

**Resolution for Faculty Support for University of Tennessee-Knoxville Licensees  
to Sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh**

Presented to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
by the Department of Sociology and the Global Studies Program

WHEREAS the global apparel industry generally, and the apparel industry in Bangladesh specifically, have a long history of workplace safety concerns;<sup>i</sup> and

WHEREAS on April 24, 2013, over 1000 laborers died and far more were injured while working in apparel factories in the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh when it collapsed on top of them due to documented structural flaws;<sup>ii</sup> and

WHEREAS more than 500 apparel workers lost their lives in over 20 apparel factories in Bangladesh before the Rana Plaza collapse,<sup>iii</sup> including more than 100 fatalities in the Tazreen Fashions factory fire in Dhaka, Bangladesh on November 24, 2012;<sup>iv</sup> and

WHEREAS consumers in Tennessee and across the United States routinely purchase apparel made in Bangladesh, not only from campus stores but also from retailers such as Sears, Wal-Mart and J. C. Penney; and

WHEREAS, as the flagship university in the state of Tennessee, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UTK) distinguishes itself in its commitment to higher learning, innovation, civility, critical thinking, and global citizenry; and

WHEREAS UTK seeks the highest standard for its students regarding ethics, equality, and human rights; and

WHEREAS, as recommended by the Worker Rights Consortium, of which UTK is an affiliated university, 24 universities, including 7 top 25 national universities, in the United States<sup>v</sup> have adopted a policy to require licensees that “sourced, produced or purchased collegiate apparel in Bangladesh as of January 1, 2013”<sup>vi</sup> or any time thereafter to sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh; and

WHEREAS the Accord is a legally binding contract between global brands/retailers and international unions that prioritizes worker representation and brand responsibility in its governance structure and articles, and fills common regulatory gaps found in the existing social compliance model of apparel supply chain labor monitoring; and

WHEREAS the Accord includes these items: independent inspections for all factory suppliers; signatory companies are required to provide financial assistance for factory safety renovations; signatory companies must commit to long-term, stable sourcing arrangements; supplier factories must provide extensive safety training;<sup>vii</sup> and

WHEREAS the Accord will contribute to improving the working conditions, and thus the lives, of thousands of workers in Bangladesh who make apparel that is consumed in Tennessee and across the United States; and

WHEREAS adopting the policy that all licensees that source from Bangladesh sign the Accord would heighten UTK's national reputation, and demonstrate to our students and staff, as well as the wider community, that we take seriously our responsibility to all of our workers, both directly and indirectly connected to the university, and that we hold ourselves, our students, and our partners to the highest ethical standards; then

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the University of Tennessee Faculty Senate strongly supports adopting a policy for UTK to require all UTK licensees that "sourced, produced or purchased collegiate apparel in Bangladesh as of January 1, 2013"<sup>viii</sup> or any time thereafter, to sign the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a letter to this effect will be sent to the Chancellor demonstrating support by faculty, students, and other campus leaders.

---

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/11/business/global/clothing-retailers-pressed-on-bangladesh-factory-safety.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/23/world/asia/report-on-bangladesh-building-collapse-finds-widespread-blame.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Doug Miller, *Last Nightshift in Savar*

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/26/world/asia/bangladesh-fire-kills-more-than-100-and-injures-many.html>

<sup>v</sup> Specifically: Duke, Penn State, University of Washington, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Temple, Cornell, Georgetown, Brown, Syracuse, University of Wisconsin, Columbia, Emerson, University of Michigan, Macalester College, Rutgers, American, Northwestern, University of Illinois, Washington State, George Washington, Michigan State, Grand Valley State, and Arizona State

<sup>vi</sup> Worker Rights Consortium (<http://www.workersrights.org/>), "WRC Recommendation to Affiliates on Bangladesh"

<sup>vii</sup> Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh

<sup>viii</sup> Worker Rights Consortium (<http://www.workersrights.org/>), "WRC Recommendation to Affiliates on Bangladesh"