

Media Update

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ILO

PRESS RELEASE

The ILO Better Work Programme Organise Textile and Ready Made Garment Industry Forum

Karachi 25 May 2023: The ILO and its Better Work programme held the Textile and Ready Made Garment Industry Forum in Karachi, attended by over 200 of relevant key stakeholders.

The event was opened by the ILO's Country Director, Mr Geir Tonstel and the IFC's Principal Investment Officer, Ms Zunee Muhtashim. Key note addresses were given by Zulfiquar Haider, Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and Mr Mudassar Raza Siddiqi, Director General (Textiles), Ministry of Commerce, who both emphasised the commitment of the Government to supporting growth of the textile and ready made garments.

The issues of trade agreements and standards compliance were addressed by panelist from the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, the Sindh Human Rights Commission, representatives of the Better Work programme in Pakistan, and International Accord. The discussion focussed upon the needs to ensure that Pakistan continues to benefit from opportunities provided by international trade agreements and that its industries ensure compliance with international labour standards and local legislation at ground level. The discussion was led by Mr Colin Fenwick, Better Work's Head in Asia.

Panel participants also explored the need for Pakistan to develop its approaches to product and market diversification and to enhance its focus upon sustainability, to ensure that Pakistan's industry can effectively compete with its international and regional neighbours. Perspectives were given by leading industry players, the Regional Trade Policy Advisor of the British High

Commission in Pakistan, the National Textile University, Faisalabad and by the Employers' Federation of Pakistan.

Throughout the day representatives of over fifty of Pakistan's major textile and RMG industry producers, workers' representatives, as well as employer and trade associations had the opportunity to meet with visiting brands who joined the event, timed to coincide with the Pakistan Texpo, organised by Pakistan's Export Development Fund and Trade Development Authority.

The ILO's Country Director, Geir Tonstol congratulated Pakistan's Better Work programme for successfully bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders dedicated to the sustainability and growth of the textile industry of Pakistan. He embarked the initiative and committed to building a robust and thriving Pakistan, able to better to compete regionally and globally."