Message from the Chair

Dear colleagues,

Over the last two years, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety has accomplished a great deal under difficult circumstances. Although challenging, the Alliance’s mission of creating a safer and more respectful environment for garment factory workers inspires all of us because we know how important our work is for factory workers, the garment industry and, ultimately, the people of Bangladesh. The Alliance made a five-year commitment to Bangladesh and continues to work toward real reform in the garment sector.

I am proud that the Alliance laid out a set of very ambitious goals in its first two years and continues to push hard to reach its five-year goals. The work we do—inspecting factories, developing corrective action plans and remediating factories—is hard, but important. The Alliance secured low-cost financing in partnership with the International Finance Corporation and the U.S. Agency for International Development to ensure resources are available to factory owners for undertaking and completing remediation in their factories. The Alliance also focused on training factory workers, managers and security guards on fire safety so they know which steps to take in the event of a fire emergency. These efforts have helped transform the garment industry in Bangladesh and focus attention on the need to ensure factories are safe and workers are provided with a safe and secure work environment. Where possible, we have collaborated with the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh to make progress on important policy issues.

As we move into our third year of work, we look to our partners in the government of Bangladesh, the garment industry and other stakeholders to sustain our efforts. The Alliance will work with the government of Bangladesh, donor governments and all stakeholders to develop a plan to sustainably transfer our work to the responsible ministries, departments and other groups at the appropriate time. The Alliance is committed to a sustainable legacy: one that continues to create hope for the people of Bangladesh.

The Honorable Ellen O’Kane Tauscher
Independent Chair
Executive Summary

Two years ago, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, a group of leading apparel companies, retailers and brands, came together in the aftermath of the 2012 Tazreen Fashions fire and the 2013 Rana Plaza building collapse with the mission of improving workplace safety in Bangladesh’s garment factories.

In year two, Alliance Members have built on progress made in year one, achieving many of the key objectives in the legally binding Members’ Agreement, including:

- Working with factory owners to develop corrective action plans for every factory from which Alliance Members source, so that the important work of remediation can begin;
- Developing, in partnership with international institutions, two credit facilities to make affordable financing available to all factory owners from which Alliance Members source;
- Implementing a new training program targeted at factory security guards, a group with a unique leadership role to play in safety in case of emergency;
- Expanding the Alliance Helpline to cover more than 400 factories; and
- Delivering on our commitment to empower workers by launching an occupational safety and health committee pilot in 12 Alliance factories.

The Alliance is proud of these achievements, which are consistent with our core values of worker empowerment, collaboration and shared responsibility, and transparency. In year two, we devoted significant attention to the sustainability of our efforts to ensure the work of the Alliance continues and endures after the five-year commitment ends.

Focus on workers

Throughout year two, the Alliance has maintained our focus on workers, who are at the heart of our efforts. We expanded our Helpline—Amader Kotha—which is now available to 414 factories. We also partnered with the International Labor Organization to launch pilots of occupational safety and health committees in 12 Alliance factories. Both initiatives give workers the opportunity to raise concerns, demand action and take an active role in their own safety.

Collaboration and shared responsibility

A key tenet of the Alliance’s work is our commitment to collaborating with all stakeholders to achieve a safer garment industry in Bangladesh. In year two, we partnered with two international institutions to develop credit facilities so that all factories from which Alliance Members source would have access to affordable financing.

We also continued to work with the Accord on Fire and Building Safety. In addition to collaborating on the inspection and remediation of shared factories, the Alliance and the Accord came together to press
the government of Bangladesh to release long-overdue regulations to implement the amendments to the Bangladesh Labor Act.

**Transparency and accountability**

As the Alliance carries out our core programs, we continue to prioritize transparency and accountability. The Alliance Members’ Agreement requires each Alliance Member to disclose the names of all of its supplier factories through Fair Factories Clearinghouse, an independent nonprofit organization that provides a secure platform to share factory information and an aggregated view of Member factories. In year two, we added a pre-approval policy that requires Members to disclose any new factories in Bangladesh for inspection before adding them to their supply chains.

The Alliance posted all inspection reports and corrective action plans on our website, so that they are publicly available to all stakeholders.

Finally, in year two, the Alliance contracted with the University of Texas-Houston and Dhaka University to conduct an impact assessment of our core training programming. The results will be released, giving public insight into the effectiveness of our training program.

Although we are proud of the progress made in year two, we recognize that much work remains to complete substantial remediation and make these efforts sustainable. The Alliance is committed to cooperation with our local and international partners to develop a sustainable garment industry in Bangladesh. In doing so, we endeavor to ensure that the garment sector remains an enduring source of economic security and upward mobility for millions of Bangladeshi workers and their families.