

## Joint Statement

### on the \$2 Minimum Wage Rise for Workers in the Textile, Garment, Footwear, Travel Goods and Bag Sectors for 2022

3 October 2021

We, as representatives of Cambodia's independent labour movement and of tens of thousands of workers are extremely disappointed with the Prakas of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training signed 28 September 2020 which decided to add only an additional \$2 to the previous \$192 wage level as the minimum wage for workers in the textile, garment, footwear, travel goods and bag sectors for 2022. This raise will not allow workers to receive decent living wages to live with dignity as human beings and does not give them the ability to provide for the daily needs of themselves, their families or dependent elderly parents, causing them to continue living in poverty. This raise is a factor forcing workers to work overtime, spend insufficient time with their families and not have enough food to eat which causes significant health problems.

In the days following the conclusion of the negotiations and decision of the National Minimum Wage Council, a number of trade union federations and confederations have issued statements and congratulatory letters regarding the results of these negotiations contrary to the positions of workers and the figure which all trade unions had agreed on - \$204. This exposes the lack of independence of these professional organisations in serving and protecting the interests of workers. As well as this, we are extremely disappointed that of the 17 trade unions which participated in these minimum wage negotiations, only six trade unions voted to support the workers' figure of \$204. This clearly confirms that a number of trade unions which participated in the 2022 minimum wage negotiations have not served or protected the collective interests of workers. On this, workers should consider resigning their membership from these sorts of trade unions.

This is not the first time that these trade unions have not served or protected the collective interests of workers and we would like to take this opportunity to appeal in particular to international trade union federations including IndustriALL and ITUC to reconsider its membership which have neither professionally nor ethically fulfilled their role.

This statement is supported by:

1. The Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
2. Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (C.CAWDU)
3. Free Trade Union of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
4. Coalition Free Trade Union of Women Textile (CFTWUT)
5. Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFE)
6. Cambodian Tourism Workers' Union Federation (CTWUF)
7. Labour Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld (LRSU)
8. Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation (BWTUC)
9. Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community Association (CCFC)
10. Cambodia Youth Network (CYN)
11. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
12. Cambodian Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF)

More than this, whilst the minimum wage negotiations were still underway, we observed that a number of trade union leaders criticised the independent trade union campaign to demand that the minimum wage be raised to \$214 per month. A number of these trade union leaders who criticised the \$214 minimum wage campaign also participated in the minimum wage negotiations for 2022 as worker representatives. On this, we see that the National Minimum Wage Council mechanism has been established without transparency, efficiency and independence as an extremely small number of independent trade unions participated and which requires necessary reform.

We, as representatives of the independent trade union movement, maintain our demands for employers and purchasing brands to provide a \$214 minimum wage. We appeal to all workers to join in this campaign at the factory level by raising their messages on banners until we succeed. Because the minimum wage negotiation mechanisms have failed to provide decent wages to workers, international brands must take responsibility for the wages of workers who sew their products. Many international brands have publicly promised to provide living wages to workers, but until today no international brand has provided these living wages, whilst international brands continue to profit from the blood and labour of Cambodian workers. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, international brands have still profited billions of dollars, whilst workers who sew their products continue to live in poverty. Based on this clear situation whereby international brands continue to make massive profits year-on-year, we demand that all international brands provide an additional \$20 per month to workers who sew their products, to ensure that workers receive a \$214 minimum wage in 2022 through direct negotiation with independent trade unions and relevant stakeholders.

- 13. Cambodian Confederation of Unions (CCU)
- 14. Workers' Solidarity Strength Independent Union (WSSIU)
- 15. Cambodia Informal Economy Reinforce Association (CIERA)
- 16. Free and Independent Trade Union Federation (FUFU)
- 17. Cambodia Informal Workers' Association (CIWA)
- 18. Cambodia Informal Civil Servants' Association (CICA)
- 19. Solidarity House (SH)

- CC to:
- Puma
- C&A
- Nike
- H&M
- VF Corporation
- Uniqlo
- Walmart
- Adidas
- Target
- Levi Strauss
- Gap
- Inditex
- IndustriALL
- ITUC
- International Labour Organisation
- Clean Clothes Campaign
- Workers Rights Consortium
- Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
- American Center for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS)
- Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)