

Better Work Jordan 4th Annual Buyers Forum

Day 2 – 24 April 2012

Key Summary Points

- All stakeholders expressed a clear desire to increase the number of Jordanians working in the apparel sector.
- There was a great deal of confusion and concern regarding the new minimum wage decision as it applies to the apparel sector. A decision was taken to create and distribute an informational sheet prepared by BWJ with the assistance of the MoL and social partners.
- International brands remain concerned about issues related to human trafficking especially in the context of the new legislation in California regarding human trafficking. Rather than pulling out of the country, the brands aim to work with more proactively with BWJ and all stakeholders to address trafficking-related issues so the industry will continue to operate and expand in Jordan.
- The garment union continues its work to advocate for all workers in the sector whether members of the union or not. The union stresses the importance of a stable and growing sector that employs more Jordanians.
- JGATE emphasized that the sector can only survive if it is able to compete globally. JGATE recommends that in its final two years, BWJ focus on increasing Jordanian employment, protecting the reputation of the industry to increase investment, and improving conditions for workers.

Opening Remarks

The Minister of Labour, the US Ambassador to Jordan, and the ILO Regional Director for the Arab States all made opening remarks. These, along with the Ministry of Labour's subsequent presentation are summarized below.

Ministry of Labour	The GoJ is working through the MoL to improve the condition of workers in Jordan. The garment industry is a priority for the MoL and the sector has seen great improvements over the past 5 years. The MoL hopes that buyers will remain in Jordan and asks that they investigate fully any allegations against the apparel sector before taking action.
US Government	The US Embassy is committed to seeing the garment sector thrive through the free trade agreement between the US government and the GoJ and to finding solutions to the challenges confronting the sector. BWJ is playing a key role in this process. The Workers' Centre will be a tangible improvement in the daily lives of workers in the QIZ and will signal U.S. commitment to the long-term success of the sector in Jordan. Sustainable and collaborative approaches such as the Workers' Centre are key to the success of the sector.
ILO	The ILO Decent Work Country Programme was recently launched and aims to increase Jordanian employment while maintaining social and human rights standards. The BWJ programme contributes to the goals of the DWCP especially that of advancing the rights of foreign workers. The progress that is made in the garment sector will be expanded to other sectors.

Feedback

Buyers

In recent months, there have been two laws passed that have significant bearings on the garment sector in Jordan. The first is the new minimum wage decision. This decision needs to be better explained to all stakeholders to clarify any confusion and to ensure that workers are receiving their rights. The second is the California Law — a state law in the USA that applies to retailers in the state of California. Qualifying businesses must disclose specific pieces of information regarding their suppliers, particularly as related to human trafficking. The brands are concerned about the issue of human trafficking given the level of migrant labour in Jordan and are raising their concerns now so proactive solutions can be found. Everyone needs to take responsibility to keep the industry alive in Jordan.

Garment Union

The union agrees with many of the issues that were raised in the meeting. Labour contracts have been and continue to be an issue, and the union has been working to have a unified contract in appropriate languages so workers are not deceived in their home countries. Fixing this problem would reduce the time the union spends addressing grievances related to contracts. The union asks that a stakeholder committee be established that will be responsible for advocacy/campaigning to increase the employment of Jordanians in the garment sector. There are factories that employ Jordanians at a rate of 100%. The union recognizes the costs of hiring workers, especially of bringing in foreign workers, and encourages creation of a lobbying group to see how these costs can be reduced.

JGATE

In terms of the new minimum wage decision, suppliers have set agreements with buyers and they cannot change their agreements because of the recent decision. Efforts were made to keep the same minimum wage for Jordanians and guest workers to avoid discrimination. It is the interpretation of the law that raises concerns of discrimination, not the law itself. While the union has done much to develop the sector, it must do more to educate workers on topics such as strikes and to help increase foreign workers' sense of belonging in Jordan and in the factories. The union needs more support and JGATE calls on all parties present to better support the union so it can operate at 100% and be financially independent. As the end of the BWJ project is approaching, we need to review the potential of extending its term. In its final two years, BWJ should focus on increasing Jordanian employment, protecting the reputation of the industry, and improving conditions for workers. BWJ should be active in publishing facts to dispel false allegations against the sector.

Action Items

Topic	Party Responsible	Collaborator	Action
Minimum Wage	BWJ	Mol, JGATE, Garment Union	Compile a fact-sheet highlighting the key points of the minimum wage decision to be distributed to all stakeholders.
Workers' Centre	BWJ	PAC	BWJ will distribute the paper prepared by the law group on the options for registering the Workers' Centre to participants and the PAC.
Wage Setting	ILO	BWJ	Bring in experts from the ILO to meet with the tripartite minimum wage committee to look at ways to reward productivity, skill, or other best practices to improve the sector.
Increasing Jordanian Employment in the Sector	BWJ	All stakeholders	Finish research on good practice and on employing Jordanians by the end of May. Facilitate a process for stakeholders to develop a strategy to effectively implement the National Employment Strategy in the garment sector, specifically how to increase Jordanian employment.
Collective Bargaining	Garment Union, Apparel Employers	ILO	If requested to do so by the employers and the union, facilitate collective bargaining discussions between employers and the union to determine what sector-wide agreements/processes could look like. Within this discussion, look at how the union can collect dues and strengthen its representation of migrant workers.
Recruitment of Foreign Workers	ILO, GoJ	BWJ, JGATE, Garment Union	Work with the sending governments and the GoJ to write bilateral MOUs as already exist for other sectors.
BWJ Programming	BWJ	PAC	BWJ to complete this year an in-depth study of sustainable models/structures for the programme once its 5-year mandate ends.

Annex 1. Participants

Organization	Participant Title	Name
Buyers		
Gap	Manager Social Responsibility Monitoring & Vendor Development Mediterranean	Mr. Serkan Tanka
	Vendor Compliance Officer - Social Responsibility Monitoring & Vendor Development Mediterranean	Mr. Loay Hatem Tolba
HanesBrands Inc. Jordan	Sourcing / Office Manager, Compliance Specialist	Mr. Ashraf Qrai
Jones Apparel Group	Senior Compliance Manager	Mr. Kesava Murali
Jones International Limited	Vice President - Middle East	Mr. Vikas Mehra
Li & Fung	Assistant Manager	Ms. Eylem Yilmaz
Sears	Regional Compliance Manager	Ms. Katherine T. Luzuriaga
Walmart	Supplier Development Specialist, Ethical Sourcing, Middle East, Africa, Turkey & Europe	Mr. Abid Manzoor
Factories		
Al Areen Wear	General Manager	Mr. Ra'ed Foudeh
		Mr. Shouban Al-Nimri
Al-Masera Textiles Co.	Admin Manager	Mr. Abdel-Hai Al-Serhan
Aseel Universal Garments Mfrg Co.	General Manager	Mr. Velu Chandran
Business Faith Garment Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	HR and Compliance Manager	Mr. Jerry Yan
Camel Textile Int'l Corp	Administration Manager	Mr. David Sun
Century Wear	General Manager	Mr. Samir Said Ahmad
Classic Fashion Apparel Industry	Managing Director	Mr. Sanal Kumar
Classic Fashion Apparel Industry Ltd Co.		Mr. Sreenath
EAM Maliban Textiles Jordan (pvt) Ltd.	General Manager	Mr. Shakir Mohammed Ismail
Fine Apparel Ltd.		Mr. Raza Lokhandwala
Galaxy Apparel Industry	General Manager	Mr. M.N. Alam
Hi-Tech Textile L.L.C.	Director	Mr. Ali Imran
IVORY Garments Factory L.L.C.		Mr. Ravish Sachdeva
Mustafa & Kamal Ashraf Trading (Jordan) Garment Ltd.	Admin Manager	Mr. Majed Alwaneh
Needle Craft		Mr. Imrankhan
OASIS	General Manager	Mr. Patrick
Rich Pine		Mr. Hassan Yang
Sterling Apparel Manufacturing	General Manager	Mr. Farhan Ifram
Tusker Apparel LTD CO	Human Resources Manager	Mr. Bashar Ali

United Creations LLC	Compliance Manager	Mr. Nirmal Khemlani
Government of Jordan		
Ministry of Industry and Trade	Head of QIZ	Mr. Hassan Al-Nsour
Ministry of Labour	Head of Inspection Directorate and Labour Affairs	Mr. Adnan Rababa
US Embassy		
Economic	Deputy Chief	Mr. Thomas M. Rosenberger
Office of Economic Growth USAID/Jordan	Project Management Assistant	Ms. Suzan T. Haddad
Political	Political Officer	Ms. Elizabeth Litchfield
Garment Union and Supplier Representative		
The General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment & Clothing Industries	President - Textile Trade Union	Mr. Fathalla Omrani
	Executive Board Member - Textile Trade Union	Ms. Mervat Abdul Kareem
Jordan Garments, Accessories, & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE)	CEO	Mr. Mohammad Khourma
ILO		
International Labour Organization (ILO)	Director, Regional Office for the Arab States	Ms. Nada Al Nashif
Better Work Global	Technical Specialist, Training & Knowledge Management	Mr. Conor Boyle
Better Work Jordan	Programme Manager	Mr. Phillip Fishman
	Technical Officer	Mr Tareq Abu Qaoud
	Enterprise Advisory Team Leader	Mr. Rebal Daoud
	Enterprise Advisor	Ms. Zainab Yang
	Enterprise Advisor	Ms. Roa'a Al-Khudairi
	Enterprise Advisor	Mr. Hazem Al-Nammari
	Enterprise Advisor	Mr. Ala'a Al-Saifi
	Enterprise Advisor	Mr. Yousef Najjar
	Enterprise Advisor	Ms. Rania Shanti
	Admin and Finance Manager	Ms. Reem Shalabi
	Admin and Finance Assistant	Mr. Mardam Bazadough
	Training Assistant	Ms. Dara Damen
	Administrative Assistant	Ms. Hanada Salah
	Consultant	Ms. Lindsay Williams