Joint Statement on the 2026 Minimum Wage Review for Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment Sector – 19.11.26

The undersigned organisations call on the Bangladesh Minimum Wage Board to give full consideration to the demands of workers and their representatives and set the minimum wage at a level that corresponds to a living wage. As partners in the industry we will encourage our members to reflect the increase of the minimum wage in their existing and future orders.

Independent research shows that the current minimum wage of Tk14,300 falls far short of the estimated living wage of approximately Tk33,000[1]. Therefore, workers' representatives on the Minimum Wage Board have proposed a minimum wage of Tk32,000 for skilled workers, and Tk30,000 for trainees.

The current minimum wage, set at the end of 2023 and adjusted annually since, was already below what workers needed for a basic standard of living. Since then, inflation has increased the cost of living and has widened the gap further.

In 2021, the UN confirmed that Bangladesh meets all three criteria to graduate from least developed country status - now scheduled for November 2029. In FY2025-26 RMG exports reached $38.70 billion, around four-fifths of Bangladesh's merchandise exports. The workers who made this possible deserve a share in that progress.

The Minimum Wage Board, appointed on 1 November 2026 and due to conclude in December, gives Bangladesh the opportunity to address the living wage gap in the industry and set a minimum wage that ensures better living standards for RMG workers. This could be achieved through effective social dialogue and meaningful consultation with worker representatives that is essential in the wage-setting process. In addition, it means that no worker faces dismissal, blacklisting, criminal charges or arrest for peacefully exercising their legitimate labour rights.

A transparent process and outcome where workers' demands are considered seriously and where the government and industrial partners respect core labour standards will boost brands and retailers' confidence for future sourcing in Bangladesh.

We recognise that international buyers share responsibility for enabling suppliers to pay higher wages. Therefore, we will encourage our members to exercise responsible purchasing practices by:

- reflecting the increase of the minimum wage in their existing and future orders with suppliers in Bangladesh;
- avoid cancelling or reducing orders or shifting sourcing away from Bangladesh in response to the wage increase.

Our organisations represent 2500+ international brands, retailers, suppliers, and workers in global supply chains. Our member companies source a significant share of products and services from more than 2900 factories in Bangladesh and are committed to responsible business conduct as well as to sustainable trade.

[1] Global Living Wage Coalition: Tk33,343 (€245) for Dhaka (Nov. 2026)