

“C&A’s Response”, 25 May 2021

“C&A is a proud founding member of the Bangladesh Accord. We were one of the first companies to sign the Accord back in 2013, along with other brands, local and international unions and NGO.

Since its inception, we’ve played an active role in the Accord Steering Committee, and we have been deeply committed to the good work done on the ground. We believe it has been the best way to address the Bangladesh apparel industry’s fire safety challenges in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza accident. Additionally, C&A was part of the negotiation team who made possible the creation and signature of the Transition Accord back in 2018. The main aim of this agreement was ensure that the Accord could safely transition its activities to a locally owned body as soon as the Bangladeshi stakeholders were ready to do so.

In line with these steps, in January 2020, the Accord Steering Committee signed an agreement with the Bangladesh Garment Employers’ Association (BGMEA) on the transition to an RMG Sustainability Council (RSC). The Transition Agreement outlines the principles and steps in the transition from the Accord to the RSC, which aims to bring together industry, brands, and trade unions to carry forward the significant workplace safety accomplishments made in Bangladesh.

Today, in May 2021, we still believe that if we want to be effective, we need to incorporate the Accord success story and learnings into the RSC and we believe an agreement to do so is still possible and highly desirable.

Moreover, we have always been engaged and involved in making the garment sector in Bangladesh as safe as possible. As a proof, we set up a dedicated team in Bangladesh including our own fire and safety engineer working very closely with the Bangladesh Accord for the past 8 years. The task of the C&A team is to follow up the progress of the factories working for C&A and help suppliers and factories to be ready for verification. The outcome of this activity in the C&A factories’ remediation status figures is as follows:

Scope: Number of factories producing or that have produced for C&A within the last 18 months (also called active and inactive): 156

- *92% of those factories that have installed fire doors. 8% are currently in process of install them.*
- *75% of those factories have fire alarms and detection systems in place. 25% are still in process of install them.*
- *78% of those factories months have the appropriate fire pump or sprinklers systems in place. It is important to mention that, following the Accord requirements, not all factories require a sprinkler system in place.*
- *1,2% of those factories are still in the process of correcting important safety issues.*

These figures above clearly show the great work done by the Accord in collaboration with a) the local suppliers and factories; b) National and International Trade Unions; c) Witness Signatories and; d) the more than 200 brands that signed back in 2013. The garment sector in Bangladesh has been transformed within the last decade thanks to the high degree of commitment from all the stakeholders mentioned above. We believe the best way to continue supporting this transformation is ensuring we learn from this success with the support of all stakeholders involved.”