



HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN IN THE GARMENT SECTOR

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SECOND PLENARY SESSION, PART II: ENGAGING JOINTLY FOR INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS

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Introductory statement

First of all, I would like to thank the European Commission to have invited the Clean Clothes Campaign to participate in this important conference. Three years after the Rana Plaza collapse, our thoughts go to the workers, mostly women, who were obliged to get in the factory that morning to supply the European market. We are also thinking to the victims of other industrial incidents who are still waiting for full compensation, such as Ali workers in Pakistan.

The Clean Clothes Campaign is a global network of workers organisations, ngos and consumers organisations whose vision is that garment workers are able to enjoy their rights and to defend and improve these rights.

Since the beginning of the nineties, the network is known for naming and shaming companies for human rights abuses in the garment supply chain.

After the Rana Plaza collapse, CCC was campaigning more two years long to get European client companies contributing to the compensation fund. This was achieved in June 2015, ensuring full compensation to the 5 0000 survivors.

The CCC invest also much energy building tools and proposals for the practical commitment of companies and public authorities to respect workers rights on the factory floor. Example, since 2011, means far before the Rana Plaza collapse, the CCC together with local and global unions and some companies was developing a MOU to contribute preventing factory fire and collapsing. Doing so, the CCC was paving the way of the Accord for fire and building safety signed today by more than 190 companies, concerning the inspection and corrective actions in more than 1600 suppliers for ensuring the safety of more than 2 millions of workers.

This is with the same commitment that we contributed to develop ideas and to identify priorities for actions to be taken by the European Commission for a responsible management of the supply chain.

Do you think the EU can bring added value in this area? If so, where precisely?

The Clean Clothes Campaign does not believe that the added value of the EU sit in initiating additional multisakeholders platforms or sharing good practices.

We believe that Time is now to implement UNGP on Business and Human rights along the global garment supply chain both outside and inside EU. According to these guidelines, EU has the obligation to protect human rights and companies have the responsibility to respect them along their supply chain.

As demonstrated through the Rana Plaza struggle for compensation, voluntary CSR does not guaranty this respect by itself. Even more, some of the identified companies started to deny their relationship with a Rana Plaza factory.

Among the proposals made to the European Commission by the CCC, I would like to emphasize the need of transparency, understood as the link between European companies and their suppliers

Transparency is a prerequisite for responsibility and accountability of European companies. It is also needed in order for European consumers to buy responsibly and for workers to access to remedy.

As transparency is today a fashionable word, we would like to sum in 4 points what could be the steps to be taken immediately by the European Commission in this matter:

1. To operate a standardised shipping database at an EU level in order to identify links between suppliers and European companies
2. To include supply chain traceability in a product code linked to a public website
3. To require that companies report, on an annual basis, on the effectiveness of their responses to address the adverse impacts of their activities on human rights, including in their supply chain. This can be done through the implementation of the non-financial reporting directive and its translation by Member States,
4. To require that companies disclose the names, addresses and contact details of their supplier facilities, subcontracted suppliers (tiers 2 and 3) and labour agents managing home-working facilities, at least on an annual basis. This can be done through the directive on safety product presently in discussion.

There is a real responsibility of the EU to help the companies who are engaged in more socially sustainable business to not lose their competitiveness. EU needs to set the rules.