**Wages**

**Kamrul Hasan,** secretary general of the Akota Garment Workers Federation: “Factory owners can influence the lawmaking process in Bangladesh. Only if brands put pressure on factory owners can we get living wages. We still fight for minimum wages in Bangladesh, living wages remain a dream for us.”

**Kamrul Hassan, General Secretary, AGWF: “**Our factories are becoming green but the workers’ jobs are not becoming green. More than 2-3 hundred thousand workers lost their jobs during the Covid period and have not received any benefits as per law.”

**Safety**

**Amin Amirul Haque,** general secretary National Garment Workers Federation: “As a result of the Accord the safety conditions in the garment and textile industry has improved, but we absolutely need to continue this process, because in Bangladesh there are 5000 factories and the Accord covers 2000 factories.(...) Some of the factories, especially the smaller and subcontracted factories are not covered.”

**Ineke Zeldenrust,** International Coordinator, Clean Clothes Campaign International Office: “The Accord has saved hundreds or even thousands of lives in Bangladesh in the past ten years by preventing factory incidents. We are delighted that, after waiting for a decade, workers in Pakistan will also finally be able to work in factories that are monitored by a credible safety program and will be able to stand up for their own safety. We call on all brands sourcing from Pakistan to sign the Pakistan Accord and urge all brands that have failed to take responsibility for their workers in Bangladesh in the past ten years to rectify that immediately.”

**Scott Nova,** executive director of the Workers Rights Consortium: “The Accord is a challenge to the voluntary code of conduct and monitoring systems, that the brands and retailers continue to utilise across the globe as the primary mechanism for managing the risk to their reputation that derives from the often-poor working conditions and the countries from which they’ve chosen to source their apparel.”

“If we do not have binding agreements, if we do not replace more of these voluntary systems with binding agreements, that we’re going to see the same problems perpetuated year after year, decade after decade in this industry. Hopefully more brands and retailers will understand that ultimately, they won’t be able to defend these voluntary systems if we continue to see workers dying in places like Pakistan and Bangladesh and so forth.”

**Kalpona Akter**, president of the Bangladesh Garment & Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF), “We work shoulder to shoulder [with unionists in Pakistan] to ensure that these improvements go everywhere where our sisters and brothers who are working in the factories are not safe. [The Accord] is in Pakistan now and we will be working to take it to Sri Lanka, India, Morocco, Mauritius - every possible place where our workers are not safe.”

**Freedom of association**

**Rashedul Alam Raju,** general secretary of the Bangladesh Independent Garment Union Federation (BIGUF): “Trade unions and effective representation of workers in the safety committees are vital in establishing and maintaining a healthy industrial relationship between workers and employers and to ensuring safety both for the workers and the industry. Unions enable workers to speak with a unified voice and work proactively with management to address health and safety and other decent work issues through collective bargaining and negotiation. Trade unions are a critical partner in improving safety and working conditions, as they are on the frontlines and know best what reforms are needed to keep workers safe.”

**General**

**Amin Amirul Haque,** general secretary National Garment Workers Federation: “In ten years I want to see our workers receive a living wage rather than a minimum wage. Women workers are the majority in this industry. Women workers are still facing discrimination, in wage, conditions and promotion. If you look at the garment industry in Bangladesh, at the bottom level 90-95% are women. If you look at the managerial side, they are 90-95% men. This type of discrimination, in wage, position, dignity and promotion is faced by women workers. In ten years I hope women workers will face equal opportunity, equal salary, position and promotion.”

**Rashedul Alam Raju,** general secretary of the Bangladesh Independent Garment Union Federation (BIGUF): “The Rana Plaza complex, an eight-story building housing five garment factories, was unsafely constructed and under-regulated.[[1]](#footnote-0) Corporate-sponsored voluntary social audits failed to detect building safety issues at Rana Plaza before the collapse.[[2]](#footnote-1)[[3]](#footnote-2) Furthermore, systemic repression of freedom of association prevailing at that time (and still prevailing to a large extent) made it challenging for workers to organize unions and raise their voices collectively to negotiate for safer working conditions. With these skewed power dynamics, workers at Rana Plaza could not refuse when their employers demanded they return to work in spite of a known safety risk.”

1. https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/video/collapse-at-rana-plaza [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. https://www.ecchr.eu/en/case/more-for-show-than-safety-certificates-in-the-textile-industry/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. https://cleanclothes.org/news/2013/06/25/bsci-10th-anniversary-shame-over-rana-plaza [↑](#footnote-ref-2)