FATAL FASHION IN BANGLADESH
THE ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY IN BANGLADESH
ABOUT THE CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN

Dedicated to improving working conditions and supporting the empowerment of workers in the global garment industry since 1989

- educate and mobilize consumers
- lobby companies and governments
- direct solidarity support to workers

For information and support: www.cleanclothes.org
FATAL FASHION IN BANGLADESH
CONTENT OF THIS PRESENTATION

1. Working conditions in Bangladesh: The daily grind in sweatshops

2. Decade of Disaster: Bangladesh accidents 2005-2013

3. Critical Catastrophe: Rana Plaza collapse

4. Bangladesh Breakthrough: The Accord on Fire and Building Safety
WORKING CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH:
THE DAILY GRIND IN SWEATSHOPS
WORKING CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH
THE DAILY GRIND IN SWEATSHOPS

- **Poverty wages**: minimum wage $37/month
- **Grinding hours**: 12-16 hours 6 days a week
- **Harassment** and intimidation as management strategy to speed up production
- Unionists are **fired** – or worse
- Most **dangerous** place in the world to be an garment worker
WORKING CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH
THE GARMENT INDUSTRY

- Bangladesh now 2nd largest apparel producer after China
- Export US$17 billion in 2011
- 5,000 factories
- 3 million workers
- 80% young women
Workers in a factory in Dhaka/Bangladesh

Image: CCC
Workers in a factory in Dhaka/Bangladesh

Image: CCC
Workers in a factory in Dhaka/Bangladesh

Image: CCC
DECADE OF DISASTER:
BANGLADESH ACCIDENTS 2005-2013
2005 SPECTRUM COLLAPSE
64 KILLED – 80 INJURED
Inditex, Carrefour, Scapino, Karstad, others

Image: CCC
2006 KTS TEXTILE FIRE
61 KILLED – 100 INJURED
Mermain int, ATT, Vida, Leslee Scott, others
2006 PHOENIX COLLAPSE
22 DEAD – 50 INJURED
Export to Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia
2006 SAYEM FIRE
3 KILLED – 50 INJURED IN STAMPEDE
Inditex, Wet, Bershka, Kreisy, others
2010 GARIB & GARIB FIRE
21 DEAD – 50 INJURED
H&M, Otto, El Corte Ingles, Terranova, others
2010 THAT'S IT/HAMEEM FIRE
29 DEAD – 11 INJURED
Gap, PvH, VFC, Target, JC Penney, A&F, others
2011 EUROTEX STAMPEDE
2 DEAD – 64 INJURED
Tommy Hilfiger, Zara, Gap, KappAhl, C&A, others
2012 TAZREEN FIRE
112 KILLED – 120 INJURED
C&A, Kik, Walmart, Disney, Sears, Kmart, others
2013 SMART EXPORT FIRE
7 KILLED – 8 INJURED
Inditex (Bershka, Lefties), KiK, New Look, others

Image: RISE BD
2013 RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE
1230+ KILLED – 2500+ INJURED
Benetton, BonMarche, Mango, Primark, others

Image: Reuters
2013 TUNG HAI FIRE
8 KILLED
Several European brands

Image: Reuters
DEATH TOLL IN GARMENT FACTORIES
2005-2013 (MAIN CCC CASES ONLY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPECTRUM</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>KTS TEXTILE</td>
<td>61</td>
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<td>PHOENIX</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>SAYEM</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GARIB &amp; GARIB</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>THAT'S IT</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>EUROTEX</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAZREEN</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMART EXPORT</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANA PLAZA</td>
<td>1139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUNG HAI</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1468</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEATH TOLL IN GARMENT FACTORIES
2005-2013 [MAIN CCC CASES ONLY]

1468

OTHER ESTIMATIONS: 1800+

BANGLADESH FIRE DEPARTMENT:
213 FACTORY FIRES BETWEEN 2006-2009
A horrific rash of events for garment workers in Bangladesh…factory collapse, explosion and fires… The Bangladesh garment industry is notoriously stricken with labor violations, but the recent tragedies have incited international pressure and investigations…”

Yahoo News, 2006
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA):

“The teams will make surprise visits and immediately inform BGMEA if they find any factory lacking adequate safety measures...BGMEA and BKMEA will take actions against the non-compliant factories...all garment factories must keep their rooftops accessible; the rooftop doors, factory entrances, fire escapes, and emergency gates must always remain unlocked; fabrics and other flammable materials cannot be kept laying around on factory floors; and all factories must arrange fire drills on a regular basis.”
Walmart and Gap response to unions and NGOs programme of inspections and renovations:

“Specifically to the issue of any corrections on electrical and fire safety, we are talking about 4,500 factories, and in most cases very extensive and costly modifications would need to be undertaken...It is not financially feasible for the brands to make such investments.”
DECADE OF DISASTERS
RESPONSES BY BSCI

2006: “BSCI members have increased their efforts to improve the situation” in relation to building safety in Bangladesh in a press release about Spectrum

2013: BSCI is working “to find a solution which prevents such tragedies from happening again” in a online statement about Rana Plaza
BANGLADESH GARMENT INDUSTRY
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS

- Poorly constructed buildings with weak foundations; illegally added after original construction [often without permission]
- **Most** factories lack proper fire exists:
  - Open stairwells, which act as chimneys rather than escape routes
  - No external fire escapes
- Missing safety systems
  - No emergency lighting
  - Missing fire extinguishers
- No worker role in safety management, no unions, no or inadequate safety training
- Managers restrict access: lock doors to control workers; delay exit to avoid loss of production, hoping alarms are false
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
NOT BUILT FOR INDUSTRIAL USE
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
FAULTY WIRING
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
LOCKED (FIRE) EXITS

Locked exit
Garib & Garib
Image: CCC
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
NO EXTERNAL FIRE EXITS

Improvised ropes
That's It Factory Fire
Image: CCC
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
BARRED WINDOWS
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
STACKS OF FLAMABLE MATERIAL
THOUSANDS OF DEATH TRAPS
INADEQUATE TRAINING

Unused extinguisher
Garib & Garib Factory
Image: CCC
GLOBAL GARMENT INDUSTRY
A DESTRUCTIVE BUSINESS MODEL

- Brands and retailers want their products cheap & fast: and push local contractors on price and lead times
- To meet these demands factory management ignore workers' rights and safety standards to cut costs and speed production
- (Local) government looks the other way: they need the business
- Audit systems have no effect: no worker involvement and no follow up
- Result: poverty wages, long hours, oppressive conditions, dangerous workplaces
- A problem of the global apparel industry, not just Bangladesh
# GLOBAL GARMENT INDUSTRY
## FAILING SELF-REGULATION SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORY</th>
<th>INDUSTRY AUDIT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAZREEN</td>
<td>WAL-MART, OTHERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>THAT'S IT/HAMEEM</td>
<td>GAP, A&amp;F, VF, OTHERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>GARIB &amp; GARIB</td>
<td>H&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANA PLAZA</td>
<td>BSCI, OTHERS</td>
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GLOBAL GARMENT INDUSTRY
FAILING SELF-REGULATION SYSTEM

Corporate accountability built on failing audits:
Walmart’s CEO, Mike Duke, in a public statement: “We will not buy from an unsafe factory.”

Walmart’s head of labor rights compliance, in an internal memo: “Fire and electrical safety are not currently adequately covered in ethical sourcing audits.”
GLOBAL GARMENT INDUSTRY
FAILING SELF-REGULATION SYSTEM

- Industry auditing: massive conflicts of interest and no transparency
- Industry auditors don’t have expertise and/or time for proper inspections: no or inadequate fire safety training, no electrical or structural expertise
- Audits are only a snapshot of conditions in the factory
- Auditors can’t ask brands to raise prices to pay for repairs
- BSCI: “You can’t expect too much from social audits”, yet brands have claimed for years that audits are adequate to protect workers.
GLOBAL GARMENT INDUSTRY
COMPANIES' DUE DILIGENCE

- Implement better purchasing practices that encourage improvement of factories
- Sign and implement the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh
- Disclose all audit reports of factories that are non-compliant
- Actively support freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Use their power to motive other stakeholders to protect workers rights
CRITICAL CATASTROPHE:
RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE
RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE
WORST DISASTER IN GARMENT INDUSTRY

- Five garment factories: New Wave Bottoms, New Wave Ltd, Phantom Apparels Ltd., Phantom Tac, Ether Tex
- Produced for: Walmart, El Corte Ingles, Benetton, Inditex, Children’s Place, Primark, Joe Fresh (Loblaws), KiK, Bon Marche, Mango and others
- Poorly constructed building located on swampland
- Illegally added floors
RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE
WORST DISASTER IN GARMENT INDUSTRY

- Workers notice cracks in walls: express fear to management
- Management tells workers building is safe and have to work
- Building collapses the next day, crushing workers *en masse*
- 1130+ dead, 2500+ wounded
- Rescue and recovery takes weeks
- **Worst industrial disaster in the world since Bhopal (India 1984)**
Rana Plaza Missing Persons
Image:Sharat Chowdhury (Wiki CC)
RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE
COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS AND FAMILIES

• Estimated € 54 million (based on ILO standards and a formula developed after other disasters in Bangladesh)

• Including compensation for pain and suffering, loss of earnings for families of diseased workers

• Excluding medical costs, psychological support, previous wages and legal severance payment
RANA PLAZA COLLAPSE
COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS AND FAMILIES

Brands need to:

- Come forward as buyers from Rana Plaza (50+ brands)
- Engage with unions and negotiate final compensation figures
- Agree size of contributions to compensation fund
- Contribute their share to the fund
BANGLADESH BREAKTHROUGH:
THE ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY IN BANGLADESH
# BANGLADESH BREAKTHROUGH
## TIMELINE OF THE ACCORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEB 2010</td>
<td>Garib &amp; Garib Fire kills 21: CCC launches April 11 Safety Demands</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC 2010</td>
<td>(Local) Unions, CCC, WRC, propose plan after That's It fire kills 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR 2011</td>
<td>Plan promoted at ITGLWF-led meeting in Dhaka, <strong>brands reject</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>MAR 2012</td>
<td>PVH signs agreement after ABC News story</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP 2012</td>
<td>GAP refuses to sign binding safety commitments</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP 2012</td>
<td>Tchibo (German retailer) signs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV 2012</td>
<td>Tazreen Fashions fire kills 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN 2013</td>
<td>Smart Export fire kills 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR 2013</td>
<td>Rana Plaza collapse kills 1139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 2013</td>
<td>Tung Hai fire kills 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUN 2013</td>
<td>Over 60 brands sign Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUL 2013</td>
<td>Implementation begins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
WHO'S INVOLVED

- Global unions (signatories)
  IndustriALL and UNI Global

- Local unions in Bangladesh (signatories)
  IndustriALL Bangladesh (including NGWF, BIGUF) and BIGWF, BRGWF

- 60+ global brands (signatories)

- NGOs (witnesses)
  Clean Clothes Campaign, Worker Rights Consortium, Maquila Solidarity Network, International Labor Rights Forum

- ILO (independent chair of the committee)
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
OVER 60 GLOBAL BRANDS SIGN
WHY THE ACCORD IS UNPRECEDENTED
5 YEAR ACTION PLAN FOR SAFE FACTORIES

- Accord of Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh covers over 1000 production units
- All commitments legally binding and enforceable
- Central role for workers and unions: union access, occupational health & safety committees, right to refuse dangerous work
- Thorough, independent inspections with full public reports
- Brands must require factories to undergo all necessary renovations and be responsible for ensuring they are financed
- 5 year plan where brands/retailers must make 2-year commitment to sourcing from safe factories
- Brands must end business relationship with any factory that refuses
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY

THE PROCESS

• 12-member planning committee focused on swift implementation: 6 representatives of companies, 6 of global unions

• Implementation plan ready on 8th July 2013

• First priority: inspections and renovations to identify most urgent hazards
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
FOUR MAIN PARTS

- Design the structure of the programme
- Rigorous inspections and remediation
- Worker involvement and transparency
- Supplier incentives to make improvements
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
DESIGN STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

Brands:

• **Classify** each supplier: tier 1, 2, 3
• **Participate** in dispute resolution
• **Cooperate** with the Steering Committee who develops the structure of the program
• **Fund** committees and safety inspector (proportionally to production in Bangladesh, up to $500.000 per year)
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
RIGOROUS INSPECTION AND REMEDIATION

● Inspections:
rigorous standards, public reporting and sharing (confidential) information of suppliers with independent safety inspector who is assigned by the committee

● Remediation:
- require factories to implement corrective action plans
- pay workers during renovations
- ensure workers get a new job when factory is unsafe or loses orders due to condition of the building
- ensure workers can refuse work when it is unsafe
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
WORKER INVOLVEMENT & TRANSPARANCY

• **Training**: require factories to train workers delivered by local unions and experts

• Set up **health and safety commissions** made up of 50% workers chosen by union or elections

• **Complaints procedure**: to be set up by safety inspector

• **Public reporting** on factory compliance and remediation including aggregated list of suppliers in program
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
SUPPLIER INCENTIVES

- System for brands to threaten factories with termination of contracts when they refuse to participate
- Negotiate commercial terms to ensure it's financially interesting to maintain a safe workplace or use alternatives (loans, investment, funding)
- Maintain orders from safe factory for at least 2 years
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
THE IMPLEMENTATION

• Goal to get repairs/renovations started in 3 months or less from July 2013 – immediate focus on checking and resolving most urgent hazards

• Binding nature of Accord gives workers the tools to ensure compliance, but there will be many battles
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY
THE FUTURE

- Legally binding commitments instead of voluntarily CSR
- Worker-led health and safety committees gives workers a say in their own safety (and working conditions)
- Union access to work floor
- Real improvements
- Safe factories
ACCORD ON FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY

SOURCES USED

- Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh
- Worker Right Consortium
- International Labor Rights Forum
- Labour Behind the Label
- Rise BD
- Clean Clothes Campaign
FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information and to keep track of the progress of the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh see:
www.cleanclothes.org