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Message from Ros Harvey, Better Work Director

As many of you may already know, I will be leaving Better Work and the ILO. I have accepted a Senior Executive Service position in Australia. It is an exciting job and most importantly, it is in my home state. My family and I have lived and worked overseas for the last 13 years - in the Pacific, Cambodia and Geneva – and we feel that this is the right time to return home.

It is also a time of sadness for me. I have been a central figure in starting Better Work. But I did not do it alone. We did it together - the ILO and the IFC, constituents, donors,

buyers, staff, colleagues, partners and many other supporters. What has made it successful is a shared vision, commitment, and integrity in achieving our purpose. This will continue as we move to a new phase of Better Work's development.

While we are recruiting a new Director, Amy Luinstra will be acting as Global Programme Manager and Conor Boyle as her Deputy from 4th January. Together they have more than ten years direct experience at both head office and field levels in Better Work and Better Factories Cambodia. Amy and



Conor, together with our country managers and staff around the world, all share a passion for this programme. Together with you, Better Work, will continue to improve the lives of workers in global supply chains and promote decent work and sustainable development.

Best wishes,
Ros Harvey

Publications Corner

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Research Shows that Compliance Reduces Factory Closures

Participation in Better Factories Cambodia has emerged to be a sustainable response to the crisis. Evidence from factory visits shows that improving compliance with labour standards improves business outcomes and can contribute to resilience in

the wake of the economic crisis. In particular, the probability of factory closure is reduced by increased compliance in correct payment of wages (-54%), providing information about wages (-30%), improved machine safety (-49%)

and emergency preparedness (-57%), and respecting regular hours and weekly rest (-68%).

The analysis of compliance assessment data was carried out by a team of researchers from Tufts University and Macalester College.

Harnessing Global Incentives for Development

10 Years of Increasing Competitiveness through Improved Labour Standards

Held at the IFC Headquarters in Washington DC on November 19th, the Conference celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the US-Cambodia Trade Agreement that spurred the creation of Better Factories Cambodia. The event brought together over 200 participants from various backgrounds including policymakers, businesses,

international and U.S. employer organizations and trade unions, opinion leaders, donors and technical agencies, the broader think tank and policy research community, and senior staff of the World Bank and IFC.

Among the speakers were H.E. Cham Prasidh, RGC Senior Minister and Minister of Commerce of the Government of Cambodia; Sandra Polaski, now Deputy Undersecretary at the US Department of Labor, and Van Sou Ieng, President of GMAC.

The Conference provided the opportunity to assess the enabling factors that made BFC a success, to learn public policy lessons deriving from the program as well as understand the challenges that Better Work faces in other countries and sectors.

[Watch video >>](#)

Strategic Governance Meetings

Better Work held three important meetings from 13-16 October to share knowledge, build relations, and identify synergies to guide Better Work into the future. During the Donor Coordination Meeting, bringing together financial contributors to the programme, discussion focussed on harmonising procedures and strategising Better Work's roll out

and diversification. The Advisory Committee Meeting followed with representatives from international buyers, donors, trade unions, employers' organisations and academia to discuss strategic directions for the program including the research agenda, implementation models and program strategy. Harnessing the knowledge, experience and

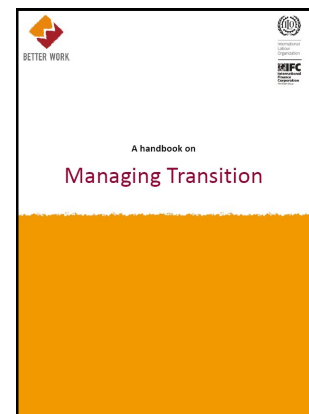
expertise from these meetings, the Better Work Management Group took important decisions which included exploring possibilities for developing a regional approach in Central America and carrying out feasibility studies in electronics and tourism.

Handbook on Managing Transition

Socially responsible workforce restructuring is a commitment by employers facing serious business problems to first make changes that can help minimise the negative effects on workers, including layoffs. In October, Better Work published a handbook which can help factories plan and implement transitions in line with internationally accepted good practices. This handbook follows

the steps suggested in the retrenchment plan template. It is intended to help enterprises find practical and consultative approaches to managing transition processes.

[Read more >>](#)



US Garment Buyers Team Up to Support Better Work

The US Council for International Business (USCIB) has announced support for Better Work by five of the biggest U.S. apparel companies--Gap Inc., Levi Strauss & Co., Nike, Walmart and the Walt Disney Company—which will contribute over USD \$1 million to Better Work through the

USCIB's foundation.

The programme will use contributions to support the development of labour standards compliance assessment and training tools, benefiting the companies' supplier factories among others. [Read more >>](#)



Globalisation and Workers in Developing Countries

Getting the Most Out of Research on Impacts and Trends

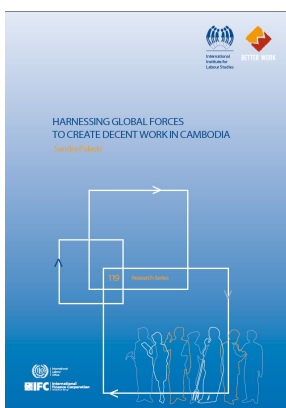
Better Work and the Center for Global Development hosted a research event on November 18th aimed at understanding the current trends in research measuring and assessing labour standards and indicators. The event was attended by World Bank and IFC officers, delegates from

the US Department of Labor, and participants from academia, independent think tanks and research institutions working on labour issues.

The presentations outlined the indicators used by Better Work in monitoring and evaluation, and provided insights on the WebMILS indicators developed by the Department of Labor. Raymond Robertson and Drusilla Brown

presented the preliminary findings of their research on the impact of Better Work. Discussions focused on different approaches to measuring labour standards and the methodological challenges that the nature of labour standards presents for assessment and implementation. Specific attention was also dedicated to Better Work strategies to expand to new countries and sectors.

Harnessing Global Forces to Create Decent Work in Cambodia



Jointly published by ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies and Better Work, the paper provides an in-depth analysis of the context in which Better Factories Cambodia came into existence, its main features, and the factors and mechanism that contribute to its alleged success.

Importantly, the text also discusses how the project may serve as a guideline for strengthening the links between trade and labour standards in other countries and beyond the garment sector.

[Read more >>](#)

Cambodia

Supervisory Skill Training in the Cambodian Garment Industry: A Randomized Impact Evaluation

In June 2008, IFC partnered with ideas42 at Harvard on a year-long randomized-experimental impact evaluation to rigorously measure the effects of a supervisory skills training (SST) programme for garment factory supervisors.

The purpose of this rigorous evaluation was to investigate whether the training programme achieved its objectives of (1) improving working relationships between garment supervisors and workers, and (2) improving productivity.

The study showed that the training improved workers' perceptions of relationships with their supervisors and led to improvements in overall firm productivity. outputs, training the indirect supervisor mattered most. [Read report >>](#)

I am Precious

Top 20 finalists of Cambodian garment workers competed in a dress and T-shirt fashion show marking the final event of the 'I am Precious' 2009 campaign. Ten dresses and ten T-shirts designed by the finalists were presented on a catwalk on 29 Nov. Thirty year old Khean Vantha, awarded best design by the judges said "It's my dream to be a dress designer. I want to open a clothing shop, but for now I just try to save money from month to month."

The top 20 finalists received 60 hours of training in pattern designing, one of the higher level tasks in the garment factories, positions help by skilled workers brought in from other countries in the region. The 'I am Precious' campaign and competition aims to promote self value of garment workers by increasing awareness of their work, abilities and skills and encouraging them to realize their potential.



Haiti

Buyers' Forum

More than 70 delegates representing international garment buyers, Haitian garment suppliers, workers' and employers' organizations, the Haitian government, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), the United States Trade Representative (USTR) and the CTMO-Hope Commission, among

others attended Better Work Haiti's International Buyers' Forum.

Forum participants expressed support for Better Work Haiti and emphasised the importance of responsible labour practices in strengthening the competitiveness of Haiti's apparel industry. In a joint statement, international buyers at the Forum expressed

“support and optimism that the ‘Hope II’ and Better Work combination will bring sustainable economic benefits to Haiti.”

[Read more >>](#) / [Watch video >>](#)

Vietnam

The ILO Worker's Bureau (ACTRAV), is working with the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) in three provinces around Ho Chi Minh City to build the capacity of trade union representatives in the factories and to compliment Better Work

activities. Union trainers are working with workplace representatives, providing training and awareness-raising activities helping workers understand their rights and responsibilities, roles of the union, leadership skills, and collective bargaining. Video,

comic books and coaching are just a few of the methods being used. The training has already raised understanding about the Better Work programme and will help equip union leaders with the tools they need to actively participate in the programme.

Jordan

Better Work Jordan's *Project Advisory Committee (PAC)* held a special meeting in November to discuss the possibility of making participation in the programme mandatory for exporting apparel factories.

The Jordanian Ministry presented its plan for making participation mandatory, which well received by JGATE (Jordan Garments, Accessories and Textiles Exporters Association), FIA (Foreign Investors Association) and the apparel unions.

If all goes well, an announcement will be made by the government in January.

Indonesia

As part of a second scoping mission, Better held stakeholder meetings with workers' and employers' organisations, the government and international buyers. All of the stakeholders reiterated their support for a Better Work Indonesia programme. A mapping exercise took place at the

meeting and revealed that most factories are located in the Greater Jakarta area, which makes Jakarta a strategic location to open the Better Work office and to provide its services. Operations are expected to begin in late 2010, starting in the apparel sector.



BETTER WORK

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Better Work Jobs

Better Work is continually looking for qualified professionals to work with the global and country programmes. When posts are available they are listed on our website. [See vacancies and tenders >>](#)

About Better Work

Better Work is a unique partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). It unites the expertise of the ILO in labour standards with that of the IFC in private sector development. Better Work brings together local enterprises, international buyers, governments, workers' and employers' organizations to improve labour standards and competitiveness in global supply chains.

[See our brochure >>](#)

Donors

The Better Work global programme is supported by the governments of the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Luxembourg, Italy, and New Zealand.

Better Work country programmes are supported by the governments of the United States, Jordan, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Finland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

