

Empowering women in Asian supply chains

Shanghai, 7 December 2018 – amfori, the leading global business association for open and sustainable trade, announces the latest achievements of its Women’s Empowerment Programme.

The Women’s Empowerment Programme, which launched in September 2018, encompasses three specific projects in amfori’s three biggest sourcing countries – China, India and Bangladesh. It aims to ensure women’s rights are protected and offers them the training and guidance necessary to advance their careers.

Women make up between 70-90% of garment workers in China, India and Bangladesh. Despite having such a dominant presence, they are disproportionately represented in the lowest tiers of the supply chain and are subject to the worst kinds of discrimination and abuse.

Empowering women will empower communities and drive economies. The European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) says that improving gender equality would lead to an increase in EU GDP per capita of 6.1% to 9.6%, which amounts to €1.95 to €3.15 trillion, by 2050.

The Women Empowerment Programme builds on amfori BSCI’s Code of Conduct, which is based on principles of no gender-based discrimination and no precarious employment, and contributes to the fulfilment of UN SDG 5, Gender equality, and 8, Decent work and economic growth.

The programme’s activities are tailored to local needs and carried out in partnership with key local strategic stakeholders. Activities include:

- **China:** A research-led project partnered with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) to understand the situation and needs of female migrant workers
- **India:** A workshop series in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry to increase awareness among producers of labour rights and grievance mechanisms, with a focus on sexual harassment
- **Bangladesh:** Partnering with CSR Centre and DBL Group in the Shobola Project to train management and female factory workers on issues related to gender, sexual harassment and discrimination in six amfori BSCI factories across Dhaka and Chittagong

Christian Ewert, President of amfori, said, “amfori recognises the importance of the empowering women as a vital element in pushing for a sustainable supply chain, and our members share the same values. They are committed to driving the advancement of women in the workforce, in talent development and in leadership roles. This is not only happening within their own companies and enterprises, but being cascaded down throughout all their supply chains.”

Highlights of the IOM China research include:

- Most surveyed companies are in compliance with the standard regarding wages and policies for human trafficking prevention and fair recruitment
- Migrant workers’ salaries are still significantly lower than the regional and national figures for urban workers
- 87% of surveyed working migrant women said that their overtime pay is 1.5 times higher than the standard pay

- Most of the companies have work harassment policies in place, but 78.2% of interviewees reported that there are no initiatives to support women migrant workers

Through the Women Empowerment Programme, amfori will develop a new type of country-specific expertise and scale up the three projects across more than 40 countries. The association will also draw on the programme's outcomes in its continuous engagement and advocacy for national and EU level initiatives.

Today, amfori hosted the 19th Sino-European CSR Roundtable Forum in collaboration with the China WTO Tribune. The forum's theme was 'Empower Women in the Global Supply Chains'. The event brought together representatives from the Chinese government, CSR organisations, NGOs, business associations and academia to explore the advantages empowering women in the global supply chain.

- END -

About amfori

amfori believes in a world where all trade delivers social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone. We call this Trade with Purpose. We offer our members a practical framework and world-class tools that enable them to manage the social and environmental performance of their supply chains and anticipate trends. We also advocate for progressive policy and collaborate with impactful stakeholders to achieve common aims. www.amfori.org

For further information, please contact:

Kenneth Wong
amfori Network Representative China
Tel: +86 131 4389 9549
Email: kenneth.wong@amfori.org