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Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association publishes first-ever *Code of Conduct* for Myanmar's apparel industry

A practical guide for responsible business practices in Myanmar's rapidly growing garment sector

Main points:

- This Code of Conduct is a first for Myanmar's apparel producers and was developed by MGMA with substantial involvement from the European Union's SMART Myanmar project.
- This document is a voluntary Code. It is intended to be used by MGMA's members as a practical tool to guide their business practices.
- Factories adhering to the full MGMA Code of Conduct will open themselves up to the massive influx of international orders coming from Europe and the United States who demand socially responsible manufacturing practices from their producers.
- Garment exports from Myanmar to the EU doubled in 2014, but nearly all of these orders went to producers able to pass international social compliance audits such as: BSCI, WRAP, SEDEX, SA8000 and the Ethical Trading Initiative, among others.
- MGMA's Code of Conduct embraces International Labour Organisation (ILO) Core Conventions and the strictures of Myanmar's national laws.
- This document comes after months of meetings between MGMA and international partners, as well as several social compliance workshops with the EU funded SMART Myanmar project.
- The ILO has also been involved in training the member companies of MGMA on the importance of young labour remediation programmes and industrial relations.

In brief:

Myanmar's garment sector is growing rapidly and MGMA has been working closely with the European Union's SMART Myanmar project to develop safe and responsible business practices in accordance with international standards and expectations. This Code of Conduct is a guide and tool to help Myanmar's garment industry become known internationally for safe & ethical garment production.

For more information:

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Quotes:

"We've always run our factory in what we felt was a responsible manner, but there are some shortcomings that need to be addressed. For instance, employee contracts are important but they're not always a part of Burmese business culture. Some factories need to improve this, just like some still need to make sure there is always an adequate fire safety plan and that working hours don't exceed the maximum allowed by law. MGMA has developed this Code of Conduct as a guide for our industry to help us all reach to international standards."

- Win Ei Khine, MGMA Board Member and Executive Director, Maple Trading Co.

"SMART Myanmar advised and supported MGMA in the development of this document, but it couldn't have been created without the energy and input of so many factory owners. Garment manufacturers in Myanmar are eager to create an industry which can be known by international brands for safety & responsible business practices."

- Simone Lehmann, SMART Myanmar Project Director

"Of course, there is so much more to be done. This Code establishes clearly the values of the domestic garment industry, and SMART Myanmar will be there to support MGMA in the coming months as they work to implement and realize the bold vision laid out in their Code."

- Simone Lehmann, SMART Myanmar Project Director