



Garment Industry Wage Survey: \$100 per Month – Not Too Much to Ask

Press Release

Phnom Penh – 2 May, 2013

The Community Legal Education Center (CLEC) would like to express its extreme dissatisfaction with the current result of garment industry wage negotiations. Further, CLEC commends the draft law put forward by Opposition lawmaker, Mr. Son Chhay which proposes a monthly minimum wage of US\$150 for Cambodian garment workers. We support and commend the draft as a prominent step towards the institution of a living wage in Cambodia. Further, in light of the upcoming election we encourage trade confederations to help their members to familiarize themselves with the proposed legislation and the benefits it would provide them.

CLEC brings attention to the inadequacies of the newly instituted minimum wage of US\$75 per month. Based on the comprehensive report commissioned by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES),¹ only a wage increase to US\$100 would ensure that Cambodian garment workers would be able to:

- Maintain their current living standards (in which food expense is insufficient) but;
- Increase their capabilities to support the basic needs of other household members; and
- Have some savings remaining for the future.

Currently, the Cambodian garment industry is typified by poverty, malnutrition, exploitation and mass fainting. If the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Garment Manufacturers' Association of Cambodia (GMAC) continue to neglect these issues, gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, mass fainting and frustrated industrial relations are guaranteed to escalate to a point where the industry and the lives of the Cambodians therein, are no longer sustainable.

We call on the Royal Government, GMAC and the major international brands sourcing Cambodian garments to ensure that the demand for US\$100 per month is met.

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¹ The comprehensive wage survey from 2009 has been adjusted for inflation. The original 27-page report was based on interviews from a total of 353 garment factory workers from 47 factories in Phnom Penh and surrounding suburbs. The report comprehensively analyzed their expenses and consequent hardships. The original report is available at: <http://apinet.ilo.org/resources/living-wage-survey-for-cambodias-garment-industry>.