Asia Floor Wage Alliance - Bangladesh

AFWA Bangladesh Calls for Reconsideration of the Minimum Wage Recommended by the Wage Board for Garment Workers

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The Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) Bangladesh rejects the BDT 17,000 minimum wage recommended by the Minimum Wage Board for garment workers. This figure is inadequate and divorced from the reality of garment workers' lives. It does not reflect the current cost of living, and it disregards the workers who form the backbone of the nation' largest export industry.

Kazi Ruhul Amin, Convener of the AFWA-Bangladesh National Committee and General Secretary of the Bangladesh Garments and Sweaters Workers Trade Union Centre, stated that the prices of essential commodities - lentils, and cooking oil - continue to climb relentlessly, while housing, healthcare, education, and transportation costs have risen sharply. Garment workers, who already endure long hours, and demanding conditions are being pushed deeper into hardship. A wage that cannot cover a family's most basic needs is not a minimum wage - it is a sentence to poverty.

Ensuring fair wages for workers is in the interest of the industry. Impoverished workers cannot sustain productivity, stability, industrial peace, on which the sector and the country's overall economic development depend. When workers are able to maintain a decent standard of living, their well-being, working capacity, and productivity improve. A fair wage for workers is essential for the sustainable development of the industry and the country's economic progress.

AFWA Bangladesh insists that minimum wages be determined through a proper assessment of the factors outlined in Section 141 of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 (as amended in 2026). In particular, due consideration must be given to workers' cost of living and living standards, production costs, productivity, the value of manufactured products, inflation, the nature and risks of work, quality of work, employers' business capacity, and the overall socio-economic conditions of the country and the relevant localities.

The AFWA-Bangladesh National Committee therefore demands reconsideration of the BDT 17,000 minimum wage recommended by the Minimum Wage Board. We call upon the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour and the Wage Board to act without delay to establish a fair, reasonable, and decent minimum wage for garment workers. Bangladesh's garment workers have built this industry with their labour. They have earned the right to be paid wages that ensure they can live with dignity.