friend Mr. Ramesh Chandra already told how *cheap*. But if we won't earn - how could we pay, how could we support our workers? We are doing business and business is not charity so we are investing our money for profit, so how far we can give charity?

I would like to request the buyers to try to understand our situation because all of their offices are in Dhaka and could explain to their higher authorities, where the trade is



controlled abroad. There are some customers coming for CSR activities, like Unitex, Zara and Metro, who are contributing for BKMEA, hospital and child care centre in a big way. We also have some other renowned buyers in our country for whom we also seeking support for some CSR activities. This would help us to take a breath, at least for the workers. They could be benefited from the CSR activities such as they can go for medical treatment, healthcare/whatever. It will also be helpful for us because it is a two-way traffic. They are buying, we are selling. It is of mutual interest. If they come up with their CSR activities, it will be helpful for our workers and manufacturers like us. The government too has some responsibilities.

The industrial police, we were talking about couple of years, need to save our property and the factories have now become a national property. It no longer is an individual but a national asset. The industrial police have a role to protect our industries. If we won't get our security, why should we run our business? We have to have our security first, then we will think about our business. Productivity, the word is efficiency. I am very much sorry because to raise this issue with our labour leaders. They are only teaching our workers about their rights, not their responsibility. They only think about their rights. They should also think about their responsibilities. The efficiency level of Bangladesh is only 33% whereas for China and Vietnam 65%. You can see the wages now, it's already improved, the difference of the wages; not like the 33-65% its almost 60-65% like other country like our competitor Vietnam, Cambodia. I hope our labour leaders will teach them as well for their responsibilities.

National crisis management: we already have a national crisis management committee but we should extend more zone wise. If we see any crisis we have to come together to sort out the problem. Therefore we emphasize that the national crisis management committee should be more strong and workable. Regarding the labour arbitration, it is already existing at BGMEA. If workers face any problem for the non-payment or others, they come and appeal to BGMEA, where the committee exists and who will call the related factory and try to sort out the problem. The problem should be sorted out across the table, not throwing bricks, not by vandalism, not by unruly steps. Everything is possible, if we sit across the table and discuss it together. Thank you very much.

Question by Mr. Basirun Khan, H&M

My question is about the presentation: Are we supposed to present or talk what the other groups should do or not to do? At this point weren't we supposed to present what we should do within our area of influence? I need it to get it clear or otherwise we might have been doing totally wrong. If you look at those we have not been pointing finger at any one else, we have been trying to look into our routines, our work area where we can improve as buyers. But when I hear the associating you know, they are ethical buying. That is pointed towards the buyers. Capacity building on the workers for productivity that they have put forwards towards the union, I think that's the 2nd part, isn't it?

Moderator: You are perfectly right.

## **BGMEA**

**Mr. Adnan Nafis**

Okay, first the industrial police: It was raised here but you have to understand that industrial police is not a new concept, its already available in Singapore, in Germany, in USA, Mexico, so this is not a new concept. Industrial police is already there so hopefully



we will be having it. It doesn't mean it's a protection force. The police will be trained to help the workers. The existing police force is already protecting, the industrial police will be more equipped to handle the situation. However there are some concern whether this will be a wrong message to the buyers. I doubt, as it is already existing in Singapur, Mexico and USA. Regarding the productivity, it's our own assessment and We are not blaming anyone for this. It is not our industries fault because our productivity is low, this is the problem with our labours and we have to sort it out, how to train them up. No one is pointing fingers regarding the productivity problem. No certain person can be blamed for this one. This is an overall issue. This is our capacity building task and we have to be a joint effort to improve this one. We are not pointing fingers for the productivity issue. This is our national problem actually. The manufactures have to come forward, the labours leaders have to convince the workers that they can need to be more productive, then they can earn more wages and the buyers can provide some technical assistance. This is the capacity building issue.

For more comments, I would wait for the second part.

**Reply by Mr. Basirun Khan, H&M**

Yes, you have raised the issue of price. I think that is also our first point in business alignment and compliance. I think we also try to go into this area. When we say, "I have 50 suppliers and one brand has 50 suppliers" and 10 are top in terms of compliance and other issues, then we need to find out a way to reward that. Definitely those 10 will be expensive compared to the other competitors. Mr. Ramesh Chandra mentioned that the Participating Committee is a buyers requirement, I cannot agree with that. It is part of the law. I guess, if you look to the next point, we would say, the ultimate is the Freedom of Association. Is a requirement by the law? Why is it there? Either it has to be taken out from the law or we can say, it needs to be strengthened and we talk with the trade union in a different forum. I think they would also say, that this needs to be strengthened. The group here might have a different opinion. Its good to have a different opinion when it comes to the fund for incidents or those kinds of things. Is it really a point to be put on buyers side? I would say this is a point to be put on the association and government's table. There has to be country labour requirement and this should come under Social Security in some way. I strongly believe that it is something for the government not really for the buyers. But buyers can work here as a strong lobbyist, that what I see as buyers function as you mentioned Garib & Garib case.

If anyone is interested to know what H&M is doing for the workers, their families or the most suffered people from Garib & Garib, you are most welcome to come individually and get yourself updated. I don't want to take the time to update here, because it will take another half an hour. So your most welcomed and please come back to me. But I think everyone knows it already, even the people who raised this right now. We have shared with BGMEA, we have shared with Mr. Moinuddin. Everyone knows but still, if you still want to know anything you from BGMEA can come back to me individually.



Ok, what did we do? We tried to look who are the most valuable people. We found 25 children, who are below 18 and we are going to support them till they are 18 and will receive a monthly stipend. Every month they will receive money to continue their education and also that they should feel when they are in the school because, if one of their parents died, they should not drop out from school or for any other hardship. We are also putting our time and money which amounts to 100,000 Taka /year for each of these children. The fund will be in the bank and this money will earn interest as a fixed deposit. When the children will become 18, they can withdraw this money and they can spend this money as per their needs. Thirdly, also we are offering a job to any of the families who need a job in the factories. Fourthly, we are supporting some of the depending parents who do not have a job or who do not have any earning source. In case they are elderly, we are also getting them a one-time contribution of 100,000 Taka. Fifth, the NGO worker giving some psychological counselling. This is the support program, if you want to know more in details, you are most welcomed.

In regard of the unified code: Long time back there was an initiative from BGMEA and an initiative from another forum. We do appreciate those initiatives but please involve us in those procedures. If you talk about unified code, but leaving out the buyers, it doesn't help. If you make a code for the garments sector, you have to include one of the stakeholders, who is a buyer. Previously the buyers were left out. Anything left, to be contributed by my colleague?

#### **Comment by Mr. Zia, PVH**

Nothing significantly, but there are certain things we need to reflect on and I think the position with the trade unions is something that definitely has my empathy - if not everyone else's. No question that the workers aren't paid enough even under the revised minimum wage. And there is a shared general concern, even by the employers' association. But having said that, we have to understand the industry a little bit better. I think this industry depends - like every industry in the world - on competitive advantage. What competitive advantage can Bangladesh offer? Why would buyers come to Bangladesh in the first place?

I think it is right to say that buyers have the freedom to move to different countries. Buyers have the whole world to source from. So, why source from Bangladesh then? The competitive advantage that Bangladesh offers are actually its low wages. Let's face it - that's the reality. Unfortunately, as far as this industry is concerned, if we look at the global scale, this industry always moved to low wage countries. This is the nature of this industry. We can't even argue on this point.

Yes, we have poor infrastructure and we have a severe power situation, a real power shortage. We do not have the advantages a lot of our competitors do. The only scale where we have an advantage is the low wage structure. We have to revolve around this and find a solution that engages us, the stakeholders, including the government in particular.

The other ingredients contributing to production, a sound infrastructure, uninterrupted power supply, have to be in place in order to have a level playing field. Until we realize this, we will continue to be bogged down by low wage - this is the nature of the industry.

From employers, you raised the concern that the wages are too high with people already saying today that 50% factories will go out of business. You even raised the spectre of higher wages and what will happen then? The industry will likely vanish overnight. But here, in my opinion, is a role for other stakeholders, and not only the labour groups.

There is definitely a concern about living wages. But is anyone able to define it? There are as many minds in this room as there are definitions about a living wage, but unfortunately at the end of the day, nobody is satisfied. You could raise wages by 80% or perhaps to 90%, but still there will be people who will remain unsatisfied. It will take us to a whole different debate spectrum but we don't need to get into this because we have to understand where we stand as an industry: The stakeholders have to come together.

One part of the presentation I could not agree is where you talked about active engagement on the buyers' part. To me, this smacks of imperialism. You are asking for outside involvement to tell a sovereign government what to do. It should not work like this! The industry should be able to sustain itself internally. It should not be externally driven. If you take it on a very micro level: going to a market, you are not particularly bothered about many things. You are bothered about the price and you are bothered about the quality of a product. Perhaps you would stretch it a little bit more and say, well I want to go to a decent place. But beyond that, you are not motivated to demand very much. If you take it on a macro level, here are the buyers, sitting around the table today. And, what do they do? They have to compete in the market to get the best possible deal, assuring the quality remains the same - and assuring the same to their customers. Put it in perspective: when you do that it's not just a labour issue, it's not just an industry issue, it's a global issue, it's an industry wide issue. You have to compete on multiple levels. Raising the minimum wages - maybe up to 5 dollars an hour is fine. But, while this will do wonders for the workers or will the industry survive? Can the industries survive?

When we are talking about all these different things, we have to keep our perspectives in relation to Bangladesh. No buyers – including mine - can be so committed to a country, to stay on regardless of the situation. Unrest has affected the industry and you need to understand the root causes behind the unrest. How much of it is actually attributable to compliance issues and how much would be resolved if compliance standards were met, is basically what we should be aiming for. Pointing fingers will not help us. We all know what the issues are. All of us sitting here are to blame. We all have a role and we have to somehow balance it. The government has a bigger role than most of us. Unfortunately they are not here attending this session. Maybe that's why it is easy for me to speak about them. Anyway, some of the things you expect from the buyers is not appropriate.

The buyers, by definition, should be abiding by the labour laws of the country. The labour laws, for instance, are requiring that there should be a Participation Committee at the factory. Buyer should now go and impose these standards, which are mandatory under national law. Trade Union is not required by code of brands; FoA is. It is the right of workers to form legal labour unions, if they wish to do so. We are not in a position to tell the workers to form trade unions or to tell a factory to form a trade union. That cannot be our role. And we have never said that.

#### Moderator

Thank you, actually we have somehow government here because we have representatives from the implementing forces like police and deputy commissioner. May I ask you to present your reflection and I think it will also give you some interesting points.

#### **Police**

From the police side, we are in a very delicate position, we are neither beside workers nor the owners and we would like to stand in a very neutral position. But our activities do reflect some biasness thought we try to maintain law and order only. At the time of maintaining law and order, we have to go to confrontation with the workers. All the time

the media coverage cast always that police force is fighting with the low waged or poor labours. This tarnishes our image that the police is a oppressive and very cruel in nature but sometimes we introduce law or enforce law to the owners also. But it never shows the activity what we are doing in regard to owners concern. In real crisis, we have to resolute all the conflicts. There is nobody from the owner side, from the labour side, only the workers are on the street and we police are also on the street to face this **consequences**. We look for owners, we look for labour leaders, sometimes we get the owners because the property is being destroyed by the labours and the owners are very concern about this.

**Mr. Mokhelesur Rahman, Police – Dhaka Range**

When something occurs, the law itself drags us to stand on the road to protect the property and save the lives. There is no other way and who comes to break the law, we have to enforce the law upon him. There is a conflict between owners and workers - the low wage and the factory compliance situation – and what *we have to do*?

Our major responsibility is to protect the property and the lives. And from this point of view, we have a continuous conflict with workers. We don't want to have that type of conflict with the workers. When one conflict arises we badly need the labour leaders. Who are the leaders? We need actual workers and the leaders emerge from the real workers and not from outside. This is urgent and it is necessary. When the demand comes from worker's side, because they are low paid, not getting salary in proper time or they are not getting their bonus and they are 'hear-say in the field that somebody is assaulted. The workers are the real victim and we would like to talk with the victim, not with their supporters. There are many events we have seen and nasty games are played by the outsiders. I think the labour leaders, who actually started their career as a labourer, they are genuine labour leaders. The outsiders - the self made / self-style labour leaders - will destroy the garments sector, the garments industry. I shall say like that that, this is my heart feeling.

I would not like to mention, who are behind this type of bad activities. From our side, we want to maintain our neutrality in this regard. Mr. Ramesh Chandra has a different opinion with me whether the industrial police shall be created or not. I would like to say that already police is exists. Where is the problem? Problem is when unrest starts, we collect police from all the corner of our country, which takes time and it is money consuming, time consuming and the police coming from outside, can not do his duty properly in this particular place. Therefore we need a specialized police. It should be police, it should not be formed by other bodies and we are policemen. It will not go against workers, it should not be for owners, I should say. It could be a labour friendly and owners friendly force; this industrial police is necessary.



I like to draw attention to another big problem and severe concern in regard of "jhut"(waste). It is no linked with workers, it is not linked with owners, but it creates a long time problem and we have to solve this problem, this 'jhut business'. Changing the government, changing businessmen and so many terror activities, killing, stabbing and different types of hard situation we have to face almost every day regarding *jhut* business. Is it not possible to make a body where every *jhut* should go to one place? *Jhut* should be sold by a secure body, where 'unwanted' people can't go. It's a major concern and I think,



if we solve this problem of the *jhut business*, automatically 30-40% problem will erase from the scenery. We are in Bangladesh and it is a problem of Bangladeshi.

Finally we need a body where we can talk. Specially a *labour body* is missing. Why am I raising this point in questioned? Because in actual conflict need, we don't get any other government people, the BGMEA and the labour body, we don't get anybody. Just waiting for somebody to talk, we go to labours, workers and pick someone to talk. When we understood the problem, mainly an issue between the workers and the management, we try to contact the owners. After sometime the workers can understand that the problem is going to be solved, their bonus, their monthly salary and others will be given in a very short time.

Only few minutes' back I talked about unwanted elements, who try to instigate this the situation. The legal labour body may be the trade union or entity, but a labour body is necessary to talk and solve the problem. In real crisis situation we have to resolute the conflict. We don't find anybody to talk with from the owners and the worker side. But we have to come forward to talk and resolute the conflict to solve the problem. You will understand how badly it is needed to form a labour body in this regard. I have taken long time, so I like to conclude.

One interesting thing: We are always blamed by some foreigners to be on the owners' side. But the 50 events we have analyzed you know what the real cause behind the unrest was? In most of the incidents it is the delayed salary, not giving correct bonus in time, not granting their leave, their breaks, sudden close of factories, staff-labour conflict. I just beg the owners to please correct your administration side, there are many people, who create unnecessary problems. Slapping, abuse, using nasty languages to female workers, which creates evolves to big problems sudden within moment. This should be address properly addressed. It is our observation from the police side as we have to go very deep into the problem, otherwise it can not be solved and we have to solve the problem time to time. Thank you all. {applause}

Moderator: Thank you very much Mr. Mokhlesur Rahman as its very good for this forum to learn about the police perspective, which will help to understand. I like to point our two issues where the some stakeholders can contribute to reduce the effect of violence: a) the waste or locally called *jhute* business

b) which body to contact times of in crises and the necessity of a designated labour body on the labour side and equally on the owners side.

I do hope our stakeholders will follow up on this very practical problem expressed by the police representatives.

### Comment by Mr. Ramesh Chandra

From the police perspective it is an objective reality as they are on the ground to solve the problem when the crisis arises. He correctly emphasize that the workers representation is very important. When the mob come, even toward me or toward us, it is very difficult. To whom I discuss and to whom I can communicate to solve the problem? From the employer's side as well, the owners normally don't go to the factories regularly. They depend on the mid-level management who are not efficient, skilled up and their attitude towards the workers is not friendly. They need a training in proper worker's representation and secondly the mid-level management needs to be trained up with skills how to handle working people. Thirdly there should be a mechanism, as he correctly mentioned and pointed out, both nationally or centrally, regionally - because our factories are situated in deferent places - and also at the plant level re. factory level. These three types of *crisis*



*management cell* you might call, whatever name you give, but there should be a mechanism to solve the problem to address the issues on national, region and on the plant level.

Regarding the industrial police, yes, the police can be skilled up among the police administration to address the labour issues, in that case we don't have an objection. But to form another police force in the name of industrial police, this will not help the industry, I can tell you. It will give bad smell to the global community, to the buyers, to the consumers and it may create problem even within the police administration in future. Still I recommend that before taking this type of decision, the policy makers, the industry, those who are advocating for it, they should think twice. That's my comment.

### Comment by Dr. Wajed

Actually what he has said is important: The relationship between the law enforcing agencies available with the workers in the industry. But it's true that the relationship with the law enforcing agencies with the workers is not at all a confident one. There are reasons: We have seen from our experience that the law enforcing agencies are always on the side with the employers. Yes, if there is an illegal act on the part of the workers, definitely law enforcing agencies will interfere. But at the same time when some violation happens on the part of the management - by management I didn't mean the owner, but the people employed by the owner - sometimes they do something, which is not legal. Even if the workers go to the police, for the police there is also scope according to law to take action. I can't remember any occasion where the police rightly interfered.

The other issue on the waste management: Who are these people actually? These *hooligans* are the creation of the owners to stop formation of trade union, they patronize some of the local muscle men. In order to satisfy them, the owners actually - this is my view - in many cases those muscle men, have to be satisfied. What is the way to satisfy them? Just give them *jhute* business and now they have become Frankenstein. Thank you.

### Comment by Mr. Azim, BGMEA

First, I want to thank Mr. Mokhlesur Rahman for pointing out, that the outsider labour leaders making the conflict between the workers and the owners. All the confusion is coming from the outside labour leaders who are not actually labourers. In regard of the salary issue, I want to point out that *Envoy Garments, Islam Garments* and others are perfectly intact and you can not give me an example that workers are not paid. You can not show me even 5% factories, who are not paying salaries in time. When they can not pay the wages, they won't survive and be out of business.

In regard of the Industrial Police, I think this is something different and a safeguard to protect the assets of the industry, not for against the labour or something else. If there is no industry and everyday is a destroying and damage, how long will we sit idle? Will we have to stop out business? For the sake of our workers, for the sake of our nation, we need industrial police to keep the safety of our assets.

Regarding the waste goods: I already told, that there is no relation to either convince or to make comfortable relation with the owners. This is not true. Somehow we are tied up. There so are many organization is coming under different banners. What will the owner do? How can they protect them? They are buying the goods and we have to give it to one, not to so many people. There is no *muscle man* and other, what he told is strange. I don't want to see my factory to be destroyed because the muscle man is involves with the factory and my workers can not work. We never encourage that sort of thing. Thank you.

Moderator

Each representative and stakeholder put their point on the table. This is not the question of debate. There simply was a proposal to establish the Industrial Police, somebody is in support and someone is opposing it.

**Comment by Mr. Ramesh Chandra**

There is no Trade Union in this industry at all. As far as the International Labour Standards - as far as the law, the workers have the right to choose their leaders. This mechanism is not prevailing in this sector, that's why self made *uni-lateralism* and even some cases the employers have created some sort of *uni-lateralism* unionist and now they are creating problems. My and our point is, let us practice creative constructive, responsible trade union practice in the sector that can solve the problem otherwise all the discussions – you can form the Industrial Police, you can form the industrial army the problem will arise again. Bengali Tape II B 305

**Mr. Azim:** I just want to tell you, we already have information that 113 factories, there we have trade union. Out of 113 factories, 100 factories have shut down. This is the statistics.

**Mr. Ramesh Chandra:** The employers have no right to allow trade unions. It is the existing law, it are the International Labour Standards that where the workers have the right to form unions.

Moderator: I think all the parties made their point very clear.

Mr. Kebschull

I will make it brief. Thank you very much to the police representative for his clear words. I think we go back to the discussion, which we had before about the role of suppliers and buyers: It has become very clear, that neither the buyers nor the suppliers can increase the wages to a level so that everybody can live in peace. They can do a lot, but we don't live in a vacuum, we are living in a real world and the world is globalized, that we know. In this context we have to look for the reasons of strikes, we have to look for labour unrest, why is it. I liked the point very much that you have said that there might be one reason, it may not be the most important, but there is a reason on the side of the middle management and the supervisors in the factory that they don't have the right behaviour, they don't look at how to treat the workers in the proper way. This is a reason why I propose that at least the suppliers should say, that they are trying to improve the situation by running courses to train the people making workers more efficient and give them a feeling of working in a family. If they have rights, they have also duties. But duties can I only have, when I am treated in the way as a normal member of the family. And if there is a case as the police mentioned, that this is not happening one needs to improve this. I find this is a very important point and I would say that the proposal, to establish a special police for this reason. However I can support it from the German point of view, as Germany has been quoted as a country with an industrial police, which we don't have. What we have, is a lot of supervisory bodies, as you have them in this country also and we have them in India. They do surveillance, controls and I find from my point of view, that this is relatively well working at least in Germany for many decades. There is a question whether one needs a special police and if it works well in Singapore, it's good. However, Singapore is a very special case and has a very special constitution. Concluding, I would say that if the suppliers can make clear that they want to improve the situation here to at least, close the bad gap as soon as possible then this would be a good progress already now.

## Suppliers

Hi everybody, my name is Debashish. I am representative one company named Fakir Apparels Ltd. Actually our apex body, our organizations BKMEA and BGMEA, have already mentioned almost everything how do we can resolve the issue and reduce the hesitations and all this demonstrations on the roads, breaking the factories and all this things, which is not at all good for the economy as well as for the country, not to name the factory itself. With all respect to the workers as well as to our apex body and also to the government, all the stakeholders have agreed the revised minimum wages and structure in my view, is we should agree according to the agreement.

Keeping in mind, first of all as far as compliance issues are the concern, every factory should maintain the compliance inside the factory as we believe that compliances is not only the cost, it's the cost of the production itself. If we make our factory compliant, there maybe its cost but at the same time we are getting the cost back out of it.

Our second part of the group task, I will discuss later. Still I like to mention one very important issue: We, the factories should communicate and we should fill the gap with the workers, as well as with the owners and with the middle management. It is very important we do counselling, we should sit with them time to time, we should make somebody whom we know. We can bring them and actually they can represent some worker group so that we can pick somebody and time to time sit and talk to them. This way we will realize their problem and try to minimize their problems keeping the interest of the factory as well as the workers. Thank you very much.

## Labour Activist

Mr. Syed Sultan

Assalam u walaikum and good afternoon, honourable moderator and friends. Actually we are from the labour activist group. You know at present time they are most under fire because everybody says that NGOs have no business with these things and why they should interfere with this things. Actually the last debate we had about the outsiders, all over the world from the very beginning of the civilization, the outsiders talk about human rights, from the slavery era to present. There is human rights activist, they feel and the think tanks, the philosophers and the civil society activists, they stand on behalf of the oppressed class community and against the human rights violation. I think as a civil society, every citizen has a right to talk and stand against the violation. The problem is that the violation is exists. If there would be no violation, nobody needed to talk. That is the main issue. From the labour activist, we want to make sure that what is our role and what we actually do at present. We don't go to any factory to hesitate the workers and we don't go to any factory area to throw the brick and everything. But we just create awareness among the workers regarding their legal rights, the contents of the law. We try to train them, we try to teach them. I don't think labour activist go beyond. We support the trade union and other civil society organizations to act properly and capably. That is approved by the law and government authority. No NGO can work without the approval of proper government authority. We contribute by supplying researched based documents to the policymakers, to the owners and to the government to formulate the policy. We act as a catalyst to organize social social dialogue, like this is, organized by an international civil

society organization. So actually, that is our role. Sometimes it is misinterpreted that NGO are working beyond their capacity. No NGO can actually organize a public meeting, public rally or anything like that. We provide legal support to the victims, and we tell them that this is your legal right. If any NGO do beyond this then that is not a NGO actually. Other

NGOs and civil society group should not be blamed for them. If any owner violates the law of the country, not all owners should be responsible for that and blamed.

Regarding the strategy part, we found that 'legal dispute settlement mechanism' at the workplace and factory is necessary. It's the number one strategy to create a healthy atmosphere. For legal dispute settlement mechanism, trade union shall be allowed to function properly at the workplace level, form Participation Committee to see the day to day things and appoint labour officers and shop steward. You see in our case, an industry with more than 3 million people, a floor with 1.000 workers sometimes has no person to listen to the workers and to communicate to the higher authority. But if you go to other countries especially in Europe, you will find shop steward for 50 or 100 workers like this appointed by the employer re. the owner. In our case also, earlier time there were labour officers in the industry, but now there is also no labour officer. There are some Compliance Officer, but the protection is different. According to the law, owners can not sack the labour officer without the permission of labour department. But that part is not in the labour law any more, which is unfortunate. So at present he can only listen to the workers grievance and put it to the higher authority or owner. We actually suggested a strategy to formation of a 'permanent tripartite consultation' committee for the industry because it's a huge industry and a legally recognized Arbitration Committee for RMG, for which you need to amend the law. The present law actually doesn't allow sector wise arbitration committees. It is the Labour Court to decide this.



We only have 7 labour courts. When it was constituted, the total workforce was may be 5 million only. Today we have in only one sector 3.5 million workers, therefore we need an arbitration committee. Everybody can not go to court everywhere. It should be legally. Now BGMEA practice an arbitrary committee, which has no legal base. Therefore the workers don't want to go there and they can not solve it legally. If there would be sector wise consultation committee, a permanent consultation committee, which can work regularly wherever there is crisis, wherever there is

dispute, they can sit and they can talk to cooperate with the police and the trade unions, owners and governments. That may solve the problem.

We are also saying to strengthen the Labour Inspection System to solve the labour dispute. We like to mention it very clearly that the present and past law and order situation is a failure of settling the industrial dispute within the industrial relation system. That is very clear and we have to accept it by everybody. It is an industrial relation system, it's a failure of industrial dispute settlement mechanism and when you have an industry you have to face the industrial dispute system. It is an integral part of the industrialization and we have to solve it within an internationally and nationally settled safe industrial dispute settlement mechanism. If we fail, then of course it will go to police and law agencies. This one part we discussed many times about the Industrial Police. We want a close relation between the labour inspection department and the police authority. It is the Labour Inspection Department, who is actually entitled to enforce the labour law.



Failure to properly enforcement the labour law, then workers come out from workplace to street, that actually happened in our situation. Thank you very much.

Question by Mr. Ramesh Chandra

From the civil society the labour activist they have given a proper reply. But is it possible for them to come forward to get training to mid level management of the factories so that can be useful for the settlement of the industries. They should come up with their resources as they are starting to teach the workers about the rights as well as their responsibilities? As this seminar is being organized by an european body, could they come forward to support our mid level management training?

Answer by Syed Sultan, Labour Activist

Thank you Mr. Ramesh, actually we can arrange and we from BILS did it for Opex Group and for Desh Garments, but unfortunately we didn't continue. The request only comes up, when buyers give some pressure to the owners to arrange some training for the supervisor and the mid-level management and then only they invited. But we have the module for that. Still we have the module and we made some budget on how actually the supervisors, workers, owners everybody are the integral part of the industry. Still we are ready to serve this, if owners or the government come up, we could arrange this.

Mr. Kebschull

Just one clarification, thank you very much to look for work for BSCI, who is the conveyor of this round table. BSCI is a cooperation body of the buyers. We do not want to be seen as an NGO. We are not going for training of middle management in Bangladesh as this would not be our task. We rather looking for the general context to come to a partnership between buyers sellers and all them. This should be clear. Thank you very much for this proposal.

I have nothing against that, but with the same reason one could also say why not train all groups involved a bit more in business. Because if we want to be socially compliant, if we want to be helpful to the poor, we must do activities, which keep up the business. Only if in business we have employment and we have income. Therefore all the actions done by everybody from all sides, I think everybody should think about the economic consequences. Thank you.

## Trade Union

Mr. Ramesh Chandra

Our position is simple, the poor people don't have much demand – only small ones. Our points are concrete: we want Decent Work, we want Fair Living Wage and fundamental trade union rights, which is recognized universally by ILO Convention 87 and 98.

As far as the industrial police is concern, we are not in favour of this. This is simple.

Remark by participant:

I just want to say one thing that you have demanded trade union rights but you didn't demanded in the EPZ sector. In our law, the EPZ workers are not allowed to form any



trade union. I think, it is missing that EPZ workers are also should allowed to form trade unions and equal rights should be given to the EPZ workers.

Respond by Mr. Ramesh Chandara

We are not only asking trade unions for RMG sectors, we are in favour of trade union rights for all sort of workers including EPZ, in the RMG sector, informal economy, everywhere. The main focus is coming to the RMG sector both nationally and globally. As our German friend was saying about the economic consequences. The Bangladesh economy is no more a small economy, its almost 90 billion dollar economy. From the RMG sector we used to get around 6 billion US dollar. Though we are talking about 12 billion dollar, half of it is going to back to back LC for importing other goods. Our domestic market is much more important than the export market. We have to think in a total spectrum of the economy. Even you know that the migrant workers are giving much more imports in the foreign currency than the sector itself.

Comment by Mr. Basir, H&M

When I came into this Round Table and when introduced to this group work, I got excited because we were asked to look within our area of influence. This totally missing from the union friends, they came with many demands. I stand with you that workers should have Freedom of Association. ...

In regard of our area of influence, I want to say influence but we are spending our time in our area of concern, we are trying to point finger at each other, this way I think again we are into the same circle, we need to get out from this circle. That is my comment.

Comment for on behalf of the Trade Union Group, Mr. Syed Sultan

Actually just a personal observation, can we think as he has mentioned this is the house we can make some concrete proposal and we have some very senior trade union leaders here. Can we come out from the RMG, this factory based trade union to sector based trade union? The industry is huge and as we have also the model in other countries. The sector based trade union can be easily be represented. The trade unionist from outside they can join in this area so if there is sector based bargain, then this sector can be little bit improved.

**GTZ**

Assalamuwalaikum, I am Mohammed Manjur Morshed, I'm working on GTZ, as senior social compliance advisor. We have been asked here to express what we can do to minimize unrest right at this moment. What I have pointed out here, basically we will work on it and at the same time we have been working on it and in addition we expect from this forum that if anybody has any particular suggestion or anything to ask in this area we can work, then we will be very grateful to you. As development agent we believe in raising the awareness and massive awareness can really work to solve much problems. The next card is on providing training, which is also one of the component to raising the awareness. I'm very happy to hear from DIG Mokhelesur Rahman, that he pointed out one point particular, which is harassment. From the experience, I like to share in one of our training in the factory, one of the supervisor in our training under *harassment and abuse*, at the end of the training, that supervisor was about to cry. He said that it is true, in my past experiences I really didn't know what we did was a crime, was an offence, which we were not supposed to do. Rather we were trained and we have been believed that how we do is right and it should be done like that and that has been indeed his realization. It has equally be our lesson as well. It is really true , coming back to Roy Ramesh, that we can't

provide training, including 'rights and responsibilities' as well. If the middle management is also trained, we want their responsibilities and rights, according to what is written in the, law then I think it can help a lot. And this training is not only for the workers, this training is for the all of stakeholders as well. We in GTZ have already trained the middle management as well social compliance officers, supervisors even sometimes the production assistant managers or quality control inspectors, who really have a great role to play in improvements of the social standard of the factory they work.

Secondly, strengthen the capacity of more labour inspectors, working under the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE). From 2006 we have been working with the under labour inspectors under MOLE having already trained them how to conduct social audits in the factories. We have as well as equipped them as much as possible and now they have a good team, already trained and equipped for conducting the social compliance audits. Of course, this is not the end, we have still some program to work with them closely so that they can really improve their quality of auditing and also inspection and monitoring from government side. Doing like this and being a development agent, we believe in the programme of sustainable development. For this reason, we focus always on capacity strengthening of training institute or private sector providers. For your information, just few years ago, there was not any professional institute who provided training on social compliance in these industries in Bangladesh. Today, I can inform, and I'm very happy to inform to this forum, that the reputed government Bangladesh Institute of Management has already the capacity and providing diploma training on social compliances with 3 batches already completed, a 6 months diploma course. For your information, it is not only for concerned people of the garments industry, but for the other industry like the telecommunication, press, pharmaceutical business and civil societies, who have participated in this diploma course on social compliance. This will ultimately help to contribute in overall social compliance improvement.

Thirdly, improve industrial relations through dialog and workshop: We like to work for the improvements of industrial relations, which is actually concerned to the trade union and I like to mention that the Participation Committee can be in now way be an alternative to trade union. Both of the organizations have different approaches and set by the law. We want to work for the Trade Union and the Participation Committees as well. Any suggestion from you side, any question, please ask.

### **Diplomatic Mission**

To finish the discussion I will conclude with diplomatic mission. Basically this is divided into two parts. What could we do for you if would consult us?

First of all we can contribute information of ongoing trends asking the German Embassy for example. Ongoing trends in our market have been highlighted here earlier. For US buyers for example it is always interesting what is happening in our market where you don't have as many information, as insiders from Germany, as this would be a major role, we could cover. Secondly, if you are looking for matching partners for example the GTZ, we can always establish some links for you that you consult us and we give your demands through the people who are covering these things.

What do we expect from you? These are basically two folded. First comes the reliability and second the sustainability to which German government is always looking for, achieving something that last long and which doesn't has only a sort time influence. If you have any questions, I am open for it. Thanks.

**Moderator:**

We are in the concluding part of this session. As I always try to mention, this is not a debating shop. Everybody put their own suggestion, own points and this is not the forum, where you can put fingers to others. We have several places in our country - including our parliament. I think this is the place where all the brilliant representatives and stakeholders made their point and I think this is enough for the minister, him mentioning in the morning, that he wants a summary of the recommendation of this meeting.

**Ms. Sara Begum Kabori, MP**

I would like to invite Ms. Sara Begum Kabori, MP. She has been scheduled to come in the morning session but because of her illness she couldn't able to make it. Ms. Sara Begum Kabori, the floor is yours:

Thank you very much, it's my great privilege being with you. I like to explain some of my experience in my constituency and be very comfortable if I can speak in Bengali.

*Banlga* .. brief summary in English:

She practically described the situation and made some recommendations from the experiences in her constituency. Her main concern is the communication gap between the owner and the labour. She suggested that frequent meetings are between the owners and mid level with workers shall be held. She also proposed that labour should be more sensitized about their roles and responsibilities as far as their factories and work are concern. She also put stress that labour organization should be more organized and should work keeping the country in their mind first. She also criticized the role of media, sometimes they overplay some negative things and mislead the scene. She also cite one experience is Pabla in her constituency. Some outsiders came to Pabla and created unrest in some garments factories in that area. She also suggests adequate transportation system when women workers return late home doing overtime in the garments factories.

She also put stress to improve the monitoring system and finally she said that she put full respect and full gratitude to he father of the nation who created the country. She mentioned that unless we are independent, we might not be owner of the factories. So we have our responsibilities to the garments factories. She also put stress about the dream of prime minister, making Bangladesh by digital 2021 and that everybody in the society should take their responsibly to make her dream come true. This is a summary of her speech.

So from my part as the local moderator, I thank you very much closing on time. With the minister example coming very punctual, he practically showed that we can conclude the session on time, which we realized. Thank you very much to everyone. All of you were very responsible, very renowned and genuine representative from different stakeholders and the thoughts, the suggestions and the ideas you put here will be compiled by the host organization. From my experience as a professional journalist, mentioned earlier that I'm very encouraged and I feel that there were practically a lot of learning sessions for me. Often we have professional relationship with the *rest and unrest situation* instantly but we are still outsiders. This experience will help me and my news room to look into the matter in full responsible way. I will hand over the micro to the organizer.

**Christian von Mitzlaff**

Thank you Bulbul. Before BSCI invites you for lunch, I like to give the word to Mr. Keschull for some remarks.

## Dr. Kebschull

Thank you Mr. von Mitzlaff, well ladies and gentlemen. I think we all are waiting now for lunch and I will make it as brief as possible. I'm very grateful that I could be here, thank the coordinator for having to come here. I wanted to say that I am very grateful having had the chance to follow this discussion. From the point of view being a German working in this field for very long but also as a representative of the Indian office of BSCI. I always ask myself what can we do to improve the situation? One thing is clear that we can not change the world, nobody can do that but we can just help to go a step forward. The BSCI is an association of buyers. Ladies and gentlemen, please be assured, we from Europe and specially from Germany, we love south Asia and we love to buy from Bangladesh. But being a buyer from Germany or a buyer from another EU country, we are today always in focus of the civil society or others. If I buy or if another company buys from Bangladesh, we are immediately accused - you said the media sometimes plays a strange role - we are immediately accused for buying in Bangladesh for two reasons:

One is, we are helping to further exploit the workers, second we are helping to further spoil and destroy the environment. Therefore if somebody buys in Bangladesh, he is a bit suspicious for the others and he is permanent in focus of the public. We have many cases over the past that companies from our country went out of Bangladesh as they have been attacked and crucified in the public. To avoid that, BSCI has created a standard, the Business Social Compliance Initiative Code of Conduct. What we try all over the world, especially in India, in China and also in Bangladesh is to make these standards and standard procedure known. The public, the buyers, the last reader of the newspaper, the listener of the TV shows shall know that BSCI is looking for the certain minimum requirements, called the standard fulfilling social compliance. For example us doing in India is to spread this to not only the enterprises but for example to educational institutions as well. Students in the field of garments have to learn very early what social compliance means and what this type of cooperate social responsibility is all about? We have courses in all fashion and design institutes, we have courses in the management institutions in the universities for the new generations which is coming up, already knows what we are talking about.

One point which is important and which I wanted to mention here is, that we have one simple new instrument in India to avoid social conflicts. If the trade unions have said that we are not looking enough for the workers and the standard, I think it's an impression but its not totally true. For example have we distributed in all audited companies in India a card to all workers, printed in Hindi and then all big languages to make workers aware about the 'complaint telephone', a toll-free number every worker can phone me and tell me, "look, this is my problem". And believe it or not, this complaint telephone is a big success. We had difficulties at the beginning with the managers. We have only some calls, always serious, and when we get them, we go as honest brokers to the companies, to the managers, we talk to them, we sort out the problem and has worked fine in call cases up to now it. This can be a possibility to go this small step ahead to improve the world that we cannot change it, *that* we know. But I hope that we can go for such simple, relatively simple and very low cost solutions.

In addition I want to say one thing, it has been said that we need *one standard* here in Bangladesh. We, with BSCI have made one step forward for the 540 members who are sticking to one standard. At present we are having a project in India working SA 8000, calling themselves SAI to bring together the standard of SA and the standard of BSCI, done together with GTZ. We offered Bangladesh that we will give you BSCI standard for



your own use, you don't have to reinvent and can get it for free of charge and we will also give you the copyright. And then I would say, let's go ahead and try to do this. Always we can then find out where we have further difficulties, further gaps, which will come up, but I think if we all are good willing, and this is what I have seen here, then it should work that we can go step ahead. Thank you very much.

In his closing remarks the Organizer is thanking the participants and expressed his expectations this Round Table will continue while expressing his view that this Round Table has developed a certain momentum, which hopefully will create a dynamic in the cooperation to address practically the issues of Social Compliance.

With the overall thanking to the participants the Organizer closed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Round Table the 3<sup>rd</sup> and invited for lunch.





## VI. Pictorials

















## VII. Feedback and Comments by the participants

Mr. von Mitzlaff requests the participants for feedback or comments on Round Table on four points.

1. How you perceived the usefulness of this Bangladesh Round Table on Social Compliance?
2. What is your comment on the today's chosen topic?
3. Which are your comments on the discussion we had respectively the observation notes.
4. Which is your recommendation for the next Round Table or the process of this Round Table?

### Mr. Majumder, Carrefour

1. "It is useful to do this type of round table discussion
2. Immediate need to make a Garments Worker's database
3. This time agenda was OK
4. Some stakeholder leaders left when topic has been discussed. Labour leader did not mentioned about their role and the responsibility they are doing constructively and what they shall do in the future to reduce unrest."

### Mr. Adnan, BGMEA

1. "Chosen topic is appropriate.
2. I think the discussion has a problem. It should be free flowing, an open debate. Then, the things will be clear.
3. Recommendation for the next agenda:
  - o Productivity
  - o International business
  - o True business picture
4. I think the Round Table is picking up momentum. Seems it's gathering more attendance. Only one BSCI member was present.

### Md. Quaimul Islam, Monno

1. "Useful topic
2. OK with the topic
3. Discussion is nice. Better if more participation of policy makers
4. May arrange two times per year."

### Walmart

1. "Round Table meeting requirements:
  - o All the key stakeholders can participate in the meeting to discuss the views and thoughts on the requirement to come up with the
  - o Solution model, which is very effective."
2. Today's topic
  - o This is an appropriate topic related to the RMG sector.
  - o Current situation may help to remediation idea of the RMG unrest.
3. Comments on discussion
  - o Every stakeholder should stick to their own roles and responsibility.
  - o Plan to minimise the labour unrest.
4. Recommendation for the next Round Table
  - o Government representatives should be present in the whole discussion.
  - o Top management of BGMEA / BKMEA needs to attend the Round Table."

## **BLAST**

1. Round Table: Very useful activities for Stakeholders to improve the workplace environment.
2. The topic is a time sound topic. As such the selection of topic is very important.
3. To reach in a concrete decision, we should extend the time for such a Round Table.
4. I recommend to invite the representative from Labour Directorate. One Round Table may be organised in participation with the mid-level management of factories."

## **Md. Zafrul Hasan, BJSD**

1. Very useful this set up of Round Table
2. Topic can be revised towards a more possible flavour, e.g. 'Healthy environment creation'
3. Discussion could be more focused, if the procedure of activity could be clearly understood by all
4. Recommendation for the next Round Table: this dialogue should continue"

## **Roy Ramesh Chandra**

1. Useful
2. Topic is quite O.K.
3. Discussion lively
4. I would like to request the organiser to provide the theme of the Round Table well in advance"

## **Jahangir Alam, Knit Concern Ltd.; Debasish Kumar Shaha, Fakir Apparels Ltd.; Aminur Rahman, French Fashion**

1. Round Table is useful
2. Right topic
3. Government makers should be presence in the meeting ...
4. Debate in a positive manner by every stakeholder

### Comments without name

1. 1. Usefulness: All dialogue among stakeholder is useful. I believe stakeholders will have left the session more enlightened than when they came in.
2. Very pertinent topic – especially in the context of unrest in the industry, following the new wage declaration.
3. Discussions were good. However moderator should have greater role in guiding discussions.
4. The next Round Table should be in the next quarter. Focus needs to highlight success stories of conflict resolution of worker – management dialogue.

### Comments without name

1. Usefulness: To the end time faded and therefore the main part of agreements between the parties could not be made.
2. Comment of the chosen topic: Social Compliance does not deal with the issue of poverty sufficiently. ⇒ extension to CSR + BSCI could be abused.
3. Observation notes: Unions were very aggressive



4. Recommendation: Keep on going, it was a benefit for all who attended (next time try to put even more on finding agreements).

Comments without name

1. Usefulness: Good to have dialogue
2. Comment on choice of topic: Very worthwhile
3. Observation: excellent
4. Recommendation: This feed forum should be prepared beforehand and distributed to the participants to make comments. Next subject: 'How to implement newly declared Minimum Wage.'

## VIII. Media coverage

### Newspaper Clippings

New Age (Front Page)



### Renewed call for trade unions in RMG sector

#### Staff Correspondent

A cabinet minister, an economist and labour leaders at a roundtable discussion on Monday urged the garment factory owners to allow trade unions in the sector to prevent a recurrence of labour unrest. They said that if trade unions had been in operation, the recent flare-ups of violence in the apparel sector could have been prevented. The Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association, which has opposed

introduction of trade unions in the sector right from the beginning, seems to have softened its stance and now says that before trade unions are allowed in garment factories, workers need to be made aware of their rights and responsibilities. While addressing the inaugural session of the roundtable on 'Strategies to minimise labour unrest in the RMG sector' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, the labour and employment minister, Mosharraf Hossain renewed his call for introduction of trade unions in the sector. There should be trade unions in garment factories to settle labour disputes through negotiations and no non-governmental organisations should be allowed to interfere in such issues in order to prevent a recurrence of workers' unrest in the sector, the minister said. 'Trade unions will deal with labour disputes and the NGOs should mind their own business. Unfortunately, NGOs have got involved in such issues in the name of human rights and they are instigating labour unrest,' he said. Economist Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmed said absence of trade unions was causing frequent flare-ups in the sector. Although the factory owners have their trade union, the workers are not allowed to exercise such rights, making room for outsiders to fuel unrest, he said. If trade unions are allowed to operate in the sector, labour disputes can be handled through negotiations with the elected leaders of the workers, and thus the crisis in the sector could be overcome, said Kholiquzzaman, also former president of the Bangladesh Economic Association. The coordinator of the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Wajedul Islam, and the general secretary of the Jatiya Sramik League, Roy Ramesh Chandra shared the views. They said that introduction of trade unions was a must to do away with labour unrest in the garment sector. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association president, Abdus Salam Murshedy, however, on Monday told New Age, 'Before trade unions are allowed in garment factories, workers need to be made aware of their rights and responsibilities.' 'Everyone should recall how trade unions disrupted production in the state-owned jute mills and caused closure of many of those units... It was the trade unions which made general workers jobless,' Murshedy said. He said the garment industry could not sustain if shipments are disrupted by trade unions, he said. He, however, claimed that the BGMEA members had never barred workers from forming trade unions. 'When laws give some rights to citizens, we cannot deny them such rights,' he said.



## The Daily Star

Tuesday, August 10, 2010, Business

# The Daily Star

## RMG labour unrest: Minister smells NGOs' involvement

Star Business Report

Some nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) were involved in the latest labour unrest in the readymade garment sector, alleged Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday.

Without mentioning any specific name, the minister said in the name of protecting human rights, they (some NGOs) are violating human rights.

He said the existing labour law should be formulated in a comprehensive manner to bring all aspects under one umbrella.

"Some external forces were involved in the violence," the minister said.

He was speaking at a roundtable on 'strategies to minimise labour unrest in the RMG sector' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel as the chief guest.

LIFT Standards, a German-based advisory firm on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), organised the discussion where lawmakers, diplomats, economists, trade union leaders, representatives of the international buyers, manufacturers, trade body leaders and experts attended.

Economist Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of the Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation (PKSF) stressed a healthy working environment at the factory level with the participation of workers and owners.

"I strongly support for allowing trade unionism," he said.

Stefan Frowein, ambassador of the Delegation of the European Commission, said EU is always concerned about core labour standards and human rights.

Dr Wajed Ali Khan, general secretary to Bangladesh Trade Union Centre, said the unrest occurred because of the poor wage.

He suggested the government introduce rationing of foods for the garment workers like police and Bangladesh Rifles.

Abu Arshad Khandker, supplier development manager of Walmart, asked the manufacturers for improving the mid-level management situation at different factories.

## The Daily Shamokal, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2010

A committee will be formed to rectify to labour laws with in a week said by  
the labour Minister

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The labour Minister, Engineer Khondaker, Mosharraf Hossain said that the labour laws of 2006 should be rectified by the present government. To certain the labour rights, the trade union of the labours will be determined very soon, Rationing and medical facilities will be given to the labours immediately.

He said in a round table conference at Sheraton Hotel in garments sector & how to find ways and means to mitigate these difficulties.

In this round table conference of BSCI, Mr. Lutfur Kabir Shachhu, the Permanent Member of Labour Minister was in the chair.

In this discussion, the Economist Dr, Quazi Kholiquzzaman, Ramesh Roy the general secretary of Sramik League, The Embassador, Dr. Stephen Frowean of European Union, Sarah Bagum Kabori the member of National Assembly, Mr. Shahid Ullah Azim Director Chairman of BGMEA, Aslam Sunny the Vice Chairman of B.K.M.E.A., Christian von Mitzlaff of LIFT Standard, Dr. Keksull of B.S.C.I., Dr. Wajed Islam, Syed Sultan Uddin the Managing Director of BILLS also spoke. The representative of European Union and American Importers, Labour Representatives, NGOs, Civil Societies also took part in this round table conference. The journalist Mr. Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul took the part as a moderator in this round table conference.

The Minister further said that the NGOs left their own workers and started the works of labour trade union. Some of them agitate the labourers and help to break their own garments industries to collapse the present government or also to ruin the property of the state at large. He also added in the round table conference that the unfriendly behaviour of the owners of the factories, the restlessness and anarchy of the labourers and outsiders should be removed immediately. The housing system & Medical facilities should be introduced for the betterment of the labourers very soon and these are the causes of labourers unrest. In this field he gave specially to rectify the labour laws of 2006, which prevailed in our country at present.

## The Daily Kaler Kontho

### A committee will be formed with in a week to rectify labour laws said by the Labour Minister

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10<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Own reporter--The Labour Minister Eng: Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain said that labour laws of 2006 should be changed to develop the fate of the labour with in a week. A committee also be formed to do the tasks of the labours. Rationing and medical facilities are at also be introduced for the betterment of the labours immediately. These words are spoken by the Minister in a hotel in Dhaka yesterday, the Monday. They also try and find ways and means how to check the labour unrest in the various garment industries. He further said that trade union should be introduced in respective garments industries. The relation between the owners and the labours should be gentle and moderate. The labour laws should be rectified newly.

Lutful Hai Shachhu the chief guest and he was in the Chair of the Business of Social Compliance Initiative Round Table Conference in Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. In the specific subject the Economist Dr. Quazi Kholiquzzaman also given his valuable speech. Mr. Ramesh Roy the general secretary of Sramik League also spoken. The Ambassador of European Union Mr. Stefan Frowein, the buyer of Euro-America, the member of BKMEA, NGOs are also present. The workers of moderator was performed by the journalist Mr, Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul.

## The Daily INQILAB

### Stress should be given to introduce trade union in ready made garments sector in Bangladesh

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10<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Economic Reporter- The labour and employment Minister Mr. Khondoker Mosharraf Hossain has made responsible some N.G.O to create restlessness in ready made garments sector. He said trade union should be introduce & implied very soon to remove these continuous unrest. He said- These words yesterday (Monday) at Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka in a round table conference to mitigate and find ways and means how to tackle these disturbances .

NGO work should be done by themselves and trade union's works should also be done by them. These words were illustrated and explained by them. These words of trade union. These types of workers are not permitted and also acceptable. They should work independently and separately. They should always remain separately and thinks in their own position and manner also. The Minister cited himself the present situation of the labours and how introducing the new scientific methods of the present developing. He again said that a committee should be formed with in next week to remove these atmospheres permanently if necessary labour laws also be changed. In the meeting a great economist, Mr. Kholiuzzaman also give stress how to keep peace and tranquillity in the ready made garments sector of Bangladesh.

## Television News

ATN News





ATN Bangla





Diganta Television



Channel i





ETV News



ntv



SOCIAL COMPLIANCE  
round table  
গোল টেবল বৈঠক



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