



ALLIANCE
FOR BANGLADESH WORKER SAFETY

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Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety applauds Bangladesh government decision to allow duty-free imports of fire and safety equipment

Import duties eliminated following strong encouragement from Bangladeshi, U.S. and Canadian retail and trade groups

Washington, D.C. (May 2, 2014) – Following advocacy efforts from key apparel associations and retailers, the Bangladesh government has announced it will eliminate import tariffs on safety equipment like sprinkler systems and fire doors, which have historically added fees of up to 60 percent of the purchase price and put these upgrades out of reach for many factory owners.

Several associations, including the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA), the Canadian Apparel Federation (CAF), the National Retail Federation (NRF), the Retail Council of Canada (RCC), the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) and the United States Fashion Industry Association (FIA) recently requested Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to relax the import tariffs in order to ease the pressures felt by factory owners and retail companies working to address factory safety issues.

“The Alliance and our partners applaud the Bangladesh government for taking this critically important step,” said former U.S. Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, Independent Chair of the Alliance. “This decision eliminates a significant hurdle in the effort to overhaul safety across the entire garment sector, and will ultimately speed efforts to ensure the safety of factory workers.”

The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety and its partners are playing a leading role in ongoing efforts to repair and remediate garment factories. The Alliance has inspected more than 450 factories to date and will complete inspections of the 640 apparel factories from which its members source by July. Remediation of these factories is now underway, during which the addition of fire doors and sprinkler systems will represent important upgrades.

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About The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety

The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety was founded by a group of North American apparel companies, retailers and brands who joined together to develop and launch the Bangladesh Worker Safety Initiative, a binding, five-year undertaking that will be transparent, results-oriented, measurable and verifiable with the intent of improving safety in Bangladeshi ready-made garment (RMG) factories. The Alliance provides global apparel companies and retailers the unprecedented opportunity to come together and put forward concrete solutions to issues that impact apparel and retail industries worldwide. More information about the Alliance can be found at www.bangladeshworkersafety.org.