Statement of the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety on the Nepal Earthquake

The Alliance expresses our sincere condolences to the victims of today’s earthquake in Nepal that has also resulted in the loss of life, injuries and structural damage in neighboring countries, including Bangladesh.

The Alliance has received several calls to our helpline, Amader Kotha (“Our Voice”), from workers concerned about cracks in factory buildings following the earthquake. We moved quickly to ensure that the owners of these factories evacuated workers immediately. We are also taking a number of additional measures to work with each factory owner, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh (Accord) and the Government of Bangladesh to ensure that all workers are safe.

This earthquake and its aftershocks should be an indication of just how difficult it can be to ensure the structural safety of buildings in an earthquake zone. While we have not yet seen immediate damage at our ready-made-garment factories in Bangladesh, this does not mean those buildings are structurally sound following this earthquake and its aftershocks. Fresh inspections must now be executed to ensure the structural safety of factories, and we have assembled a team of structural engineers, led by our Chief Safety Officer, to visit each building where there is a concern within the next 48 hours.

We extend our deepest condolences to earthquake victims and their families, and we will continue to take all steps possible to ensure that this tragedy does not result in injury or loss of life in Bangladesh garment factories.