

September 15, 2014

The Honourable Ed Fast
Minister of International Trade
Government of Canada

The Honourable Christian Paradis
Minister of International Development and La Francophonie
Government of Canada

Dear Ministers Fast and Paradis:

On behalf of the undersigned Canadian human rights, religious, international development, women's, trade union, investor, teacher, student and community organizations, we are writing to urge the Canadian government to publicly encourage Canadian companies sourcing apparel products from Bangladesh to make generous contributions to the Rana Plaza Donors' Trust Fund, irrespective of whether they had a relationship to a factory in the Rana Plaza building. We also request that the Canadian government offer to match the total contributions to the Fund made by Canadian companies, organizations and institutions.

More than 16 months after the collapse of the Rana Plaza building, in which over 1,100 Bangladeshi garment workers were killed and approximately 2,500 injured, the families of those killed and the workers who suffered debilitating injuries have not yet received the full compensation to which they are entitled and are in desperate need of support.

The governments of seven European countries – the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Denmark – released a joint public statement in June of this year calling on retailers and brands in their respective countries to donate generously to the Trust Fund immediately. That statement also calls on the Government of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' Association (BGMEA) "to increase their contributions and ensure their public accountability."

To their credit, many of the US and European retailers and brands, as well as company foundations, that have made contributions to the Trust Fund to date had no business relationship with garment factories in the Rana Plaza building. As companies sourcing apparel products from Bangladesh, they recognized their shared responsibility for working conditions and safety practices in the Bangladeshi garment industry and the urgent need of the victims and survivors of the Rana Plaza tragedy.

Despite the fact that Bangladesh is a major sourcing destination for most Canadian retailers, only one Canadian retailer – Loblaw (Joe Fresh) – has made a contribution to the Trust Fund to date.

The Rana Plaza Donors' Trust Fund, for which the International Labour Organization (ILO) acts as the sole trustee, was established to provide compensation to the victims and survivors of the tragedy for lost income and medical expenses. As of September 1, the Trust Fund has received less than half the \$40 million needed to fully compensate the victims and survivors.

In September and early October, the ILO will distribute the first installment of compensation to the victims and survivors of the Rana Plaza tragedy. It is therefore imperative that there are sufficient

monies in the Trust Fund to provide the first installment of compensation to all eligible claimants, and to ensure that there are sufficient additional contributions made in the very near future so that all the eligible claimants can receive the full compensation to which they are entitled.

We appeal to your government to add its voice to those of its European counterparts by publicly encouraging Canadian companies that have apparel products made in Bangladesh to also contribute generously to the Trust Fund immediately, by offering to match those total contributions, and by calling on the Government of Bangladesh and the BGMEA to increase their contributions and ensure their public accountability.

We strongly urge you to act promptly on this critically important request. We look forward to receiving your positive response to our letter.

Yours truly,

Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux: Carolle Dubé, présidente

BC Federation of Labour: Jim Sinclair, President

BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU): Stephanie Smith, President

Canadian Federation of Students: Jessica McCormick, National Chairperson

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace: Julie Laplame, Research and Advocacy Director

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace: Toronto Archdiocesan Council

Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC): Julia Sanchez, CEO-President

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC): Hassan Yussuff, President

Canadian Union of Postal Workers: Denis Lemelin, National President

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE): Paul Moist, National President

Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ): Louise Chabot, présidente

Centre International De Solidarité Ouvrière (Ciso): Michèle Asselin, coordonnatrice

Comité d'action contre la traite humaine interne et internationale:
Louise Dionne, coordonnatrice

Comité de solidarité/Trois-Rivières: Jean-Marc Lord, directeur général

Confédération des syndicats nationaux, Jacques Létourneau, président

Conseil central du Montreal métropolitain (CCMM-CSN): Dominique Gaigneault, présidente

Council of Canadians: Maude Barlow, National Chairperson

CUPE 1979: Guy Laflamme and Jamie Kass, Co-Presidents

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO): Sam Hammond, President

Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ): Daniel Boyer, président

Fédération des femmes du Québec: Alexa Conradi, présidente

Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec: Regine Laurent, présidente

Handicap International Canada: Jérôme Bobin, Executive Director

Inter Pares: David Bruer, Program Manager Asia

Jesuits in English Canada: Peter Bisson sj, Provincial Superior

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives: Jennifer Henry, Executive Director

Ligue des droits et libertés: Dominique Peschard, président

Maquila Solidarity Network: Lynda Yanz, Executive Director

Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Labour: Mary Shortall, President

Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA): James Ryan, President

Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU): Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President,

Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation: Paul Elliot, President

Oxfam Canada: Robert Fox, Executive Director

Presbyterian World Service & Development: Ken Kim, Executive Director

Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC): Robyn Benson, National President

Service Employees Union (SEU), Local 800: Raymond Larcher, President

Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE):
Peter Chapman, Executive Director

South Asian Women's Rights Organization (SAWRO): Sultana Jahangir, Executive Director

Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec: Lucie Martineau, présidente

Syndicat des Travailleurs et Travailleuses des Postes (STTP): Christian Martel,
Directeur national, STTP Région du Québec

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund: Adele Finney, Executive Director

The United Church in Canada: Michael Blair, Executive Minister, Church in Mission Unit

Toronto and York Region Labour Council: John Cartwright, President

Unifor: Jerry Dias, National President

Unifor Québec: Joseph Gargiso, directeur adjoint

Unifor section locale 8284: Richard l'heureux, président

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) – Canada: Paul R. Meinema, President

United Steelworkers: Ken Neumann, Canadian National Director

UNL Canada Inc.: Fuad Chowdhury, Director

Vancouver and District Labour Council: Joey Hartman, President

Workers' Action Center: Deena Ladd, Coordinator

Workers United Canada: Barry Fowlie, Director

Workers United Quebec: Claude St. Marseille, Director

cc. Heather Cruden, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh
Diane J. Brisebois, President and Chief Executive Officer, Retail Council of Canada
Bob Kirke, Executive Director, Canadian Apparel Federation