

She shouldn't pay the price for factory closures. Now, she'll receive up to four months' wages while we make her workplace safer.

#Alliance1Year



Alliance Announcements

STATEMENT BY ALLIANCE CHAIR ELLEN TAUSCHER ON THE DECISION OF THE BANGLADESH ACCORD TO REJECT ALLIANCE INSPECTION REPORTS FOR SOME SHARED FACTORIES

28 August 2014.

Significant progress has been made in the past year in improving factory safety since the establishment of the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety (Alliance), the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) and the Government of Bangladesh-run inspection programs. More work remains, including building local capacity, giving workers a stronger voice, ensuring thorough remediation, and reducing the cost and burden on workers and factories alike as they implement safety improvements

One of the critical areas that must be resolved is how to handle the inspection of factories shared by both Accord and Alliance brands. From the beginning, we have advocated a joint approach to develop a protocol and understanding for shared factories to ensure that safety standards are met without subjecting workers and owners to duplicate inspections. We understand from a recent announcement by the Accord that it will reject inspections in shared factories that were conducted by Alliance Member Brands prior to the formation of the Alliance. This is a setback for garment factory safety efforts in Bangladesh, and is based on incorrect information. The Accord itself has accepted pre-Standard inspections conducted by an Accord member brand.

As we announced in July of this year, the Alliance completed its first round of fire, electrical and structural safety inspections in nearly 600 factories—representing 100 percent of the factories from which Alliance Member brands source. The majority of these inspections were carried out by one of seven Qualified Audit Firms operating in Bangladesh that have been retained and overseen by Alliance staff. We publish the results of these inspection reports on our website on a rolling basis. A minority of these inspections began prior to alignment on a harmonized safety Standard by firms retained by a small number of Member Brands, and included follow-up visits to gather additional data or validate findings by one of the seven approved Alliance firms to ensure that the report was in keeping with the Alliance equivalency requirements.

The Alliance has a strict equivalency process in place requiring that all inspections conducted by our Member Brands meet the harmonized safety Standard agreed to by the Alliance, the Accord and the National Tripartite Committee (NTC)—including those conducted before the new Standard was adopted. All such inspections must be conducted by a firm whose processes and expertise underwent review and approval by our Committee of Experts. Further, these inspections are subject to independent oversight and our quality control process, including a thorough review by Alliance engineers, the Committee of Experts and additional international quality control firms. After this extensive review and quality control process, we determined that existing inspections conducted by three Alliance members could be supplemented to meet Alliance standards and procedures. Other inspections that did not meet the harmonized Standard were required by the Alliance to be re-inspected. This was the only way the Alliance could have confidence that the inspections conducted were done in a thorough, professional and independent manner.

The Accord indicated that they have “methodological concerns” with Alliance inspection reports, yet they have never raised these concerns with us, despite our interaction on the ground in Bangladesh and the fact that we shared our inspection protocols with the Accord many months ago—without receiving the Accord’s in return.

The Alliance continues to demonstrate progress and achieve new milestones. In addition to completing our first round of inspections, in our first year of operation we have trained more than one million workers in safety, taken the lead in executing joint initiatives like the International Expo on Building and Fire Safety, piloted a confidential worker helpline and begun remediation in 50 percent of our factories. We also are committed to providing compensation to workers displaced by factory remediation efforts, including support for lost wages for up to four months in partnership with the factory. All of these activities are detailed in our [annual report](#), which can be found on the Alliance website at www.bangladeshworkersafety.org.

Increasing thoughtful and respectful collaboration between the Alliance, the Accord, and the Government of Bangladesh is critical to creating a more effective inspection process and building much-needed capacity within the Bangladesh government, which will be responsible for ensuring factory safety long after our five-year efforts draw to a close. We continue to invite the Accord to partner on accepting inspections and in other areas like our worker training programs and creating a joint advisory board. We believe that working together allows us to achieve our common long-term goals: permanent transformation and improvement of the entire Bangladesh garment industry.

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