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**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
TECHNICAL WORKSHOP
ON
STANDARDS FOR ASSESSMENT OF BUILDING, FIRE AND
ELECTRICAL SAFETY OF RMG FACTORIES IN BANGLADESH
CLOSING STATEMENT
HOTEL SONARGAON, DHAKA
SEPTEMBER 7, 2013**

Co-hosts of the workshop: Mikail Shipar, Secretary, Ministry of Labor and Employment and Srinivas Reddy, Country Director-Bangladesh, ILO

The distinguished Foreign Secretary and Commerce Secretary

Other representatives of the Government of Bangladesh, fellow diplomats, apparel manufacturers, labor movements, buyers, ILO, academia and all who, like me, seek safe working conditions for Bangladeshi workers

Asalaam ‘malaikum and good afternoon

November 24, 2012 ... a day of infamy ... Tazreen Fashions fire ... 112 dead, many injured

April 24, 2013 ... a day of infamy ... Rana Plaza building collapse ... 1131 dead, many injured

Tazreen Fashions, Rana Plaza ... these words are known the world over ... these words have entered our lexicon ... these words are defined to mean senseless death, death caused by greed, by corruption and by ignorance ... senseless death ... 1243 lives snuffed out in these two disasters ... and hundreds grievously injured or maimed ... thousands of families destroyed forever ... all innocent people who had done no wrong, who had committed no offense, who wanted simply to get on with life ... all wantonly destroyed.

Your task today, our task more broadly is to ensure that these lives shall not have been destroyed in vain ... to ensure that from the ashes and crumbled concrete of these two disasters comes a determination, a commitment from all stakeholders ... manufacturers, buyers, consumers, workers, Bangladesh government, ILO, civil society, international friends and partners ... that

Bangladesh will never again have another Tazreen Fashions or Rana Plaza disaster ... never again.

This will not be easy as there are thousands and thousands of factories, and all these factories must be brought to meet fundamental labor, fire safety and factory structural soundness standards ... all of them ... every one of them ... no exceptions.

This technical workshop, which will soon close, was a critical step down the path to ensuring that Bangladesh's apparel factories are safe. Thanks to the Government of Bangladesh and the ILO, this workshop began development of uniform fire and structural soundness technical standards that meet the expectations of all stakeholders. Achieving agreement on standards will be an important milestone in ending confusion over conflicting safety standards and duplication of efforts, in ensuring Bangladeshi workers no longer risk their lives when they go to work.

Agreement on uniform fire safety and factory structural soundness standards will be an important step, but we must also take other steps to create an effective, credible factory inspection regime. Stakeholders must also develop common standards for labor rights, common credentials for and training of all inspectors, common inspection checklists and reporting requirements, and, most importantly, a common publicly accessible database, listing all/all factories and the inspection results along with inspectors' names for each inspection, listing recommendations for needed remedial actions for each factory, listing progress or lack thereof in fulfilling those needed remedial steps for each factory, and listing fines and other sanctions levied against those factories that came up short.

The apparel sector is at a critical juncture. It can choose to transform itself by meeting international standards for labor rights, fire safety and factory structure soundness, thus becoming a Preferred Brand in the global market place. Or, it can choose to delay, to obfuscate, to undertake minimal, half-hearted measures in the hope that the world will soon forget ... but this is the path to assured destruction of Bangladesh's apparel industry as this road will lead only to more Tazreen Fashions and Rana Plaza disasters ... disasters that will drive apparel buyers and consumers away from Bangladesh.

I believe Bangladesh and all the stakeholders must choose the path of transformation, putting Bangladesh on a trajectory to be the number one apparel exporter in the world.

Now is the moment of transformation.

Never before have conditions been better for transforming the apparel sector. The Sustainability Compact, adopted by Bangladesh and its leading buyers the US and EU, entails public commitments for transformative change; the GSP Reinstatement Action Plan provides a road map for achieving global standards for labor rights and worker safety; the buyers/the brands, as we have seen today, are committed as never before to supporting change; the ILO is preparing to undertake a huge program to coordinate efforts to improve the sector and to extend change to all factories, including those not impacted by the Alliance and Accord; the ILO is considering launch of a Better Work program, the biggest in history; workers are organizing independent unions as never before; donors and partners, including the US, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, UK and others, are offering significant resources and technical assistance, and, most importantly, the Government of Bangladesh is constructively committed and engaged in leading the way for change in the apparel sector.

Indeed, now is the moment of transformation of the apparel sector.

I commit myself, my mission, my government to do everything that we can to support this transformative change, to help ensure that Bangladeshi workers need never again experience the horror of another Tazreen Fashions fire or Rana Plaza building collapse.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery.*