

## PRESS RELEASE by Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association

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Myanmar Garment Sector is labor intensive and employs majority of basic education leveled women workers. The Sector is the most important source of job creation, is also the most attractive sector for foreign investment, and is currently Myanmar's second largest export sector.

A 2016 World Bank report entitled "A Country on the Move: Domestic Migration in Two Regions in Myanmar," found that *"Garment-factory work is perceived as highly sought after; it is better paid and provides regular, longer terms of employment compared with casual labor."*

MGMA welcomes a number of recent reports done by international NGOs about the garment sector. However we appreciate to receive a balanced view on Myanmar's garment sector, which would more accurately portray the reality of the sector.

We found some of the recent reports by international NGOs, shed a negative light on Myanmar's garment sector and we believe that these reports do not accurately reflect the reality of the current situation. The report from the World Bank was based on interviews with 1600 people in mostly rural Myanmar, and it showed that many people hold favorable views of the sector.

We learned that ActionAid Myanmar organized a launch event on the report "Safety Audit for women in garment sector in Yangon region" on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at Summit Park View Hotel. Based on this report, Yangon Region Hluttaw Finance, Planning and Economic Committee organized an inspection team consisted of members of the Committee, Yangon Regional Minister for Rakhine Ethnic Affairs and Labor, Immigration and Population, management team of relevant Industrial Zones, representatives from Department of Labour, Township Conciliation Body representatives and executives of MGMA. The team inspected factories which were mentioned in the report. We noted that most of the factories were certified by BSCI and other audits.

MGMA reviewed ActionAid Myanmar report and found the following irrelevant points.

1. The translation of the Report Title from English to Myanmar does not express the exact meaning of the original English version.

2. The number of sexual violence against women occurred in the cities indicated in the Foreword can mislead to the Sector.
3. The Report Title and the full report are not consistent.
4. Safeties of women concerns women as a whole, not only to women working in the garment sector. Therefore, the Sector should not be solely highlighted.
5. ActionAid report covered less than 4% of the member factories, which was not relevant enough to make strong conclusions. Also, the workers who participated in the study were not randomly selected, so they did not represent all women factory workers in Yangon.

MGMA is trying its best to improve its responsible business conduct (RBC and CSR) as well as product quality and production capacity to streamline into the global market. However, we recognize that there are limitations and some shortcomings. Therefore, MGMA has set out a home grown Code of Conduct and is implementing our 10 year Strategic Plan in a systematic way.

Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association and our members will be working with development partners and social partners to realize our targeted goal.