



**ITGLWF STATEMENT ON FAIRTRADE
APPROACH TO EXPLORING STANDARDS
IN THE TEXTILES SUPPLY CHAINS FOR
FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED COTTON**

The concept of social labelling

The ITGLWF believes that the subcontracting of production in our sector of industry makes it impossible provide any sort of credible guarantee that goods are made in decent conditions.

The concept of social labelling (cont.)

- If there is a desire to label in this way then we would suggest a “Union Made” label which indicates that the garment was made in an organized factory.
- However, such a label would only be used in a situation where the union was recognized, engaging in collective bargaining and believed that the enterprise merited a “Union Made” label.

Payment of a living wage

- The notion that observance of the legal minimum wage would qualify a factory for a fair trade label is unacceptable. Calculated conservatively, most countries have a legal minimum wage which is only between one-third and one quarter of the living wage.

Payment of a living wage (cont.)

- An initiative where outsiders determine what level of premium is necessary to achieve a living wage disempowers unions and workers.

Payment of a living wage (cont.)

- The notion that buyers should pay a premium which would then be used for community services is unacceptable. Wages should be paid in cash directly to the worker and not in kind.

Freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively

Freedom of association does not mean that workers must have representation, it means they must have the right to join a form a union of their own choosing without interference or retaliation. It is workers and workers alone who must decide whether they wish to form or join a union.

Responsibility for wages and workplace conditions

A system that removes the responsibility from wages from the employer and puts it on the buyer or the consumer is not sustainable.

Responsibility for wages and workplace conditions (cont.)

- While the ITGLWF recognises that buyers hold the power in the global garment industry, it also believes that the key to workplace compliance is the employment relationship, on which all domestic and international labour law is based.

Responsibility for wages and workplace conditions (cont.)

- A sustainable system would see the employer being responsible for the payment of a living wage; and the buyer being responsible for making the payment of a living wage a contractual obligation, paying prices that enable the supplier to fulfill that obligation, and supporting suppliers in bearing the risk of paying higher wages for instance by providing greater stability in orders.

Independent Monitoring of Workplace Conditions

The independent monitoring of workplace conditions is not adequate or sustainable in the longer term. The best way to promote compliance is through mature systems of industrial relations at the workplace.