

**January 31, 2017**

**Parliamentary questions by the members Voordewind (ChristianUnion) and Van Laar (Labour Party) to the Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation *on clothing brands that contribute to low wages, long working hours, child labour and school dropout in Bangladesh* [no. 2017Z01357]**

**Question 1**

Are you familiar with the report *Branded Childhood*<sup>(1)</sup> of the coalition Stop Child Labour and SOMO?

**Question 2**

Do you agree with the report's conclusion that clothing brands that manufacture their products in Bangladesh not only contribute to low wages and excessive overtime, but also, as a result, to child labour and school dropout of children from adult garment workers?

**Question 3**

Do you agree with the recommendations in the report and are you prepared to bring this to the attention of the garment brands, multi-stakeholder initiatives (including the Covenant Sustainable Garment and Textile) and the Government of Bangladesh?

**Question 4**

Are you prepared to discuss the increase in costs of living (rent, energy) in recent years in Bangladesh with its government? How do you explain this cost increase which followed a sharp percentual increase of the minimum wage at that time?

**Question 5**

Are you also prepared to bring this report to the attention of your European colleagues and the European Commission in order to jointly bring this matter to the attention of the government in Bangladesh?

**Question 6**

Are you willing to take more action towards garment companies active in the Netherlands and towards the European Commission to urgently raise the problem of the lack of a living wage and the consequences of that for adults and children, because of the limited progress being made by garment companies on increasing the actual wage to a living wage? Are you prepared to do this in consultation with all stakeholders who are committed to a living wage?

**Question 7**

Are you planning to take the initiative to require transparency from companies and to come up with legislation relating to modern forms of slavery? Are you willing to make the fight

against starvation wages part of this, considering that in your response to recent previous questions<sup>(2)</sup> you agreed with the recommendations to governments of importing countries in the report *Fabric of Slavery*?

**Question 8**

Can you explain - in the context of living wage – what the status is of the investigation by the apex body for sustainability standards ISEAL of a benchmark for living wage? What follow-up steps you have in mind for this issue?

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- (1) <http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/garment-brands-contribute-to-low-wages-long-working-hours-and-child-labour-in-bangladesh/>
  - (2) <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/kv170116e.pdf>