

Voluntary Declaration Buyers' Forum Pakistan **Promoting Sustainable Textile & Garments Sector in Pakistan**

There is strong consensus that compliance with environmental, labour and health & safety standards is critical to business productivity and success. The Government of Pakistan, buyers, factory management and workers need to work together to address non-compliance to international standards/conventions and in particular, those under Generalised Schemes of Preferences Plus (GSP Plus). There is a necessity to adopt an integrated approach involving national governments', workers' and employers' organisations as well as international buyers.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC), International Labour Organisation (ILO) through the Better Work Programme, as well as the Netherlands Embassy, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan have facilitated major buyers, (international brands who trade with Pakistan textile sector), to organise themselves to discuss and deliberate on issues of sustainable practices, improved compliance and reporting on environmental, labour and health & safety standards and their implementation in the garment and textile sector in Pakistan.

17 brands came together at the first meeting in December 2014 in Islamabad and announced the need for a establishing a buyers forum in Pakistan that shall act as a representative body of international brands that are committed to promote compliance of standards. A second meeting took place in February 2015 in Karachi where the group agreed to a governance structure that will help adopting a systematic approach of prioritising issues, engaging with key stakeholders and finding solutions through knowledge exchange on best practices to improve working conditions.

The next step is to formalise this commitment and the shared vision of creating, advocating and supporting a conducive environment in textile and garment sectors for better trade and investment.

The declaration below is voluntary and may be disseminated to a wider group of buyers to expand the support to the aspirations set out in this declaration. It symbolises the importance and vitality of the issues discussed above and demonstrates the willingness to address these issues with concerted efforts.

We, international buyers of the textile and garments industry in Pakistan, commit to promoting fundamental principles and rights at work through the following aspirations:

1. Assemble as a voluntary forum of international buyers to discuss and deliberate upon issues related to the trade and investment in textile and garments sector;
2. Engage in dialogue with the government of Pakistan, trade associations, suppliers, trade unions and other relevant partners to advocate harmonisation of national labour laws with international standards and their compliance in the textile and garments sector;
3. Promote a dialogue for policy and programme level interventions in support of social, labour and environmental compliance to reap optimum benefit from the different schemes, including the European Union's GSP-Plus status granted to Pakistan;
4. Advocate improved trade and social linkages by promoting a more sustainable textile and garments sector;
5. Promote exchange of good practices of the industry and promote competitiveness and productivity;
6. Support research and facilitate access to gather knowledge on models and best practices at national, regional and global level to explore potential opportunities of growth for textile and garments sector.

Technical partners

ILO, IFC and the Embassy of Netherlands are technical partners and will provide technical facilitation to the Buyers Forum in Pakistan in realising the above commitments.

Legal Disclaimer: The present Declaration is not legally binding on either Signatory and shall not be construed as an endorsement by the technical partners.

Signatories:

Brand _____
Representative _____