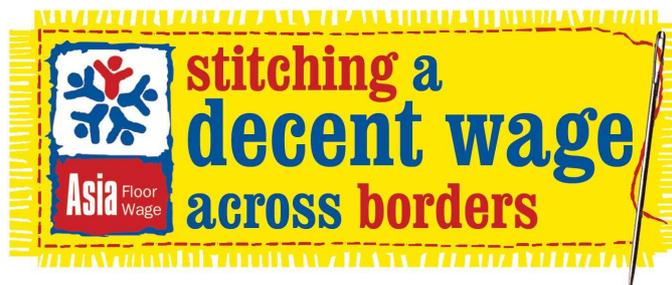


Press statement:

From the Asia Floor Wage Alliance



This is the statement of the international Asia Floor Wage Alliance in response to the findings of the People's Tribunal on the Minimum Living Wage and Decent Working Conditions as a Fundamental Human Right which took place from 5-6th February 2012, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The judges recommend brands to “move beyond “good intentions” and recognize and prioritize the need for human rights in the workplace in their **pricing and procurement policies**” which would deliver “mandatory living wage”.

The International Asia Floor Wage Alliance thanks the judges and welcomes their findings.

The tribunal has heard serious evidence demonstrating how poverty wages impact the lives of garment workers, here in Cambodia, but also more generally across Asia.

Due to inflation, the real value of wage for Cambodia's garment workers has fallen by over 14% since 2000, even with the \$5 wage increase that was achieved in 2010 as a result of the big strike of garment workers.

Stark evidence showed that low wages can lead directly to a dangerously low calorific intake, and the consequences of this were seen last year in the mass fainting incidents. Other important facts brought to light included the dire effects of such short term contract work and low wages on family life and living conditions as well as perpetuating long working hours. 200 workers offered concrete evidence of the impact of poverty wages - their stories should be a call to action for the international garment industry.

So far the international brand response was inadequate. Despite the fact that three of the four testimonies centred on violations happening at H&M suppliers, H&M failed to attend and to account for the evidence brought against them by victims of human rights abuses. Gap also decided not to attend. This was disappointing.

Although we appreciate the efforts made by adidas and Puma to publicly present their perspective, much more needs to be done by brands to tackle the endemic problems caused by poverty wages in the garment industry globally. Much talk was made of addressing the consequences of low wage, such as malnutrition, long working hours, slum living conditions, lack of family life etc. Yet brand responses did not go far enough in suggesting solutions showing concrete steps in addressing the source of the problem - that workers need to be paid more and that this cost has to be paid by somebody.

Mounting evidence produced by this tribunal, and the tribunal held in Sri Lanka last year, indicates that an international collaborative effort is necessary to address the clear human rights violations raised. Unions, brands, manufacturers, multi-stakeholder initiatives, workers'rights organisations and governments must work together to address the need for a living wage for Asian garment workers.

We believe that some consensus on the definition of a living wage is necessary. A living wage for a standard working week of max. 48 hours must provide for the basic needs of workers and their families and leave some discretionary income, where a family is defined as two adults and two children. The Asia Floor Wage provides a concrete figure across Asian borders to calculate this in real wage terms.

Ms. Anannya Bhattacharjee, coordinator of the Asia Floor Wage Alliance said, “Wages are a cross border problem and needs to be addressed as such – we all must work together.”

Dr. Jeroen Merk, of the International Clean Clothes Campaign said, “Consumers must keep up the pressure while buyers sourcing from Cambodia, such as H&M and Gap, need to answer the question of why they are still not paying a basic living wage to garment workers”

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