



Transparency in the Bangladesh Apparel Industry

15-16 November 2017
Radisson Blu Hotel
Chittagong, Bangladesh

****Required reading****

Background, Purpose and Relevant Definitions

The purpose of the meeting is to bring together the most important stakeholders working to transform labor and human rights conditions in the Bangladesh apparel industry to discuss the public disclosure of apparel industry data to secure practical and lasting improvements in the industry. For the purpose of this meeting, transparency = public disclosure.

While transparency is becoming a popular theme in industry discussions, there remains considerable apprehension around it. Our mandate is to demystify what transparency is, what it is not, and present how it can bring systemic change to the Bangladesh RMG industry, and what is in it for Bangladesh.

The meeting aims to:

1. Offer a neutral location outside of Dhaka and provide the time and opportunity for stakeholders to speak openly and honestly about both the challenges and opportunities of greater transparency in the Bangladesh RMG;
2. Re-position transparency as a tool for positive change with benefits for actors across the industry;
3. Identify and discuss actions that can be taken to improve accountability through transparency resulting in an improved reputation for the industry;
4. Develop a common understanding of what transparency could look like in the future;
5. Define a path for future collaboration to advance ideas developed during the meeting.

Relevant Definitions

The following definitions are provided to ensure that everyone at the meeting has the same understanding of the terms we are using. There will be a chance to discuss them at the beginning of the meeting.

Transparency

Disclosure of accurate, credible information in a manner that is accessible to all and enables comparison.

Data

We differentiate data from other sources of information that are not standardized, that cannot be tracked, collated and measured over time. For example, an article in the media that describes violations occurring in a factory would be considered information, but not data.

Data relates to metrics about the apparel and footwear industry and the behavior of stakeholders within the industry. ***Data should enable calculation, analysis, or planning.*** Some examples of the type of data that could be disclosed to improve accountability are:

- 1) Working conditions in production facilities
- 2) Provenance of garments, i.e. locations of factories or fields where each garment inputs are sourced or produced
- 3) Purchasing practices (defined below)
- 4) Legal decisions rendered against apparel producing companies or manufacturers.

Purchasing practices

Purchasing practices describe the business relationship defined by brands and buyers for manufacturers, including processes such as forecasting, margins, lead times, order volumes, changes to orders, payment terms and length of supplier relationship.