



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles





We all agree that we do not wish to have clothes touching our bodies that have been produced in places where human rights are being trampled underfoot and people are being exploited and poisoned. We need decent work worldwide. And we need binding minimum social and environmental standards worldwide.

Dr Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic
Cooperation and Development

Dear readers,

Unsafe buildings, poor fire protection, toxic chemicals, wages that are barely enough to survive on – all this is the harsh reality in many garment factories.

I am aware that the textiles industry's complex supply chains mean that we cannot make all stages in the production process more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable at a single stroke. But we can – and must – make a start.

That's why, in October 2014, I launched the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles together with representatives of the private sector and civil society. Working together, our aim is to achieve real improvements in the textiles and garment industry.

We are also safeguarding transparency: a new web portal will compare existing garment quality labels and create clarity for consumers. We want to improve the situation for everyone. Please join us!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gerd Müller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Gerd Müller

Member of the German Bundestag

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development

Challenges in the textiles industry – some examples

WAGES –

50 EUROS A MONTH

In Bangladesh, unskilled garment workers are paid minimum wages amounting to just 50 euros per month. This is much less than a living wage.

OVERTIME –

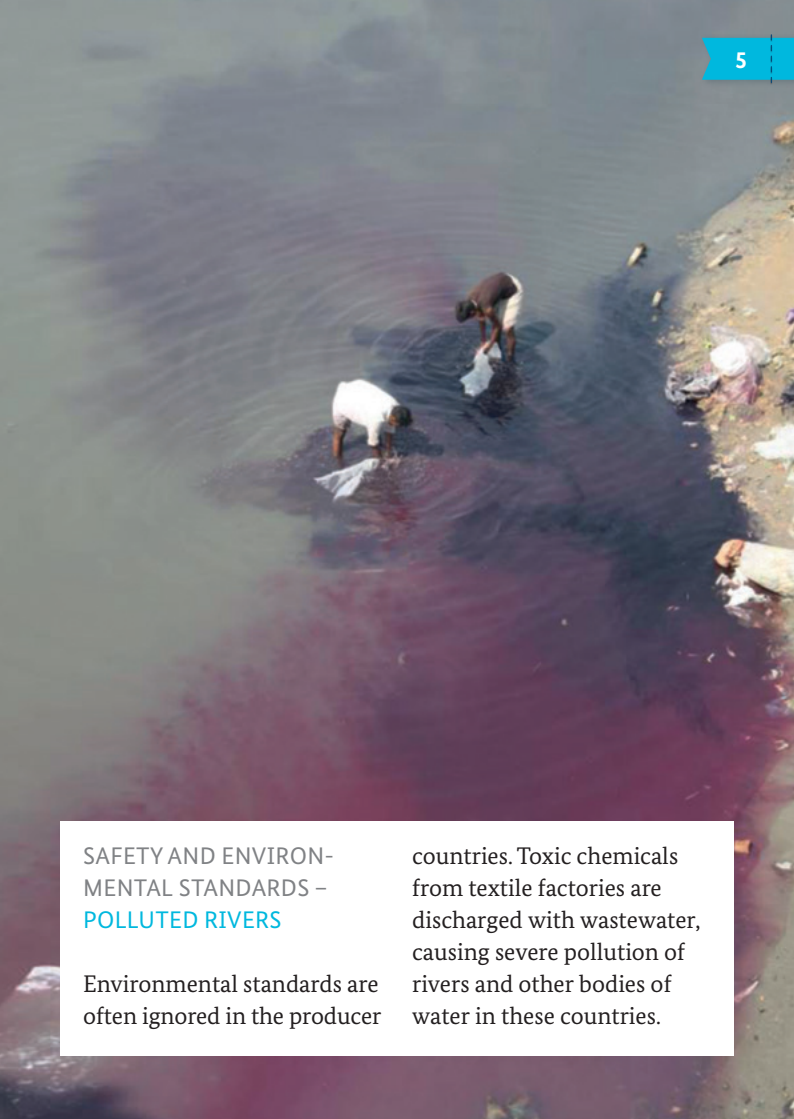
16 HOURS A DAY

If textile producers fail to meet certain price levels and deadlines, they lose business to competitors. They pass on this pressure to their employees. In such situations, many garment workers work not just 10 or 12 hours but up to 16 hours a day. Overtime is often not properly remunerated.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

NO PROTECTION FROM HARMFUL CHEMICALS

Many textile factories use chemicals that can cause serious diseases. However, in many cases, workers are not provided with the proper protective clothing. Serious accidents also occur frequently because safety standards do not exist or are not adhered to.

An aerial photograph of a river. A large, irregular, reddish-brown stain is visible in the water, extending from the bottom left towards the center. Two people are wading in the river. One person, wearing a white shirt and dark shorts, is in the lower left of the red stain, reaching down. The other person, wearing a dark shirt and light shorts, is further up the river, also reaching down. The riverbank on the right is visible, with some debris and a small structure. The water is a murky greyish-brown color.

SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS – POLLUTED RIVERS

Environmental standards are often ignored in the producer

countries. Toxic chemicals from textile factories are discharged with wastewater, causing severe pollution of rivers and other bodies of water in these countries.

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles



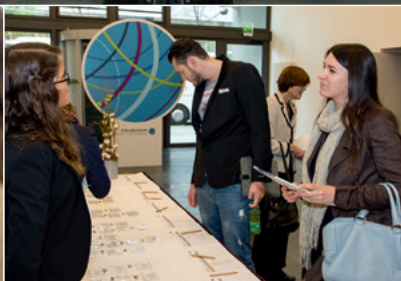
In April 2014, German Development Minister Gerd Müller invited various stakeholders to form a Round Table on the Textiles Industry and discuss options for improving environmental and social standards in this sector.

More than 70 representatives of the textiles industry, trade unions and civil society took part in the Round Table and drafted an ambitious Plan of Action. It defines the social, environmental and economic standards that are to be progressively implemented all along the textile supply chain.

On 16 October 2014, the Plan of Action was unveiled and the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles was officially launched.

Many other European governments have launched similar initiatives. The Partnership is therefore not a unilateral national project but an important contribution by Germany to sustainable global development.

For the latest information about the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles, click here:
www.textilbuendnis.com/index.php/en/



The aims

The aim of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles is to pool the strengths and expertise of its members and thus achieve a critical mass in the marketplace in order to bring about continuous improvement of social, environmental and economic sustainability all along the textile supply chain.

This is to be achieved with the following four strategic elements:

1. Definition of Partnership Standards for the individual textile processing stages; definition of requirements and deadlines for the gradual implementation of these standards;
2. Improvement of conditions in producer countries and drafting of recommendations for a coherent policy in Germany and in the EU;
3. Transparent communication that shows the progress made by the Partnership and its members and that makes it easy for consumers to identify sustainable textiles;
4. Establishment of a platform for partners to review progress, share experience and learn from each other.



ASIA: PROMOTING CORE LABOUR STANDARDS IN THE TEXTILES INDUSTRY

In May 2014, the BMZ and the International Labour Organization (ILO) signed a cooperation agreement on the financing of ILO

programmes in the Asian textiles and garment industry. The programmes (e.g. in Cambodia and Bangladesh) will focus on fostering freedom of association and dialogue between the social partners and on enforcing living wages.

The bases

“... universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”

Preamble to the Constitution of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1919)

The standards of the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles are based on well-established international principles such as the International Labour Organization's core labour standards, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. They have also been

influenced by existing systems of standards (e.g. for organic textiles and Fair Trade), technical industry standards, and voluntary commitments (codes of conduct) within the private sector.

AFRICA: A WIN-WIN SCENARIO FOR FARMERS, TEXTILE COMPANIES AND CONSUMERS

BMZ supports the “Cotton made in Africa” initiative in order to promote sustainable cotton production. The clothing companies pay

a licence fee for the right to use the “Cotton made in Africa” quality label. The revenue from the licence fees is invested in the African project areas.

More than 435,000 small-holders have already received support from the initiative.



The Plan of Action

The Plan of Action defines binding standards for the production and processing of raw materials in the textiles and garment industry (spinning, weaving, knitting, dyeing, finishing and sewing).

Smooth and gap-free monitoring of all production processes is still a major challenge for the industry and retailers at present. The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles will therefore focus initially on the most urgent issues, especially transparency in value chains, production chemicals, freedom of association, and living wages.

The focus will initially be on cotton, the most important

raw material in the industry. Later, the production of synthetic fibres is also to be included.

The Plan of Action also defines the stages in which the Partnership Standards are to be implemented. Deadlines have been set in order to ensure that continuous improvements are achieved. The timetable will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

The Plan of Action has not been imposed unilaterally by the German government but was developed in a collaborative process involving businesses, civil society, the trade unions and the government.

THE TEXTILE PRODUCTION CHAIN

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The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles views the textiles and garment supply chain as an integral whole, with sustainability to be built into every processing stage on a progressive basis.

Natural fibres

Cotton growing and harvesting



Hazardous working conditions from fertiliser and pesticide use

Synthetic fibres



Health and environmental risks from the use of oil and chemicals

Finishing

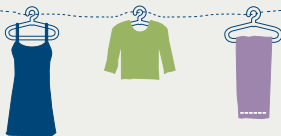


Health and environmental risks from bleaching, dyeing and impregnation with, in some cases, toxic chemicals

Garment assembly/sewing



Long working hours and very low wages adversely affect workers' health and safety



The Partnership Standards (excerpt)

The ambitious Partnership Standards describe the social, environmental and economic goals to be implemented in the individual stages of the supply chain. Key topics addressed in the Standards include the following:

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

- Freedom of association and collective bargaining, e.g. on wages and working conditions
- Living wages, paid overtime, paid leave, social security benefits
- Prohibition of child labour, forced labour and contract slavery

- Health and safety at work, prohibition of discrimination and mistreatment

THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION

- Environmental management
- Protection of soil and biodiversity
- Chemical safety

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

- Ethical business practices, prohibition of corruption
- Purchasing practices which support implementation of the Partnership Standards



BANGLADESH: AWARENESS-RAISING AND TRAINING IN TEXTILE FACTORIES

In Bangladesh, the BMZ promotes compliance with national labour and environmental legislation and with international social and environmental standards in textile and garment factories.

Since 2010, more than 200,000 garment workers, managers and factory owners have undergone training to learn more about their rights and responsibilities. Training and better equipment are also provided for public labour inspectors, who are responsible for carrying out checks in the factories.

Support from the BMZ

The BMZ is itself a member of the Partnership and will fund the Partnership Secretariat until 2016. It is seeking to build partnerships in Europe and worldwide (e.g. with the G7, other governments and international organisations) to establish the Partnership and its goals on the international stage and create a level playing field for all market participants. The BMZ engages in dialogue with national and international actors on relevant topics (e.g. introduction of a living wage) in order to identify solutions.

Action plan on living wages

The first European Conference on Living Wages, jointly hosted by the BMZ, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the German Round Table Codes of Conduct, took place in Berlin and drafted an action plan.

Furthermore, through its political dialogue with the governments of producer countries, the BMZ advocates for improvements in their implementation of social and environmental standards, e.g. by encouraging these governments to allow freedom of association and the formation of trade unions. Through its develop-

ment cooperation, Germany also supports bilateral and regional programmes with the aim of promoting sustainability standards in the textiles industry.

Pakistan: more efficient water use in garment factories

In Pakistan, Germany is promoting water efficiency in the textiles industry in order to reduce water consumption and pollution and improve workers' health and safety.

The support provided by the Partnership builds members' capacities to implement the Partnership's goals, e.g. with assistance from the develoPPP programme.

develoPPP.de

The BMZ supports joint projects with Partnership members at the local level, such as the establishment of production facility pools, the introduction of new process technology, and training programmes in partner countries. The BMZ provides financial and technical support for these measures for up to three years.

As a public authority committed to fairness, BMZ makes sustainability a priority in its procurement processes and promotes sustainable public procurement in the dialogue with other ministries.



Sustainable textiles

Everyone can join in!

By making informed purchasing decisions, we can ensure that more products which meet social and environmental standards come onto the market.

Here are some tips to help you buy clothes responsibly:

- Look out for quality labels certifying compliance with

environmental and/or social standards.

- Buy fewer but better quality clothes that will last longer.
- Ask your favourite brands about working conditions in their garment factories

A new consumer information portal SIEGELKLARHEIT

At present, consumers have few opportunities to find out about and compare the various quality labels existing in the textiles industry.

That's why the German government is launching the *Siegelklarheit* portal in 2015.

A website and an app for mobile devices will explain what the various quality labels mean and how they differ from each other.



[www.textilbuendnis.com/
index.php/en/](http://www.textilbuendnis.com/index.php/en/)

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