

October 2021

Statement

Bangladesh National Action Plan on the Labour Sector

Bangladesh has issued a comprehensive action plan to reform the labour sector and better align the legislation with various ILO conventions. Although this is welcomed, amfori does have some concerns

We are disappointed that the deadline to eliminate all forms of child labour has been set at 2025. Although it is a sensitive and complex issue for Bangladesh it is one that should be addressed sooner, rather than later. Similarly, it is disappointing to note that labour reforms within the EPZs are not due to be completed until mid-2025 and we urge Bangladesh to bring this deadline forward. Finally, regular progress reports throughout the implementation of the NAP would be appreciated – both by us, and parties such as the European Parliament which has been particularly vocal on the lack of progress on labour reform.

amfori has [written](#) to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to congratulate her on the NAP but at the same time to raise our concerns. amfori President Richard Dictus highlighting that *“EU human rights due diligence legislation will be in place in the near future. Consequently, companies will be placing far greater scrutiny on social conditions when deciding whether to partner with typical sourcing countries.”*

An important principle of our work is for our members to source from countries that offer workers their full rights and proper working conditions, and that EU companies have sustainability at the heart of their supply chains. Consequently, we were deeply concerned when, at the end of 2019, the Commission and European External Action Service completed a two week visit to Bangladesh and compiled a highly critical report on human and workers’ rights. The Commission then compiled a roadmap of reforms for the country to undertake, which we urged the government to complete as soon as possible. Unfortunately, shortly thereafter the covid-19 pandemic occurred, and all progress stalled.

Therefore, despite our concerns, we welcome the recent announcement by Bangladesh of a National Action Plan to reform the labour sector. In particular, the commitment to ratify the ILO Convention on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (No.138) by December 2021. We also note that other reforms in the NAP should go a long way toward addressing the concerns that we, and others¹, have regarding non-observance of certain ILO conventions.

About amfori

amfori is the leading global business association that promotes open and sustainable trade. We number over 2,400 importers, retailers and brand manufacturers, from over 40 countries and with a combined turnover of more than €1.7 trillion. Our membership includes large retailers, brands, importers and supermarket chains.

¹ [ILO complaint](#)