

Comparison: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Gap/Walmart scheme

	Bangladesh Safety Accord	Walmart/Gap Plan
Participating brands and retailers	72 companies from more than fifteen countries, including H&M, the largest buyer from Bangladesh; Inditex, the world's largest fashion retailer; PVH, the world's largest shirt-seller; Carrefour and Tesco, two of the world's three largest general retailers; multiple North American companies, including Abercrombie & Fitch, Sean John Apparel and Loblaw.	Currently 17 brands from two countries.
Labor-Management Cooperation and Role for Worker Representatives	Developed by apparel companies and both Bangladeshi and global unions and labor rights NGOs. Jointly governed by companies and worker representatives. The accord reflects genuine cooperation between labor and management and includes a central role for independent worker representatives in its implementation.	A unilateral corporate initiative, designed and governed by corporations with no involvement by independent worker representatives.
Safety Inspections	Inspections are independent. Inspection and remediation plans completed for every factory within 9 months.	Inspections are not independent and – incredibly – brands and companies retain complete control of the inspection process. ¹

¹ Section 6.2 of the Gap/Walmart Agreement states that the Committee of Experts on fire and building safety will “operate under the oversight of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director”, thereby ensuring that the companies maintain control.

<p>Cost of safety repairs and renovations</p>	<p>Contractual commitments by signatory companies to ensure funds are available for all necessary safety renovations and repairs, based upon need, with tripartite system of checks and balances.</p>	<p>No commitment by corporations to provide any funding for renovations and repairs. In fact, any help to factories to pay for repairs is via a purely voluntarily loan program over which the brands have complete control.² Participation in this loan program is not a requirement. This is the same voluntary “CSR” approach which has already been proven to be a complete failure in Bangladesh.</p>
<p>Workers’ right to refuse dangerous work and enter a dangerous building</p>	<p>The Accord protects workers’ rights to refuse dangerous work, including the right to refuse to enter a dangerous building, which the events of Rana Plaza illustrated is an absolute necessity in Bangladesh.</p>	<p>The Walmart/Gap scheme makes no mention of the right of workers to refuse dangerous work, leaving factory managers free to bully workers into dangerous buildings, like their counterparts did at Rana Plaza or to prevent workers from leaving during a fire, as they did at Tazreen Fashions.</p>
<p>Endorsed by</p>	<p>UN Secretary General, International Labor Organisation, in addition to the Bangladeshi Government, US Senators and Representatives including the Senate Majority Leader and the House Minority Leader, European Parliament, OECD National Contact Points, and numerous organizations representing garment workers in Bangladesh.</p>	<p>Apparel industry groups: National Retail Federation, American Apparel and Footwear Association, Retail Council of Canada, Canadian Apparel Federation, Retail Industry Leaders Association, with the support of the Bipartisan Policy Center, two former U.S. Senators and the Bangladeshi government.</p>
<p>Enforcement</p>	<p>The Accord is a binding, legally enforceable contract. Worker representatives, who have a strong interest in enforcement, are signatories. Binding arbitration, backed up by the courts of the home country of the company in question, is used to resolve</p>	<p>Unenforceable by workers. Walmart stated at the BPC press conference, July 10th, that the way in which a worker may “enforce” the obligations is to report any breach to the companies and then the companies will take necessary action. This puts all the power in</p>

² Section 2.3.1 of the Gap/Walmart Agreement outlines the “Affordable Capital for Building Safety” (ACBS) program, which states that company members of the Agreement may make loan funding available to factories, “on terms and conditions to be established solely by that Member” and that “participation in ACBS is voluntary.

	<p>disputes and enforce company commitments. This ensures that companies must follow through on their commitment to make all of their factories safe.</p>	<p>the hands of the corporations, unlike in the Accord where worker representative organizations may take enforcement action. Moreover, companies can walk away from the “Alliance” whenever they see fit, with the only cost being a portion of their modest administrative fees.</p>
<p>Signers</p>	<p>Signed by 72 companies, UNI Global Union, IndustriALL Global Union, and Bangladeshi garment worker unions.</p>	<p>Signed by Gap, Walmart, and other companies.</p>