

## **Brands back minimum wage demands in Bangladesh**

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**DHAKA - Leading brands and retailers, including H&M, Inditex and Primark, have joined calls for a substantial increase in the minimum wage for garment workers in Bangladesh.**

**Members of the Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT) initiative have set out their support in a letter to the country's RMG (readymade garments) Minimum Wage Board.**

**Other signatories include ASOS, Bestseller, Big W, C&A, Cotton On Group, Esprit, G-Star Raw, Kmart, Lidl, New Look, Next, Pentland, PVH, Tchibo, Tesco and Zalando, as well as the IndustriALL global union.**

The minimum wage for garment workers in Bangladesh has been BDT8,000 (US\$75) a month since 2018 and unions have been demanding a rise to BDT23,000 (US\$215) a month.

A tripartite board was set up to review it in March but has still to reach a conclusion as garment workers reportedly struggle to make ends meet amidst spiralling inflation.

The ACT letter urgently calls on the RMG Minimum Wage Board to "agree through a peaceful process to a higher minimum wage for the sector", and urges the sector to respect freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.

"In recent years, Bangladesh's RMG sector has seen remarkable development into a leader of global garment and apparel production. The industry has taken decisive steps towards a safer and more sustainable industry," it says.

"Simultaneously, Bangladesh's largest trade partners - the US and the European Union - have begun to implement new due diligence laws and requirements with an increased focus on working conditions and respect for fundamental rights for workers throughout our supply chains.

"These requirements have focused expectations by consumers and governments on production countries like Bangladesh to continue upholding, respecting and protecting rights of workers. One of the fundamental human rights is the right to a just remuneration that ensures an existence worthy of human dignity.

"ACT brands recognise the crucial contribution brands need to make through their purchasing practices and engagement with manufacturers and suppliers in Bangladesh in support of higher wages. We have therefore made commitments to facilitate the payment of living wages through our purchasing practices."

ACT, which campaigns for living wages for workers in textile and garment supply chains, sent copies of the letter to Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporter Association (BGMEA) president Faruque Hassan and Amirul Haque Amin, president of the IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC).