

Moving Beyond the Shadow of the Rana Plaza Tragedy
In Search of a Closure and Restructuring Strategy

Fourth Monitoring Report

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Section 1 - Background to the Fourth Monitoring Report

Two years have elapsed since the Rana Plaza Tragedy - the worst ever man-made disaster in the Bangladesh industrial sector. The tragedy has resulted in limitless suffering for the families of the deceased and injured workers. Despite various measures having been taken over the previous two years, a large number of issues remain unresolved. During the first year since the incident (year one)², the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), in association with fourteen civil society think-tanks, undertook the Independent Monitoring Initiative to track the progress made in implementing a range of measures initiated in response to the Rana Plaza Tragedy.

The Independent Monitoring Initiative focused on seven specific areas of work. To achieve the targeted objectives, various activities were conducted during year one. These included the organisation of three dialogues at the national level with major stakeholders, and the publication of three monitoring reports, released 100 days, nine months and one year after the incident. These reports have been widely used as reference documents on the Rana Plaza Tragedy. The Independent Monitoring Initiative concluded one year after its inception.

With the second anniversary of the Rana Plaza Tragedy approaching, the CPD considers it pertinent to revisit the progress made in the areas outlined in the Independent Monitoring Initiative. While considerable progress has been made towards the realisation of certain measures during this period, the implementation of a number of measures remains incomplete. An in-depth analysis is required to identify ongoing issues in detail and to understand the reasons behind this slow progress. It had been expected that relevant stakeholders would fulfil all of their commitments within two years of the incident, however, the commitment of stakeholders has been a concern. This poses a critical question - how is Bangladesh going to end the difficulties that it has faced as a result of the Rana Plaza Tragedy?

Section 2 - Objectives and Structure of the Report

2.1 Objectives

Following the Rana Plaza Tragedy, short, medium and long-term initiatives were launched by stakeholders with the aim of improving the lives of victims and positively developing the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector. These initiatives have had varying levels of impact on the livelihoods of victims and the development of the RMG sector. After two years of targeted programmes, it appears that the Bangladesh RMG sector remains in the midst of reform. This presents an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives based on their stated objectives. Moreover, there is a growing need to produce a revised timeline stating updated completion dates for each of the measures and a final end date for the conclusion of the restructuring process. As such, the focus of this study is on how the Bangladesh RMG sector can fully implement all of the promised measures and to propose additional strategies for the future. The present report intends to examine different changes from that framework.

² The use of “year one” throughout the report refers to the period of April 2013- March 2014. The use of “year two” throughout the report refers to the period of April 2014-March 2015.

To monitor the progress made over the previous two years requires taking into account both the overall progress achieved by the end of the two years and the incremental progress that has been made during year two. This report will be alert to making this distinction while analysing the available information. Such a distinction is necessary to identify any difference between the pace of progress between the first and second years.

2.2 Structure

This report is organised along five themes in nine sections. Following the background discussion, report framework and structure in Sections 1 and 2, the humanitarian and social aspects of victims and their families will be discussed in Sections 3, 4 and 5. These sections will shed light on the debate regarding unidentified victims, the treatment available for injured workers, long-term financial support for victims and their families, support for children and rescuers, and re-employment of workers. A primary discussion point will be whether the various initiatives undertaken to date meet the long-term needs of victims, their families and other dependents. Section 6 will then discuss reform and restructuring of the RMG sector. This section will track progress made in implementing the US Trade Representative (USTR) Plan of Action, the EU Sustainability Compact, and the National Tripartite Action Plan (NTPA). The analysis will focus particularly on assessing the level of progress made over the previous two years compared to the initial commitments set, and consider whether the progress made is sufficient to realise the completion of all initiated actions in the near future. Section 7 will reveal that the major areas of work that have been carried out under the initiatives of the Accord, the Alliance and the NTPA supported by the ILO include the identification of major weaknesses in the fire, electrical and building safety issues in the RMG factories and the undertaking of necessary corrective measures. This section will provide a detailed discussion on the progress made of those activities with a view to assessing whether the progress made is sufficient to facilitate the completion of those activities. Section 8 will identify and briefly discuss the contribution made by development partners to reform and restructuring of the RMG sector. Section 9 will provide a descriptive statistical analysis of the recent slowdown in apparels exports from Bangladesh to major markets in the context of the Rana Plaza Tragedy. Finally, Section 10 will present a series of concluding remarks that will reflect on whether the Bangladesh RMG sector is reaching 'closure' in regards to the Rana Plaza Tragedy and thereby whether Bangladesh will be able to rebuild its global image in the foreseeable future.

Section 3 - The Numbers Debate: Why are we yet to resolve the issue of the total number of missing workers?

The debate over the total number of victims of the Rana Plaza Tragedy continues. According to reports by the Rana Plaza Coordination Cell in the Second Monitoring Report (CPD, 2014) a total of 2,535 workers suffered injuries, 1,134 workers died and 189 workers were identified as missing. Of the 365 workers who were not traced, a total of 206 workers have so far been identified through DNA testing, with a total of 159 workers still claimed to be missing, a figure that is currently being verified. Nevertheless, numbers continue to vary significantly between sources (see Table 1).

During year two, no additional missing workers have been identified through the use of DNA testing or through the verification of documents submitted by family members of the victims. Although the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has stated its plan to verify missing workers, such efforts need to be urgently realised as family members of the unidentified missing workers continue to experience immense emotional and financial suffering.

Table 1: Current status of missing workers, by source

Source	Date	Number of Individuals Reported Missing	Number of Individuals Identified	Number of Individuals still Recorded Missing
The Daily Star	8 March 2015	322	200	122
The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)	1 February 2015	365	206	159 (identification underway)
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)		NA	206	NA
Dhaka Tribune	15 March 2015	NA	98	166

Source: Authors, CPD

Section 4 - A Snapshot of the Lives and Living Conditions of Victims and their Families

Incidents on the scale of the Rana Plaza Tragedy often severely affect the livelihoods of victims and their families unless they are provided with proper and adequate support. The level of improvement in their wellbeing as a result of various support measures provides an indication of the level of commitment of national and international stakeholders.

In April 2015, the CPD conducted telephone interviews with a selected number of victims and their family members. A total of twelve individuals were interviewed, including six workers who had suffered injuries as a result of the incident, four family members of deceased workers, one family member of a deceased worker who had been identified through DNA testing, and one family member of an unidentified deceased worker. The interviews aimed to ascertain the current state of each worker's physical condition, the treatment received for their injuries and the source of finance for this treatment, their current employment status and income levels, and the level of financial support that they had received. Table 2 presents a summary of this information.

Despite the implementation of various initiatives, the living conditions of victims and their family members remain below the level enjoyed prior to the Rana Plaza Tragedy. Living conditions are particularly poor for those workers who suffered severe injuries in the incident, and for the families of workers who are deceased but yet to be identified. Among the injured workers, only a few are employed locally in off-farm jobs, after receiving training as part of initiatives implemented by numerous organisations. However, in most cases their level of income is below that which they had previously earned. Many individuals remain unemployed as they are unable to engage in daily work as a result of

their injuries. All of the victims interviewed reported that they continue to suffer from a range of physical and mental difficulties. While some individuals have had to spend significant sums of money on medical treatment over the previous year, others have been unable to access the necessary treatment due to a lack of personal funds. Most of the victims have children who require essential services, such as education, which is difficult to provide with such limited incomes.

It had been agreed that all victims' expenses (including those incurred by their families and other dependents) were to be financed by national and international organisations. While all of the respondents were in receipt of financial support from these organisations, the amount of financial support received varied widely, from as low as Tk. 75,000 to Tk. 12 lakh. This variation in the levels of financial support is largely as a result of the difference between the claimed income of each claimant and the amount of money received (in two instalments) from the Rana Plaza Trust Fund. Significant progress has been made in the provision of financial support to the families of missing workers particularly those who have been identified through DNA testing.

Overall, despite having been promised comprehensive financial support to cover both their monthly and medical expenses, the amount of financial support that has so far been received by victims and their families is insufficient to meet these needs.

Table 2: Physical and financial conditions of selected victims and their relatives, as of 21 April 2015

Name	Age	Married (Y/N)	No. of Children	Factory of Employment	Previous Earnings inc. overtime (Tk.)	Current Employment	Current Earnings (Tk.)	Current Total Family Earnings (Tk.)	Ongoing Physical Problems	Total Spent on Treatment (Tk.)	Financial Support for Treatment	Total Support Received (Tk.)
Mr Sumon (injured)	19	N	0	New Wave Style Ltd.	7,500	Grocery shop assistant	7,500	7,500 + interest on deposit	Pain in waist and afraid of sound	10,000-15,000	None	Bkash (phase one) - 75,000
Mr Abdur Rashid (injured)	29	Y	1	Ether Tex Ltd.	10,000	Animal husbandry and farming	5,000-6,000	5,000-6,000 + interest on deposit	Pain in fingers on left hand	0	None	Bkash (phase one) - 95,000
Mrs Rekha Khatun (injured)	25	Y	1	New Wave Style Ltd.	4,500	Unemployed	0	4,000-5,000 + interest on deposit	Headache and pain in waist	10,000-12,000	None	Bkash (phase one) - 65,000 + DBBL (phase two) - 50,000
Md Abdul Halim (injured)	25	Y	2	New Wave Style Ltd.	14,300	Unemployed	0	Interest on deposit	Chest pain and a respiratory problem	10,000-12,000	None	60,000 + DBBL (phase two) - 46,000 (expected)
Mr Khaled Reza Pintu (injured)	45	Y	3	New Wave Style Ltd.	40,000	Shopkeeper	15,000-20,000	15,000-20,000 + interest on deposit	Pain in hand	4,000-5,000	None	CRP - 70,000 + Bkash (phase one) - 90,000
Miss Shampa (injured)	18	N	0	New Wave Bottom Ltd.	5,000	Unemployed	0	7,000-8,000 + interest on deposit	Pain in waist	7,000-8,000	None	Bkash (phase one) - 80,000
Miss Shyamali Khatun (unidentified)	20	N	0	New Wave Bottom Ltd.	7,500	N/A	N/A	9,000 + interest on deposit	N/A	N/A	N/A	DBBL (phase two) - 12 lakh
Miss Akhi (unidentified)	18	N	0	New Wave Style Ltd.	10,000	N/A	N/A	5,000-6,000 + interest on deposit	N/A	N/A	N/A	7 lakh
Mrs Begum (identified)	35	Y	2	New Wave Style Ltd.	5,000	N/A	N/A	6,000 + interest on deposit	N/A	N/A	N/A	3 lakh + DBBL (phase two) - 80,000
Mr Shahin (deceased)	25	Y	1	New Wave Bottom Ltd.	10,000	N/A	N/A	Not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	PM's Fund - 1 lakh + Bkash (phase one) - 95,000
Mrs Merina (deceased)	27	Y	1	New Wave Bottom Ltd.	7,000	N/A	N/A	8,000-9,000 + interest on deposit	N/A	N/A	N/A	PM's Fund - 1 lakh + Bkash (phase one) - 95,000
Mr Harun-ur-Rashid (deceased)	36	Y	1	New Wave Style Ltd.	12,000	N/A	N/A	Not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	PM's Fund - 1 lakh
Mr Abdul Kader Rubel (deceased)	25	Y	1	Phantom Tac Ltd.	20,000	N/A	N/A	Not available	N/A	N/A	N/A	PM's Fund - 1 lakh + DBBL (phase two) - 20 lakh (expected)

Source: Authors, CPD

Section 5 - Support for the Victims of the Rana Plaza Tragedy: How issues are being resolved?

5.1 Long-Term Financial Support: Resolving the issue

It is of the utmost importance to monitor the level of long-term financial support provided to victims and their families throughout year two as such support is essential to ensure a minimum standard of living. During year one, most victims received support that they were legally entitled to (for example, their wages for April, 2013 (24 days), overtime allowances (number of hours), attendance bonuses (number of days), and production bonuses (monthly fixed)), in addition to immediate and short-term support from a number of organisations and public donations. Such support immensely benefitted the families of deceased and injured workers and ensured that they could meet their immediate needs. Funding support contributions were provided by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA), Primark (one of the retailers sourcing from Rana Plaza), and a number of development partners.³ Unfortunately, however, the families of unidentified workers did not receive adequate support during this time.

A primary focus of this report is to assess whether the long-term financial support that had been promised to victims by national and international organisations has been disbursed. Two specific initiatives for the provision of long-term financial needs have been assessed. Under the direction of the High Court, a national committee estimated the compensation needs of victims and their families by casualty level (including deceased, injured to varying degrees, etc.). The committee proposed the following sums: Tk. 1,450,000 (US\$ 18,600) for each family of a deceased or missing worker, Tk. 750,000 (US\$ 9,600) for victims who had lost one limb, Tk. 450,000 (US\$ 5,800) to cover treatment costs for each injured worker, and Tk. 150,000 (US\$ 1,900) for mental distress (CPD, 2014).⁴ The committee submitted its report to the High Court in February 2014, however, no further progress has been made since then.

A number of victims received long-term financial support from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund in year one. A total of Tk. 25 crore was provided to the families of 976 deceased workers, at Tk. 1-5 lakh per family. In addition, each of the 41 workers who lost limbs as a result of the incident received Tk. 10-15 lakh in the form of a savings certificate, and each of the families of the 164 victims who have been identified through DNA testing received Tk. 1 lakh. A proportion of the support provided by the Prime Minister's Relief Fund has also been provided during year two, including to the families of 67 deceased workers and the families of 164 victims who have been identified through DNA testing. According to media reports, a total of Tk. 105 crore of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Rana Plaza Victims is yet to be disbursed.

³ The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) has disbursed a total of Tk. 4.2 lakh (Tk. 35,000 each) in cash to twelve pregnant workers for their delivery and treatment; Tk. 2 crore to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund; Tk. 20.6 lakh for 100 days of the Rana Plaza & EID celebration for the injured at the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), Tk. 45 lakh to the fire service (Anjuman, 9 Infan. Div.) and RAB; and Tk. 32 lakh for others (uniforms, food, rescue equipment, renovation, TPT & accommodation for cheque receivers, and administration costs). 11 rescue workers received financial support from a total of Tk. 20,000 through the Labour Welfare Foundation, as lobbied by the BILS with the MoLE.

⁴ The BGMEA, one of the committee members, has raised objections to the proposed compensation levels.

During year two, a number of brands/retailers have demonstrated an increased commitment to providing long-term support to victims (see Table 3). The brands/retailers associated with the Rana Plaza Coordination Committee (RPCC) have estimated the amount of financial support to be provided to victims to be in the region of Tk. 25 lakh for deceased workers and Tk. 5-12 lakh for injured workers⁵. This support includes health care and related medical benefits. The RPCC's initial estimate of the total funds required was US\$40 million, however, this has been revised and reduced to US\$30 million. This figure is inclusive of all authorised payments, income replacement payments and allied care costs. As part of that support, the RPCC has disbursed a total of Tk. 14.2 crore to victims and their families as of 22 April 2014. The RPCC has disbursed 30 per cent of the total claim which equals US\$4.07 million during September-December, 2014 and 40 per cent which amounts to another US\$5.8 million in April, 2015. A total of 5,139 family members of 2,835 victims have received financial support from the Rana Plaza Trust Fund.

Among the members of the RPCC, Primark has disbursed approximately 95 per cent to all claimants of one factory in Rana Plaza (668 workers) where it was a major buyer, totalling approximately US\$5 million. Financial support has also been provided by Auchan (US\$ 1.5 million); Gap, Walmart and Asda through BRAC USA (US\$ 2.2 million); Benetton (US\$ 1.1 million); C&A (US\$ 0.69 million); G. Güldenpfennig GmbH (US\$ 600,000); Loblaw (US \$ 3,37 million); and Kik (US\$ 1 million). In addition, fixed pledges now total approximately US \$0.1 million, and direct payments to beneficiaries (under the coordinated scheme) are expected to total US\$ 8.8 million. The current combined total is therefore US \$21.6 million, over US\$ 8 million below the promised US\$ 30 million. According to the RPCC, its members are committed to identifying funding avenues to meet the current shortfall. However, it is still not clear how soon the outstanding amount will be collected and disbursed to victims. This outstanding financial support needs to be provided as soon as possible to victims given their urgent need. It is proposed that the remaining amount (approximately Tk. 70 crore) could be provided from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

The latest RPCC update reveals that a number of other organisations have also provided financial support to victims and their families. These organisations include, among others, the Village Education Resource Center (VERC) (support provided to 100 workers/families), the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (support provided to 382 workers/families) and Enam MCH (support provided to 245 workers/families) (see Table 3 for full details). While these support funds have been reported in this year's RPCC report, a large proportion of this support was in fact provided in year one.

⁵ Following ILO's method based on loss of income, the RPCC estimated that compensation amounted to 60 per cent of the reference wage payable for his or her life time for totally disabled workers, compensation of a percentage of the amount payable to totally disabled workers and the percentage being equal to the degree of disability of the worker for the partially disable workers and compensation of 60 per cent of the current wage payable in case of 3 eligible dependents or more, 55 per cent of the current wage in case of 2 eligible dependents, and 50 per cent in case of only 1 eligible dependent for surviving dependents or missing workers. Payments will be divided between each eligible dependent (Ref....).

Table 3: Number of workers/families that have received financial support as of the end of year two, by support type and source

	Source				
	Government	BGMEA	Primark	Others	Rana Plaza Trust Fund
Salary and Allowances	N/A	2834	3639		
Burial (Tk. 20,000)	843				
Short-Term Allowance	1000+ ¹	12 ²		1229 ³	
One-Time Support (Tk. 1-5 lakh)	1099			100 ⁴	
Long-Term Support (Tk. 10-15 lakh)	38		668		2835 ⁵ (5139 claimants)

Notes:

¹ Support provided by Dhaka District Administration - Tk.5,000 each

² Tk.36,000 each

³ These include:

- Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) - Tk.20,000 each to eleven rescuers, and Tk.5000 each to 29 pregnant workers
- Merrill Prothom Alo - Tk.50,000 to one injured worker, and Tk.10,000 to a widow of a deceased rescue worker
- Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) - support provided to 365 workers/families
- Individual donor - support provided to 9 workers/families
- Village Education Resource Center (VERC) - support provided to 100 workers/families
- Bangladesh Red Crescent Society - support provided to 382 workers/families
- Enam MCH - support provided to 245 workers/families
- Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB) - support provided to 86 workers/families (including Tk. 1 lakh each to nine orphans and two pregnant women in 2013, and Tk.40,000 each to 75 survivors in 2015)

⁴ Support provided by Merrill Prothom Alo Trust

⁵ Support provided by Naripokkho International Trust Fund

Source: Authors, CPD.

5.2 Ongoing Treatment of Victims

During year one, most injured workers received immediate treatment from local hospitals, with funding support and medical supplies being provided by various public and private organisations and individuals. The previous monitoring report stated that initial treatment had been received by more than 1,800 injured workers, of which 339 severely injured workers were admitted to medical institutions, including the Orthopaedic Hospital; Savar CMH; Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH); Enam Medical College and Hospital, Savar; the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), Savar; and the Dip Clinic, Savar. Treatment was provided for hand injuries, leg injuries, trauma, severe back injuries, head injuries, pelvic fracture, crush injuries, and others. At the time of the crisis, a total of approximately Tk.1.5 crore was disbursed from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to 22 clinics and hospitals to provide substantial support to victims. In addition, Tk.53.9 lakh was disbursed from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to the National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory in Dhaka for the purpose of identifying deceased workers through DNA testing. In total, more than 1,000 injured persons were provided with a range of medical facilities with government expenses. The governments of Bangladesh and Thailand together provided financial assistance for surgical procedures involving attaching artificial limbs to 107 individuals (including 5 amputees of the Rana Plaza Tragedy). The BGMEA has disbursed approximately Tk.3.95 crore for the

medical treatment of affected workers.⁶ This initial support provided by a number of organisations significantly contributed to ensuring at least a minimum level of treatment was provided to workers injured in the incident.

During year two, a number of organisations have provided long-term financial support for medical treatment (see Table 4). From April 2014 to March 2015, a total of 792 workers received follow-up treatment at the BILS Support Center. This treatment included medical checks by doctors, medication, diagnosis, pathological tests, physiotherapy and psychotherapy. A total of 28 pregnant women (either affected workers or the wives of affected workers) are undergoing treatment. 1,999 victims have benefitted from medical assessments by the RPCC, supported by the ILO and the CRP. Upazila Health Complex has provided long-term support to 236 victims. The BGMEA has provided financial support totalling Tk.1.33 lakh for the treatment of 180 victims at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) and the DMCH. An amputee patient received Tk. 0.91 lakh from the BGMEA for cancer treatment at Mohakhali Cancer Hospital.

Another important achievement during year two was the establishment of a prosthetics and orthotics (P&O) School at the CRP in Savar. The P&O School was supported by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development under GIZ's 'Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in Industry' (PSES) project. There has been a significant need for such a school for some time given that there was previously no P&O School in Bangladesh. The newly-established P&O School trains individuals to become technicians, who then plan, create and fit orthopaedic aids and prosthetic braces. The establishment of the P&O School has paved the way for the PSES project to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in RMG factories. It is worth noting that the CRP has provided health and rehabilitation support from its own resources.

However, despite these positives, the treatment facilities and the financial support provided for medical treatment does not benefit all victims for a number of reasons. First, given the central urban location of the support services (which are particularly concentrated in facilities in Dhaka, Savar and nearby areas), it is difficult for victims based in more remote locations to access these services. Second, injured workers suffering from physical and psychological issues have to bear their own expenses for getting treatment at the local level (assuming the treatment would be substandard). Most of the victims have found it difficult to cover the costs of their treatment with the limited funds that they have received for treatment purposes. Third, chronically ill and injured patients are required to undergo treatment on a regular basis for a long period of time. These individuals will find it increasingly difficult to continue with their treatment unless these services remain open and continue to be provided at a low cost into the future.

Further, it is necessary for individuals who have received artificial limbs to replace their prosthetics after a specified period of time. According to CRP, nineteen amputees have replaced their artificial limbs during second year. However, it is not clear whether other amputees receive the proper treatment during this

⁶ In addition, the BGMEA transported discharged patients to their homes by ambulance and kept in regular contact with them during their follow-up treatment.

period. A number of affected individuals have claimed that their artificial limbs are unsuitable for daily activity and as such are of limited use. It is therefore highly important to consider the physical condition of such individuals, as well as their economic condition.

Table 4: Number of injured workers that have received treatment as of the end of year two, by treatment and source

	Source					
	Government	BGMEA	Enam Medical College	CRP	BILS	Other
Immediate Treatment	1	850	1000+			2590 ¹
Total Patients Registered			676			1834 ²
Surgery			291	514	928	
Artificial Limbs	4	26				26 ³
Neo-Natal Care				29	37 ⁴	
Physiotherapy				254	291	
Psychotherapy		1		159	962 ⁵	
Medical Assessment					1999 ⁶	
Other						491 ⁷

Notes:

¹ Including support provided by Prothom Alo (to 140 affected individuals), Action Aid Bangladesh (AAB) (to 150 affected individuals), and GK (to 2000 rescuers and 300 family members of missing workers).

² Including support provided by the Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital (to 1 affected individual); the Association of Medical and Doctors of Asia, Bangladesh; AAB (to 3 affected individuals); Upazila Health Complex, Savar (to 236 affected individuals); Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib College Hospital (to 6 affected individuals); and GK (to 1210 affected individuals (including 224 in-patients and 986 out-patients)).

³ Including support provided by the Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) (to 10 affected individuals), BRAC (to 12 affected individuals), and NITOR (to 4 affected individuals).

⁴ Including support provided by AAB and GK.

⁵ Including support provided by Naripokkho (to 130 affected individuals), the Sajida Foundation (to 16 affected individuals), the RPCC (to 100 affected individuals), and GK (to 714 affected individuals).

⁶ Support provided jointly by the RPCC, the ILO and the CRP.

⁷ Including support provided by AAB (to 258 affected individuals), the BGMEA (to 180 affected individuals, reaching a total cost of Tk. 1.33 lakh in 2014), and the RPCC (to 14 affected individuals).

Source: Authors, CPD

5.3 Re-Employment of Affected Workers

Progress has continued to be made throughout year two on initiatives jointly undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh and local and international organisations towards the re-employment of affected workers and their family members. A total of 2,122 workers have been re-employed as of the end of year two either in RMG sector or in small businesses (see Table 5). During year two, 27 workers were re-employed in the RMG sector through the RPCC – this compares to 777 workers having been re-employed during year one. A total of 1,318 workers have started their own businesses following training on small business/entrepreneurial development. Organisations that have provided such training support include, among others, the RPCC, the CRP, AAB, COEL, Adesh, EMCH, GIZ, Aparazeo, and Handicap International. These organisations have also provided a small amount of financial capital support to aid business start-up. However, despite this support, a number of workers who have begun trading have faced

a range of operational difficulties, including a lack of adequate working capital and a lack of demand for their services. As such, these small-scale entrepreneurs are in need of access to low-cost credit to support their businesses.

As revealed during the interviews conducted by the CPD (see Section 4), a number of victims remain unemployed, possibly due to a lack of physical fitness as a result of their injuries. It is also important to know whether individuals with amputations have been able to engage in any employment activity.

While it is positive that some injured workers have been able to earn some level of income, given the level of such income and the challenges that they are facing in operating their businesses, the positive contribution made by current forms of re-employment to victims' long-term living conditions is limited.

Table 5: Numbers of re-employed and re-trained workers as of the end of year two

Total Number of Rescued Workers	Re-employed in the RMG Sector	Job Support/Training Received	Small Business/Entrepreneurship Development Support (after receiving training)
2400	804 ¹	670 ²	1318 ³

Notes:

¹ Including support provided by the BGMEA (to 70 workers), the RPCC (to 27 workers), and Paramount Textiles/Prothom Alo (to 1 worker).

² Including support provided by the Coordination Cell (to 32 workers), GIZ (to 3 workers), AAB (to 278 workers), the COEL (to 6 workers), Adesh (to 2 workers), Enam MCH (to 2 workers), Aparazeo (to 31 workers), the Hotel and Hospitality Sector (through the ILO) (to 1 worker), Handicap International (to 25 workers), the CDD (to 1 worker), the CRP (to 389 workers), and GK (to 48 workers).

³ Including support provided by BRAC (to 400 workers), the CRP (to 350 workers), GIZ (to 513 workers), SPANDAN-B (to 55 workers), and the CRP (to 125 workers (intervention still ongoing)).

Source: Authors, CPD

5.4 Support for the Children of the Victims

It was noted in the Third Monitoring Report (CPD, 2014) that around 250 deceased workers have left behind one or more children. According to a survey conducted by the VERC and Save the Children, a total of over 700 children have been affected by the Rana Plaza Tragedy. A large number of these children have received some level of support from local and international organisations. During year one, a total of 505 children were supported by organisations including the VERC, Save the Children, Sreepur village, the BGMEA/ORCA, the Optimists, Naripokkho, UNICEF, the YMCA and the Prothom Alo Trust. Of these 505 children, 406 children received long-term support and 99 children received short-term support.

During year two, most of the abovementioned organisations have continued to support these 513 children, as well as a number of additional children who have been brought within the scope of the established support programmes. As a result, the number of children who have received support has now increased to 735. However, despite this increase, some children affected by the incident remain outside of the support programmes despite having a claim to support under the Rana Plaza Trust Fund.

The BGMEA has provided support to 45 orphans, including fifteen boys at ORCA Homes, Chittagong; ten boys at ORCA Homes, Gaibandha; and twenty girls at Anjuman Orphanage, Savar.⁷ The BGMEA has also taken responsibility for the education and monthly living expenses of four orphans of two deceased victims. Prothom Alo has donated Tk. 50 lakh, the interest earned on which will be used to fund the educational expenses of twenty orphans until they reach 18 years of age. In addition, BILS supports 25 orphans through the ‘BILS Support Center’.

Table 6: Numbers of children of the victims who have received support as of the end of year two, by support type and source

One-Time Support		Long-Term Support	
Source	Number of Children	Source	Number of Children
AAB	9	BGMEA/ORCA/Anjuma-e-Mofidul Islam	45
Office of Social Services/UNICEF	14	Naripokkho	4
The Optimists	75 (Tk. 8,800 each per year, given in two equal instalments)	IAB	10
Total	98	Sreepur Village	138
		JUTA	8
		YMCA	10
		Sneha Foundation	100
		VERC/Save the Children	176
		Merrill Prothom Alo	20
		ShishuPalli Plus	140
		QTRTC (Savar)	26
		BILS	41
		CRP	8
		AAB	9
		Total	735

Source: Authors, CPD

5.5 Support to Rescue Workers: Is the support provided adequate?

150 rescuers were each awarded prize bonds of Tk. 5,000 by Bangladesh Bank in recognition of their services during year one (The Daily Star, 2013). One rescue worker, who was critically injured by a neck injury that resulted in paralysis, has received treatment at the CRP. His medical costs were supported by the Canadian High Commission.⁸ Naripokkho, with the help of its supporting partners, has conducted experience sharing sessions with 55 and 3 psycho-social counseling to 75 rescue workers. In addition, the

⁷ A recent update from BGMEA officials states that several RMG owners have offered to take responsibility for the provision of medical care, clothing, housing and education, etc. for 285 orphans, until they reach 18 years of age. In addition, one orphan has been admitted to the BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology (BUFT) and has been offered a job at the BGMEA.

⁸ His family currently depends on monthly interest payments of Tk. 1 lakh donated from the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund (Dhaka Tribune, 2014).

Merrill Prothom Alo Trust Fund has provided financial support to five rescue workers, among whom one deceased rescue worker's widow received Tk. 10,000.

During year two, financial support was provided to eleven rescuers (Tk. 20,000 each) through the Labour Welfare Foundation. The families of injured rescue workers are yet to receive any compensation. It is important that financial and medical support is urgently provided to the rescuers so as to incentivise them to join future rescue missions in such situations of national need.

5.6 Legal Issues

During year one, a total of 14 cases were filed against individuals accused of being implicated in the incident, by a range of organisations under the provisions of a number of legal instruments. Of these cases, two were filed by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) against the owner of the building; two cases (one alleging death due to negligence and the other under the Building Code) were filed by the police under the Criminal Procedure Code and the Building Construction Act against a total of 22 individuals, including Sohel Rana's father and an engineer; two cases were filed by the DIFE against each of the factory owners; and one case was filed by Rajuk against Shohel Rana. In addition to these cases, under a High court order, the District Commissioner has seized the assets of Mr Sohel Rana, including the 18 decimals of land of Rana Plaza, the 10 decimals of land of Rana Tower, and 1.47 acres of land located in Dhamrai, Savar.

During year two, progress in the abovementioned cases has been rather limited. All cases have now gone to trial, and the case filed by Rajuk is under investigation. The Police Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has submitted a request to the High Court for a further five weeks to submit its report (until 21 May 2015) on two cases that were filed soon after the Rana Plaza Collapse (15 April, 2015 bdnews24.com). In addition, two cases initiated against the parents of Shohel Rana, concerning the alleged unlawful acquisition of property, estimated at a total of Tk. 17 crore, have been approved by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Section 6 - Reform and Restructuring of the Bangladesh Garment Sector: What progress is being made?

A diverse range of actions have been undertaken as part of the reform and restructuring of the Bangladesh RMG sector following the Rana Plaza Tragedy. These actions have been carried out under initiatives including, but not limited to, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) Plan of Action, the European Union Sustainability Compact and the National Tripartite Action Plan (NTPA). While these three initiatives are distinct in their targets and objectives, they also share some common courses of action.

6.1 The United States Trade Representative (USTR) Plan of Action

In June 2013, the USTR requested that the Bangladesh Government to implement within one year a sixteen-point action plan in order to reinstate Bangladesh's GSP status in the US market. At the end of the

year, the government sent a progress report to the USTR on accomplishments to date, as well as an updated timeline for the completion of the remaining actions.

As shown in Table 7, substantial progress has been made in regards to twelve of the actions. These include:

- increasing the number of factory inspectors (270 under the DIFE), fire inspectors (238 under the Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD)) and building inspectors (132 proposed under Rajuk and 40 proposed under CDA)
- increasing the level of fines and other sanctions applied to companies in breach of labour, fire or building standards
- conducting structural assessments and fire safety assessments at all active RMG/knitwear factories
- creating a publicly accessible database for reporting labour, fire and building inspections that have been conducted (a database of 1006 factories is available on the website (of a total of 3743 factories))
- establishing an effective complaints mechanism, including a hotline
- increasing the number of trade union registrations (from 131 in January 2013 to 367 in September 2014)
- making information regarding trade union registration publicly available (access code required)
- registering non-governmental labour organisation(s)
- making information regarding unfair labour practices publicly available (access code required)
- issuing the necessary regulations until the EPZ law is repealed
- issuing regulations that will ensure transparency in the enforcement of the EPZ law

Greater progress is required in regards to the following four actions:

- modifying the rules in accordance with the amended Bangladesh Labour Law
- developing and implementing training programmes for labour inspectors
- initiating worker-related initiatives in the shrimp sector
- publicly reporting on anti-union discrimination

Most of the progress made in regards to the action plan occurred during year one, with the pace of progress slowing somewhat in year two.

There are concerns regarding the number of actions that have been carried out so far. Such concerns include, among others, the delay in cabinet approval of the rules of the amended labour law, a slowdown in the number of approvals of newly-registered trade unions, and alleged harassment of trade union leaders. The Government of Bangladesh should make every effort to undertake the necessary actions as efficiently and as effectively as possible. Further, the government should ensure that all relevant stakeholders complete the remaining actions within the new timeline, as stated in the Progress Report (June-October 2014).

However, despite these concerns, overall performance in implementing the USTR Action Plan has been quite impressive to date. It is recommended that the USTR take these recent developments positively and, if Bangladesh delivers its promised rate of implementation of the requested reforms, consider reinstating the GSP Facility for Bangladesh products in the US market in the near future.

Table 7: The 2013 USTR Bangladesh Action Plan: Progress made as of the end of year two

	Proposed Action	Comments on Progress
	I. Government Inspection of Labour, Fire and Building Standards	
1.	Develop, in consultation with the ILO, and implement in line with already agreed targets, a plan to increase the number of government labour, fire and building inspectors, improve their training, establish clear procedures for independent and credible inspections and expand resources and their disposal, so as to conduct effective inspections in the RMG, knitwear and shrimp sectors, including within Export Processing Zones (EPZs).	Substantially Completed
2.	Increase fines and other sanctions, including loss of import and export licenses, applied for failure to comply with labour, fire or building standards to levels sufficient to deter future violations.	Substantially Completed
3.	Develop, in consultation with the ILO, and implement, in line with already agreed targets, a plan to assess the structural building and fire safety of all active RMG/knitwear factories. Initiate remedial actions, or close or relocate inadequate factories, as appropriate.	Substantially Completed
4.	Create a publicly accessible database/matrix of all RMG/knitwear factories as a platform for reporting labour, fire and building inspections. Information included should include factory names and locations, violations identified, fines and sanctions administered, the names of factories closed or relocated, violations remediated, and the names of the lead inspectors.	Substantially Completed
5.	Establish, in direct consultation with civil society, an effective compliant mechanism, including a hotline for workers to confidentially and anonymously report fire, building safety, and violations of workers' rights.	Substantially Completed
	II. Ready Made Garments (RMG)/Knitwear Sector	
6.	Enact and implement, in consultation with the ILO, labour law reforms to address key concerns related to freedom of association and collective bargaining.	Partly Completed
7.	Continue to expeditiously register unions that present applications that meet administrative requirements, and ensure protection of unions and their members from anti-union discrimination and reprisal.	Substantially Completed
8.	Publicly report information on the status and final outcomes of individual union registration applications, including the time taken to process the applications and the basis for denial if relevant, and information on collective bargaining agreements concluded.	Substantially Completed
9.	Register non-governmental labour organisations that meet administrative requirements, including the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS) and Social Activities for the Environment (SAFE). Drop or expeditiously resolve pending criminal charges against labour activists to ensure that workers and their supporters do not face harassment or intimidation. Advance a transparent investigation into the murder of Aminul Islam and report on the findings of this investigation.	Substantially Completed

	Proposed Action	Comments on Progress
10.	Publicly report on the database/matrix identified above (Action 4) or any complaints received of anti-union discrimination or other unfair labour practice, as well as labour inspections completed (including information on factory names and locations, the status of investigations, the violations identified, and fines and sanctions levied).	Substantially Completed
11.	Develop and implement mechanisms, in coordination with the ILO, to prevent harassment, intimidation and violence against labour activists and unions. This should include a training programme for industrial police officers who oversee the RMG sector on workers' freedom of association and assembly.	Partly Completed
III. Export Processing Zones (EPZs)		
12.	Expediently bring the EPZ law into conformity with international standards so that workers within EPZ factories enjoy the same freedom of association and collective bargaining rights as other workers in the country. Create a government working group to begin the repeal or overhaul of the EPZ law, in coordination with the ILO.	Substantially Completed
13.	Issue regulations that, until the EPZ law has been repealed or overhauled, ensure the protection of EPZ workers' freedom of association, including prohibiting "blacklisting" and other forms of exclusion from the zones for labour activities.	Substantially Completed
14.	Issue regulations that, until the EPZ law is repealed or overhauled, ensure transparency in the enforcement of the existing EPZ law, and that require the same inspections standards and procedures as in the rest of the RMG sector.	Substantially Completed
IV. Shrimp Processing Sector		
15.	Actively support the ILO and other worker-employer initiatives in the shrimp sector, such as the March 2013 Memorandum of Agreement, to ensure the strengthening of freedom of association, including addressing anti-union discrimination and unfair labour practices.	Partly Completed
16.	Publicly report on complaints received of anti-union discrimination or other unfair labour practices, as well as labour inspections completed (including information on factory names and locations, the status of investigations, the violations identified, fines and sanctions levied, remediation of violations, and the names of the lead inspectors).	Partly Completed

Source: Authors, CPD

6.2 The EU Sustainability Compact

The EU Sustainability Compact is a broad-based agreement between the European Union (EU), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Government of Bangladesh. Its objective is to improve working conditions in the Bangladesh RMG sector. The EU Sustainability Compact has been endorsed by the USTR Action Plan, particularly for trade union related activities.

A total of twenty nine activities are listed in the EU Sustainability Compact (see Table 8). Fifteen of these actions have been fully or substantially completed. These include, among others:

- amending the Bangladesh Labour Law
- upgrading the Department of Chief Inspector of Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to a Directorate
- creating a publicly accessible database

- achieving the aims of the ‘Better Work Bangladesh’ (BWB) project
- registering independent trade unions
- conducting regular visits and assessments of industrial establishments
- conducting a diagnostic study of the labour inspection system
- implementing the National Action Plan (NAP) on fire safety and structural integrity
- assessing the structural, building and fire safety of all export-oriented RMG units
- extending the social compliance component in the EU’s ongoing ‘Better Work and Standard’ (BEST) programme
- engaging with stakeholders so as to ensure effective implementation

Thirteen of the actions have been partly completed. These include, among others:

- monitoring enforcement of the Bangladesh Labour Law through the submission of reports to the ILO by the Government of Bangladesh
- implementing all rules required by law
- ILO technical assistance to Bangladesh for implementation and follow-up concerning the freedom of association
- developing and adopting additional legislative proposals to address ILO Convention No. 87
- implementing and following-up on union-related issues
- prohibiting blacklisting
- establishing the right to strike
- establishing an education and training programme on fundamental principles
- rehabilitating workers who are permanently disabled as a result of the Rana Plaza Tragedy
- focusing on skills development in future EU assistance to Bangladesh
- encouraging other companies, including SMEs, to join the Accord
- taking note of the work completed by European social partners in the RMG sector

While these activities are yet to be fully implemented, progress made during year two has been substantial. However, the list of activities that remain incomplete is sizeable. The relevant stakeholders should take the appropriate measures to accelerate the implementation process so as to ensure the timely completion of all remaining activities.

Table 8: The EU Sustainability Compact: Progress made as of the end of year two

	Proposed Action	Comments on Progress
1.	Amend the Bangladesh Labour Law.	Substantially Completed
2.	Establish Joint Committees for the improvement of occupational safety and health.	Partly Completed
3.	Implement and enforce the Labour Law, to be monitored by regular Government of Bangladesh reports submitted to the ILO Committee of Experts and social partners' observations submitted to the same Committee, in compliance with the conclusions of the ILO Committee on Application of Standards.	Partly Completed
4.	Issue and implement all rules required by law - free election of workers' representatives and the functioning of participation committees.	Partly Completed

	Proposed Action	Comments on Progress
5.	The ILO is to provide technical assistance to Bangladesh towards implementation and follow-up concerning freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, including for the effective application of the law regarding union registrations, union discrimination cases, and unfair labour practice claims.	Substantially Completed
6.	Develop and adopt additional domestic legislative proposals to address ILO Convention No. 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise) and ILO Convention No. 98 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining).	Partly Completed
7.	The ILO is to assist Bangladesh in reviewing the adequacy of reforms in meeting ILO requirements.	Partly Completed
8.	Ensure freedom of association, collective bargaining and the application of the Bangladesh Labour Law, including the prohibition of blacklisting and the establishment of the right to strike by workers' welfare associations, from 1 January 2014 in the EPZs.	Substantially Completed
9.	Deliver education and training programmes on fundamental principles, rights at work and occupational safety and health.	Partly Completed
10.	Achieve eligibility for the 'Better Work Bangladesh' (BWB) programme.	Substantially Completed
11.	Register independent trade unions and ensure protection of unions and their members from anti-union discrimination and reprisals.	Substantially Completed
12.	Upgrade the Department of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Establishments to a Directorate. Recruit 200 additional inspectors by the end of 2013.	Fully Completed
13.	Conduct regular visits to assess industrial establishments.	Substantially Completed
14.	Create a publicly accessible database.	Fully Completed
15.	Implement the ILO's skills and training programme for injured workers. Rehabilitate and reemploy affected workers.	Substantially Completed
16.	Conduct a diagnostic study of the Labour Inspection System, followed by the development and implementation of an action plan with appropriate measures.	Substantially Completed
17.	Rehabilitate those who are permanently disabled as a result of the Rana Plaza Tragedy.	Partly Completed
18.	Explore the possibility of reallocating funds under the current EU-funded 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training' (TVET) project implemented by the ILO. Implement the existing EU-funded 'Better Work and Standard' (BEST) cooperation programme.	Substantially Completed
19.	Ensure a focus on skills development in future EU assistance to Bangladesh.	Partly Completed
20.	Align actions with the ILO Programme Outline 2013-2016, 'Improving Working Conditions in the RMG Sector in Bangladesh', and 'Better Work'; to be supported technically or financially by the EU under the next programming cycle (2014-2020).	Partly Completed
21.	Explore further funding possibilities within the upcoming programming period (2014-2020), including through the 'Thematic Programme Global Public Goods and Challenges' programme, which includes a component specific to supporting the implementation of EU commitments on decent work.	Partly Completed
22.	Implement the National Action Plan on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity in the RMG industry in Bangladesh, with the support of the ILO, in accordance with established milestones and timelines as stipulated in the Programme of Action.	Substantially Completed

	Proposed Action	Comments on Progress
23.	Assess the structural and fire safety of all active export-oriented RMG and knitwear factories and initiate remedial actions, including the relocation of unsafe factories.	Substantially Completed
24.	Extend the social compliance component in the ongoing EU BEST programme with Bangladesh, e.g. by providing more training on social compliance and occupational safety and health.	Substantially Completed
25.	Extend technical assistance, including Aid for Trade, to address labour standards, including health and safety at work and adequate levels of social dialogue and collective bargaining in Bangladesh, as well as in other countries in the region facing similar issues.	Partly Completed
26.	Encourage other companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to expeditiously join the Accord within their respective capacities. Recognise the need for appropriate involvement of all stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the Accord.	Partly Completed
27.	Underline the importance of engaging with stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of and consistency among various initiatives.	Substantially Completed
28.	Encourage retailers and brands to adopt and follow a unified factory audit code of conduct in Bangladesh.	Not Initiated
29.	Take note of the steps taken by European social partners in the RMG sector (as initiated on 26 April 2013) to update their 1997 and 2008 Codes of Conduct on Fundamental Rights, within the framework of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Textiles and Clothing.	Partly Completed

Source: Authors, CPD

6.3 The National Tripartite Action Plan (NTPA)

The National Tripartite Action Plan (NTPA) lists 25 commitments, divided into the three categories of: legislation and policy, administration, and practical activities.

As shown in Table 9, sixteen of the commitments have been fully or substantially completed. These include, among others:

- amending the Bangladesh Labour Law
- establishing a task force on building and fire safety of the Cabinet Committee for the RMG sector
- upgrading the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to a Directorate
- developing and introducing a unified fire safety checklist to be used by all relevant government agencies
- establishing a workers safety hotline through the Fire Service and Civil Defense (FSCD)
- adopting a National Occupational Safety Health Policy (OSH)
- recruiting staff to fill currently vacant posts as factory inspectors and support staff
- establishing a single resource point for fire safety licensing and certification information
- conducting a needs assessment of factory level fire safety
- delivering a fire safety “crash course” for mid-level factory managers and supervisors
- strengthening the capacity of the FSCD
- developing and disseminating self-assessment and remediation tools on fire safety
- establishing a publicly accessible database on safety issues in RMG factories

- redeploying RMG workers who were rendered unemployed as a result of the incident, as well as rehabilitating disabled workers

Nine of the commitments in the NTPA have been partly completed. These include, among others:

- conducting a review of the relevant laws, rules, and regulations with regards to fire, building and chemical safety
- conducting a review and adjusting factory licensing and certification procedures
- developing and implementing a factory fire safety improvement programme
- assessing the structural integrity of all active RMG factories
- developing a transparent sub-contracting system
- developing educational tools for workers
- developing and delivering fire safety training for factory inspectors
- developing a tripartite protocol for compensating affected families

Table 9: The National Tripartite Action Plan (NTPA): Progress made as of the end of year two

	Proposed Action	Deadline	Comments on Progress
A. Legislation and Policy			
1.	Submit the Bangladesh Labour Law Reform Package to Parliament.	15 July 2013	Substantially Completed
2.	Adopt a National Occupational Health and Safety Policy.	30 April 2013	Fully Completed
3.	Review relevant laws, rules and regulations regarding fire, building and chemical safety.	31 December 2013	Partly Completed
4.	Establish a Task Force on Building and Fire Safety under the Cabinet Committee for the RMG sector.	30 May 2013	Fully Completed
B. Administration			
5.	Recruit staff to fill currently vacant posts (including factory inspectors and support staff), as well as 200 additional labour inspectors in the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE).	31 December 2013	Substantially Completed
6.	Upgrade the Department of the Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) to a Directorate.	31 December 2013	Fully Completed
7.	Implement a Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) project to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE).	31 December 2014	Substantially Completed
8.	Review and, where necessary, adjust factory licensing and certification procedures concerning fire, electrical, chemical and environmental safety.	30 June 2013	Partly Completed
9.	Consider establishing a single resource for information on fire safety licensing and certification.	31 December 2013	Substantially Completed

	Proposed Action	Deadline	Comments on Progress
10.	Develop and introduce a unified fire safety checklist to be used by all relevant government agencies.	30 April 2013	Fully Completed
C. Practical Activities			
11.	Conduct a factory level fire safety needs assessment.	30 April 2013	Substantially Completed
12.	Develop and implement a factory fire safety improvement programme.	31 December 2013	Partly Completed
13.	Assess the structural integrity of all active RMG factories.	31 December 2014	Partly Completed
14.	Develop a transparent and accountable industry sub-contracting system.	30 June 2013	Partly Completed
15.	Deliver a fire safety “crash course” for mid-level factory managers and supervisors.	30 September 2013	Substantially Completed
16.	Develop and deliver fire safety training to union leaders.	31 December 2013	Partly Completed
17.	Develop and deliver mass worker education tools.	31 December 2013	Partly Completed
18.	Establish a fire safety hotline for workers.	30 June 2013	Fully Completed
19.	Develop and deliver fire safety training to factory inspectors.	30 June 2013	Partly Completed
20.	Strengthen the capacity of the Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD).	30 September 2013	Substantially Completed
21.	Develop guidelines for the establishment of labour management committees on occupational safety and health and/or fire safety.	30 September 2013	Fully Completed
22.	Develop and disseminate fire safety self-assessment and remediation tools.	31 December 2013	Substantially Completed
23.	Develop a tripartite + protocol for compensation of the families of deceased workers and workers injured as a result of occupational accidents and disease.	31 December 2013	Partly Completed
24.	Establish a publicly accessible database on safety issues in RMG factories.	31 December 2013	Substantially Completed
25.	Redeploy RMG workers that were rendered unemployed by the incident, as well as rehabilitated disabled workers.	30 June 2014	Substantially Completed

Source: Authors, CPD

Table 10 presents a summary of the progress made to date in implementing all actions under the three initiatives. Despite impressive progress having been made in a significant number of areas, greater motivation is required from all stakeholders to ensure the timely completion of all proposed actions.

Table 10: Progress in implementing reform and restructuring actions as of the end of year two, by initiative

Initiative	Substantially/Fully Completed	Partly Completed
USTR	12	4
EU Sustainability Compact	15	13
NTPA	15	10

Source: Authors, CPD

Section 7 - The Accord, Alliance and NTPA Initiatives: A mixed picture

Under the private initiatives of the Accord, the Alliance and the NTPA (with the support of the ILO), inspections of Bangladesh RMG factories are being conducted and the necessary improvement works initiated. This is a measure that is unique in the context of the global RMG sector. After a slow start, substantial progress has been made in regards to the number of inspections conducted in year two. As of April 2015, 2,703 factories have been assessed for structural safety, which equates to 77 per cent of the total 3,500 RMG factories in Bangladesh. As shown in Table 11, of those factories that have so far been assessed, 1,250 are Accord members, 647 are Alliance members and over 500 are ILO-supported factories.

Table 11: Progress of factory inspections as of the end of year two, by organisation

Organisation	Total Number of Factories	Total Number of Factories Inspected	Factories received CAPs
Accord	1400	1250	950
Alliance	647	647	300
NTPA	1500	500+	

Source: Various websites

7.1 The Accord Initiatives

1,250 Accord member factories (of a total of 1,400) have now been inspected. The Accord is also conducting initial inspections at newly-listed factories, having already completed more than 250 fire, electrical and structural safety inspections. The Accord has identified 52,605 issues present in these factories, relating to unsafe means of disposal, unsafe electrical installations and structural weaknesses. As of March 2015, 950 CAPs have been received by the Accord and handed over to the respective factories. The Accord has been publishing the CAPs on their website - so far 683 CAPs have been updated on the website. Most of the factories that have been inspected by the Accord face common safety hazards, which include a lack of fire doors in stairwells, inadequate automated fire alarm systems, inadequate fire separations and protected exits, a lack of lateral structural stability, missing structural drawings, and inadequate space for electrical installations (such as substations) (Accord, 2015). At present, only 782 (1.5 per cent) of the total 52,605 issues identified have been corrected, with 10,248 (19.5 per cent) pending verification and the remaining 79 per cent of problems remaining unresolved. In addition, around 550 factories require Detailed Engineering Assessments (DEA). As of February 2015, 133 DEAs have been submitted for approval. In addition to its regular activities, the Accord has been working to improve Occupational Safety and Health, and has been providing training to its workers on safety and their rights.

7.2 The Alliance Initiatives

The Alliance, like the Accord, has undertaken rigorous initiatives to inspect its' member factories. The Alliance has already inspected all of its 647 factories. During the inspection process, five factories were fully closed, twelve were partly closed, and two were required to operate at a reduced capacity (Alliance, 2015). The Alliance has finalised 300 CAPs to date. The Alliance has arranged low-cost financing for factory owners in order to support them in implementing remedial actions. In addition, the Alliance has provided its workers with basic fire safety training.

7.3 The National Tripartite Action Plan (NTPA) Initiatives

The NTPA, with the support of the ILO, has set a target to inspect around 1,500 factories that are neither part of the Accord or the Alliance. This programme is supported by Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) has inspected 500 factories, with the rest of the factories in the initiative to be inspected by two private sector companies, TUV SUD Bangladesh (Pvt.) Ltd and Veritas Engineering & Consultant.

The NTPA initiative is currently facing a number of difficulties in conducting the inspections. Overall, 1,100 factories of the 1,500 factories listed as members of the BGMEA have proven a challenge to inspect. Out of 600 factories that have received UD certification for export, 450 factories have incorrect addresses listed with the BGMEA/BKMEA. Another 500 factories appear “missing” as a result of previous closures. Without accurate addresses for these factories it will be extremely difficult to conduct the inspections. In fact, the BGMEA/BKMEA has decided to stop issuing UD certifications unless factory addresses can be verified first. As such, an accurate address list will be essential for the ILO to be able to complete the inspections.

In addition, there are an estimated 800 companies that are not members of any organisations, including the BGMEA and the BKMEA. These companies mostly operate informally and often conduct sub-contracted work on behalf of larger firms. These factories remain uninspected under the three initiatives. It is likely that these factories are non-compliant with the required standards. It is therefore necessary to identify and formalise the arrangements of these factories so that they can be fully inspected.

Table 12 shows that a total of 29 factories have been fully closed due to safety concerns, with several thousand workers being affected. While the majority of workers have received financial support from factory owners, in a number of cases workers are yet to receive the support that is owed to them (see Table 13). A major priority is to ensure the re-employment of affected individuals in the RMG sector. How to support affected workers has proven to be a contentious issue, yet it is vital that policymakers consider the compensation, rehabilitation and re-employment concerns of these individuals. Given that exporters have stated that only a relatively small number of EU and US buyers who used to place orders with smaller factories in Bangladesh have shifted their orders to other countries (such as Vietnam, India and Cambodia), re-employment opportunities should be available. However, exporters have highlighted that production capacity has had to be reduced so as to offset the significant increases in costs associated with ensuring compliance with standards.

Table 12: Factory inspection decisions as of the end of year two, number of factories by organisation

Organisation	Referred to Review Panel	Partly Closed	Fully Closed	Open and Operational
NTPA	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0
Accord	38 (18)	8 (5)	24 (9)	6 (4)
Alliance	25 (14)	8 (4)	5 (2)	14 (8)
Total	65 (34)	17 (10)	29 (12)	20 (12)

Number of Workers Affected	20,724	1,530	15,093	4,101
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Source: CPD (2015)

Note: The number of buildings is shown in parentheses.

Table 13: Financial support provided to workers affected by factory closures as of the end of year two, number of factories by organisation

Organisation	Factories that Remain Closed	Workers' Dues Settled in Factories	Discussions ongoing regarding Workers' Dues
Accord	12	7	5
Alliance	05	-	-

Source: Authors, CPD

Section 8 - Initiatives undertaken by Development Partners: Is Further Collaboration Needed?

Development partners play a crucial role in the implementation of various reform and restructuring initiatives in the RMG sector. A number of countries and international organisations, either individually or jointly, provide financial and technical support for a range of activities.

8.1 ILO Initiatives

The ILO, with the support of a number of countries, development partners and other international development agencies, is currently implementing twenty programmes in the Bangladesh RMG sector. As part of its activities, the ILO is conducting a series of fresher's training courses for 110 newly-recruited labour inspectors. A four-day introductory training course, organised jointly by the ILO and the German cooperation agency, GIZ, in collaboration with the DIFE, commenced in Dhaka on 24 February 2015. This introductory course included training on the national labour law, fire and building safety, and inspection techniques for the first 35 of the new inspectors. The ILO has also continued to support capacity development of the DIFE so that it is able to effectively follow-up on RMG factory building and fire safety inspection reports. The ILO has extended its support to the development of a roadmap for the 2015 DIFE Labour Inspection Plan, in collaboration with its ILO International Training Centre (ITC). In addition, the ILO, in collaboration with its Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV), is carrying out a series of capacity building activities aimed at strengthening union educators in the RMG sector.

With the support of Canada, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the ILO is currently implementing an initiative aimed at developing health and safety skills in the RMG sector.⁹ 100 senior master trainers and 100 master trainers have been provided with training designed for trainers. These trainers will now provide training to 75,000 mid-level managers and chief supervisors, who will then pass on basic occupational safety and health skills and knowledge to some 750,000 workers.

The 'Better Work Bangladesh' (BWB) project is advancing steadily. To date, a total of thirty factories are working under BWB, with thirteen buyers involved. The ILO has recently established a helpline for workers at Ashulia, funded jointly by the ILO and the Norwegian Government, which is being ran by the DIFE.

8.2 Other Initiatives by Development Partners

As shown in Table 14, a series of initiatives are currently ongoing in the Bangladesh RMG sector. All of these projects, whether funded by sponsor countries or international organisations, aim to develop the Bangladesh RMG sector with reforms and restructuring within the existing sector framework.

Included among the ongoing projects are:

- 'Improvement of Working Conditions in the RMG Sector' (2013-2016) - funded by the ILO, the UK, the Netherlands and Canada, this project provides rehabilitation and skills training for the victims of the 2013 Rana Plaza Tragedy and the 2012 Tazreen Fashions fire.
- 'Better Work and Standards' (BEST) (2008-2015) - funded by the EU, Germany, Norway and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), this cooperation programme provides immediate assistance to the victims of the 2013 Rana Plaza Tragedy and the 2012 Tazreen Fashions fire.
- 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training' (TVET) (2007-2015) – funded by the EU, this programme provides victims with rehabilitation support.
- 'Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in Industry' (PSES) - funded by Germany and the EU, this project provides victims with training courses and job placements, as well as supporting self-employment and the provision of micro-credit facilities. In addition, training is being provided to government officials on disaster management, and the rehabilitation and employment re-integration of victims is being supported under the Inclusive Skills Development component.

⁹ The training initiative is being undertaken in close collaboration with the Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), the BGMEA and the BKMEA.

Table 14: Ongoing initiatives implemented in the Bangladesh RMG sector by development partners

Project	Date	Funder(s)
Improvement of Working Conditions in the RMG Sector	2013-2016	ILO, UK, the Netherlands, Canada
Better Work and Standards (BEST)	2008-2015	EU, Germany, Norway, UNIDO
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	2007-2015	EU
Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)	2010-2014	EU
European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General-Disaster Preparedness (DIPECHO) V and VI		EU
Building Safety		Denmark
CSR Child Labour (Phase II)		Denmark
Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in Industry (PSES)		Germany, EU
Compliance in Factories Supplying LIDL and C&A		Private (from Germany)
Capacity Building of Labour NGOs	2012-2015	The Netherlands
Bangladesh Water Partnership for Cleaner Textiles (PaCT)		The Netherlands
Health Enables Returns (HER)		Sweden
RMG Sector Centre of Excellence		Sweden
Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded in Bangladesh (COPE) (as part of the Rights and Governance Challenge Fund)		UK
Strengthening the Capacity of Independent Workers' Organisations in the Bangladesh RMG Sector and EPZs		USA
Empowering Workers to Negotiate Building and Fire Safety		USA
Improving Fire & Building Safety for Bangladesh's RMG Workers		USA
Fundamental Principles & Rights at Work (FPRW)		USA
Combating Labour Trafficking	2013-2015	USA
Global Labour Programme	2011-2016	USA
Fire and Building Safety		USA
Better Work Bangladesh (BWB)		USA
Mediation and Conciliation		USA
EHS+ Centre - RMG Sector Centre of Excellence		USA, Sweden

Source: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2014/december/tradoc_152969.pdf

Section 9 - Recent Trends in the Global Apparels Market: To what extent is the recent slowdown in Bangladesh associated with the Rana Plaza Tragedy?

Since the Rana Plaza Tragedy, RMG entrepreneurs have often complained about gradually declining demand for Bangladesh RMG products by buyers/retailers from major international markets. Entrepreneurs have pointed to a decline in orders at factories that are situated in shared buildings, as the

level of risk increases in shared buildings when compared to compliant factories. Overall, growth in the RMG sector has been adversely affected by declining exports to major markets.

A market-wide analysis of exports of knitted products (HS code 61) and woven products (HS code 62) before and after the Rana Plaza Tragedy has been conducted for Bangladesh and a number of its major competitors, including India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (see Figure 1).

Exports to Canada: While exports of knitted and woven products from Bangladesh to the Canadian market decreased post-Rana Plaza, China, Pakistan and Indonesia all also experienced a slowdown in the level of exports to the Canadian market (see Figure 1(a) and 1(b)). However, a number of countries, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka, experienced a consistent level of growth in exports in both categories of products over the same period. As such, it is not easy to draw clear conclusions with regard to the impact and implications of the Rana Plaza Tragedy on Bangladesh exports to the Canadian market.

Exports to the EU (27): Conclusions are even more difficult to draw in regards to the level of exports from Bangladesh to the European market post-Rana Plaza. Following considerable growth in both knitted and woven products during 2013, Bangladesh's exports experienced negative growth during 2014 (see Figure 1(c) and 1(d)). However, the performance of a number of Bangladesh's major competitors in the European market also suffered, including China, India, Vietnam and Indonesia. Pakistan and, to a certain extent, Cambodia, maintained consistent positive growth in both product categories during the same period. Pakistan's positive performance in the European market is most likely as a result of Pakistan's inclusion in the EU GSP Plus, which provides Pakistan with duty-free market access on a range of products that are also significant exports for Bangladesh (CPD, 2015). Further, the EU's new Rules of Origin (RoO), enacted in 2011, have allowed Cambodia to gain duty-free market access on imported fabrics. As such, it is not possible to assert that the slowdown experienced in Bangladesh exports to the European market is as a result of the questionable physical and social compliance standards revealed by the Rana Plaza Tragedy.

Exports to the USA: While exports from Bangladesh to the US market were not particularly encouraging in 2014, China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Cambodia all had similar experiences for either one or both of the products in 2013 and/or 2014 (see Figure 1(e) and 1(f)).

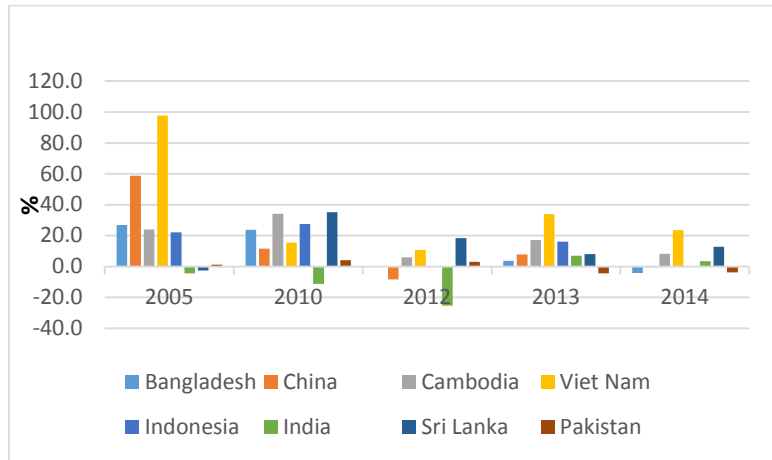
A product-wide analysis reveals that growth in Bangladesh's top ten exports to the US, EU and Canadian markets was not vastly different from that of its competitors for the same set of products. However, some competing countries have experienced very high growth rates, particularly since the Rana Plaza Tragedy, for exports of products that have been traditionally exported from Bangladesh. While this may indicate that a decline in the export of some products may, to a certain extent, be associated with the Rana Plaza Tragedy, this does not, however, explain the broader slowdown being experienced currently by the wider Bangladesh RMG export market.

It is clear that RMG exports from Bangladesh to major markets have struggled over the previous two years, and particularly so in 2014. However, this trend also appears to be experienced by a number of other major exporting countries. Such a finding does not conclusively identify the factors responsible for such

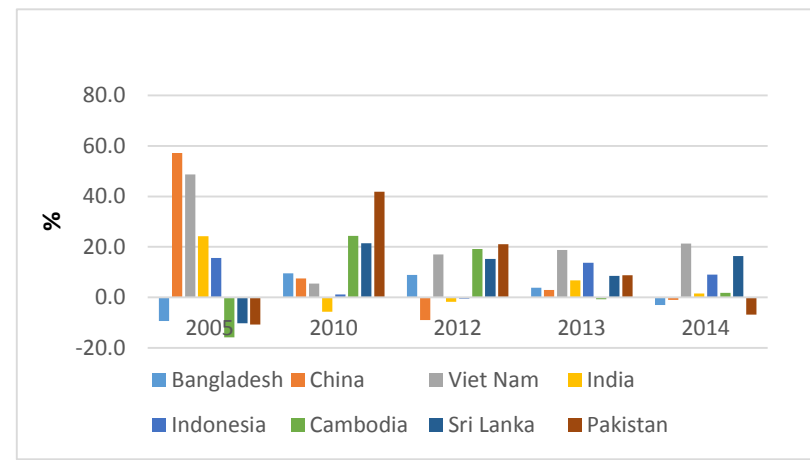
change. However, prospective growth in RMG exports from Bangladesh may nevertheless have suffered as a result of the Rana Plaza Tragedy. As such, the overall conclusion to be drawn is that the decline in exports of knitted and woven products from Bangladesh post-Rana Plaza may be associated with the Bangladesh RMG sector's poor compliance record, but only to a limited degree, as global factors and the performance of Bangladesh's competitors are likely to have also had an influence. A detailed analysis of specific products, of buyers' sourcing strategies, and of buyers' and consumers' perceptions of Bangladesh products since the Rana Plaza Tragedy, would help to determine the cause(s) and effect(s) of the changing trends in Bangladesh RMG exports.

Figure 1: RMG Growth Trends in Bangladesh and Major Competitor Countries

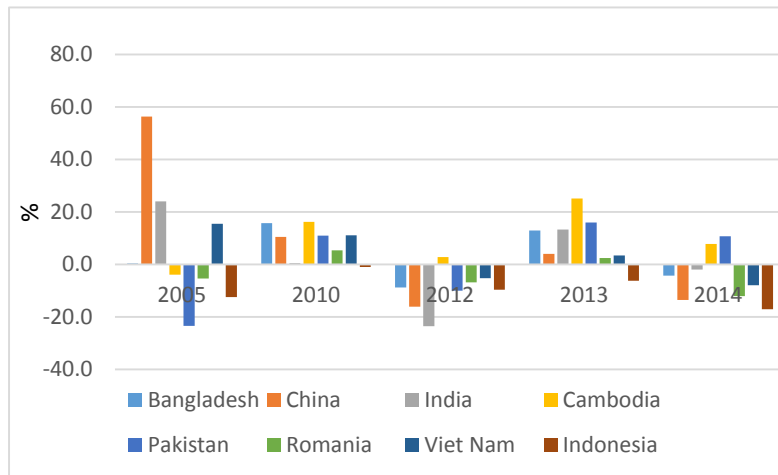
a. Major exporting markets for knitted products (HS code 61) imported by Canada



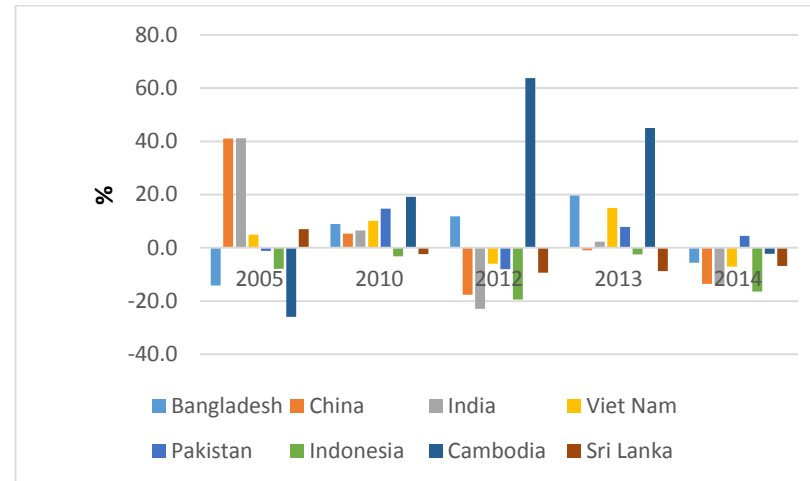
b. Major exporting markets for woven products (HS code 62) imported by Canada



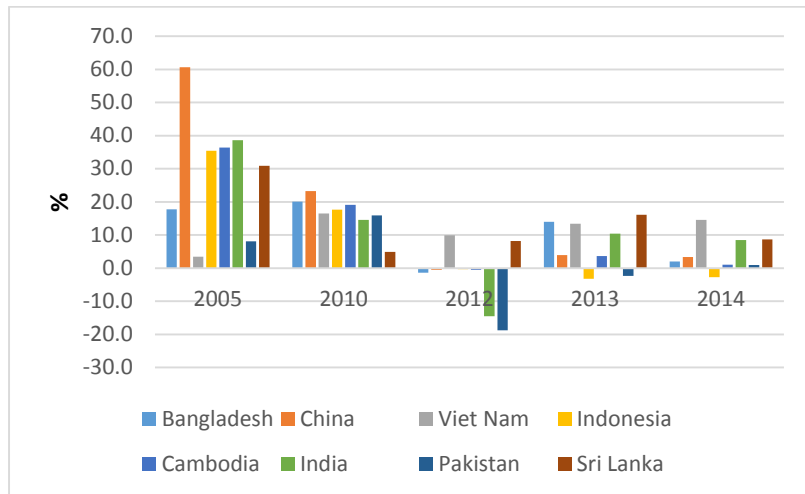
c. Major exporting markets for knitted products (HS code 61) imported by the EU (27)



d. Major exporting markets for woven products (HS code 62) imported by the EU (27)

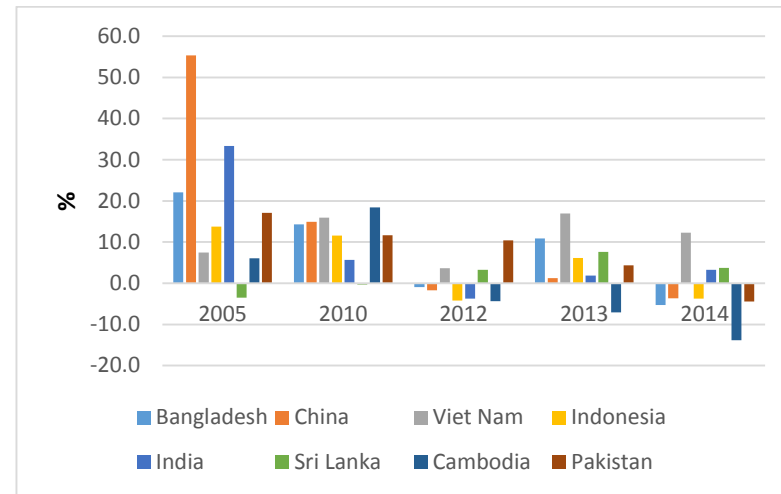


e. Major exporting markets for knitted products (HS code 61) imported to the USA



Source: Authors, CPD

f. Major exporting markets for woven products (HS code 62) imported by the USA



Section 10 - Concluding Remarks: Moving beyond the shadow of the Rana Plaza Tragedy

Over the last two years, the Bangladesh RMG sector has undergone substantial structural reforms and humanitarian and social initiatives, all aimed at minimising the possibility of an incident similar to the Rana Plaza collapse occurring again in the future. A range of commitments have been made by stakeholders to support victims of the incident, and the industry has identified a series of problems and initiated appropriate remedial actions. However, the implementation of these commitments and measures has faced challenges. As such, the question that remains to be answered is how, two years on from the tragedy, can the Bangladesh RMG sector reclaim its image as one of the most compliant apparel sectors in the world? This monitoring report has focused on the level of progress made towards achieving this objective and towards developing the sustainability of the sector into the future.

This report has recognised the effectiveness of initiatives implemented to assist affected workers to get back into normal life, and measures to promote the reform and development of the RMG sector. However, despite their efficacy, these measures have been found to be inadequate in their impact and sustainability. It is imperative that all stakeholders ensure the successful implementation of all ongoing initiatives in their entirety, so as to avoid stagnation and to continue to improve Bangladesh's position in the global market.

10.1 Victims of the Rana Plaza Tragedy

Missing workers: There are as many as 159 victims who remain missing. While the MoLE has expressed its intention to identify these missing workers, these efforts must take precedence so as to reduce the suffering of family members, both emotionally and financially. The families of missing workers need to be identified in a timely manner when the available information is sufficient to meet the requirements set. When the information does not comply with such requirements, the MoLE may request additional information in support of a claim.

Long-term financial support for victims and their families: Two years after the incident, many victims are yet to receive the full compensation that they are entitled to. While initiatives undertaken at the local level met the immediate and short-term needs of most victims and their families, the long-term needs of victims remain unfulfilled. A lack of progress made in regards to compensation directives at the High Court is another shortcoming. Considering other developments regarding long-term financial support, particularly under the Rana Plaza Trust Fund, the High Court may consider issuing a compensation directive for victims to cover the outstanding funds.

Year two saw considerable progress being made in implementing the initiatives of buyers/retailers through the Rana Plaza Trust Fund. The Fund has so far disbursed 70 per cent of the total compensation claims to affected individuals. Despite the weakness of the authenticated information system, the identification of victims and dependents of deceased and missing workers has been possible with little difficulty. However, the pace of payments has not been satisfactory. It is clear that it is extremely difficult for victims to survive on this basic level of financial support. Additionally, 30 per cent of the claim remains

to be disbursed due to a shortfall in the Fund as a result of the slow progress of brands/retailers in fulfilling their commitments. This shortfall must be met immediately given the urgency of the situation. Funds for this purpose could be provided from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, towards which the High Court may consider issuing a directive. Continuing on from the initiative to support missing workers who have been identified, sufficient funds for the remaining 159 missing workers should be able to be provided from the Rana Plaza Trust Fund.

Treatment for injured workers: While recognising the initiatives that have been undertaken by a number of organisations in providing long-term medical treatment to injured workers, these initiatives have been found to be inadequate as, for a number of reasons, it has not been possible to extend this provision to all injured workers, free-of-charge. Given the central urban location of the support facilities, it is difficult for victims in more remote areas to access these services. It is important to gather a complete list of all victims who are located in remote areas and to ensure that the necessary arrangements are made so that they are all able to benefit from free-of-charge medical support and the reimbursement of medication and travel expenses.

Injured workers who suffer from physical and mental difficulties have to fund their own treatment at local facilities as most victims have found the limited funds provided inadequate to cover the necessary treatment. While some organisations have provided support for the main treatment (e.g. physiotherapy), affected individuals have had to themselves cover the cost of medicines required for such treatment, as well as for other medical tests. Given their limited finances, this has proven difficult for many injured workers, resulting in a discontinuation of their treatment. The Government of Bangladesh may therefore consider allocating additional funds to these specialised facilities, so as to provide free-of-charge services for not only the main treatment but also for any necessary accompanying treatment and medication.

Chronically ill and injured patients are required to undergo treatment on a regular basis for a long period of time. Unless these treatments continue to be provided at a low cost into the future, individuals in need of such medical assistance will find it difficult to continue their treatment. As such, the Government of Bangladesh should also allocate funds to these specialised facilities to ensure that they remain in operation for the benefit of victims and their rehabilitation.

It is necessary for individuals who have received artificial limbs to replace their prosthetics after a specified period of time. Given the reported limited usability of the artificial limbs that have been given to victims, higher quality prosthetics should be provided so as to enable individuals to engage in normal daily activity and re-enter employment. It is therefore necessary to allocate a separate fund for the purpose of artificial limb replacements.

Re-employment: Considerable progress has been made during year two with regard to re-employment of victims. A number of organisations have provided training to promote and develop the entrepreneurial skills necessary for small business activities. This research has found that a large number of individuals have benefitted from this training and have as a consequence started their own businesses. However, despite this, a number of workers have claimed that a lack of access to adequate working capital and low

demand for the services that they offer have detrimentally affected their businesses. It is evident that these small entrepreneurs need better access to low-cost credit for the proper operation of their businesses. While it is admirable that these workers are taking the necessary steps to earn a modest, albeit volatile living, it is difficult for them to negotiate the challenges that they face so as to realise continued improvements in their living standards.

10.2 Restructuring of the RMG Sector

Reinstatement of the GSP Facility in the US Market: Impressive progress has been made in implementing various activities of the USTR Action Plan. However, a number of actions remain only partly completed. The USTR should take note of recent developments and, if the implementation of the proposed actions continues to progress at the promised rate, consider reinstating the GSP Facility for Bangladesh products in the US market in the near future.

Implementation of the EU Sustainability Compact: Although considerable progress has been made in implementing the commitments of the EU Sustainability Compact, a number of issues remain unaddressed. The Government of Bangladesh should ensure that all relevant stakeholders complete the remaining activities within the scheduled timeline.

Timely implementation of CAPs by RMG factory owners: Many problems have been identified at the factory level in relation to fire, electrical and structural safety. Although a significant number of factories have already received CAPs, difficulties in implementing all remedial actions within the scheduled CAPs timeline has meant that a large number of entrepreneurs have requested time extensions. While such requests are in part understandable, given that a significant amount of machinery needs to be imported and that substantial funds are required for effective implementation of CAPs, there are cases where entrepreneurs are not promoting successful CAP implementation.

Inspection of NTPA-supported companies: The pace of inspections of NTPA-supported companies needs to be accelerated. The NTPA initiative is currently facing a number of difficulties in conducting inspections, including inaccurate contact details for the majority of factories. Further, the successful implementation of remedial actions in such factories appears even more challenging given their poor compliance standard, despite, however, being indirectly involved with major buyers. It is therefore crucial to allocate funds towards implementing a corrective action plan. The Government of Bangladesh should initiate discussions with development partners regarding this fund.

Initiation of a process for identifying non-member companies for inspection: At least 800 companies in operation are not members of any authorised organisation. Since these companies are not members of any organisation, it is difficult to track them. However, in order to complete the ongoing process of sector-wide reform and restructuring, these companies need to be identified, inspected and brought into compliance with minimum standards. Failure to do so could result in another tragic incident. As a matter of urgency, the DIFE should therefore identify these companies, ensure that they register for membership under any of the authorised organisations, and then conduct inspections and ensure the implementation of the necessary remedial actions.

Development of a local inspection and monitoring process: The capacity of the MoLE has been enhanced as a result of a number of upgrades. However, while these upgrades are welcomed, the MoLE needs to continue to enhance its capacity and efficiency so as to realise further improvements that will ensure continuing compliance with standards throughout the entire RMG sector. While the MoLE has already initiated a number of capacity development programmes, even greater improvements could be realised by the transfer of technology from international experts and technicians who are currently engaged under the Accord and Alliance initiatives. In this context, the Government of Bangladesh, in cooperation with the ILO, should develop a skills development programme for local authorities, predominantly focused on efficient monitoring and proper implementation of remedial measures at the field level.

Further research is needed: The Bangladesh RMG sector has seen significant transformations as a result of internal and external factors. Restructuring of the RMG sector will result in heightened competitiveness of the sector, however, new competitors are emerging in the global market that will change the market dynamics. Bangladesh itself is progressing towards a higher level of development, a level at which its current comparative advantages in their present state will become inadequate to maintain its market position. Further research is therefore needed to evaluate a wide range of factors, including the changing dynamics of the competitive market, the characteristics of physical and social compliances, product sourcing patterns, and market and product diversification.

The Bangladesh RMG sector has undergone notable reform and restructuring over the previous two years. This has resulted in positive changes that can already be seen in many areas, ranging from improved support provided to victims, to development of the entire RMG sector. However, such changes are yet to be firmly established and as such further action needs to be taken to ensure their successful implementation.

Concerns of another future incident remain. If such an incident were to occur, it would detrimentally affect Bangladesh's level of development. It is therefore necessary for all stakeholders to monitor and extensively assist in the effective and comprehensive implementation of all remaining initiatives so that the Bangladesh RMG sector can move beyond the shadow of the Rana Plaza Tragedy and rebuild its global image.