

Memo of Meeting

Pursuant to the global and local situations and consequences of Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the world consumption, in particular on industry and trade sectors and workers including textile and clothes workers in Jordan,

The joint committee of employers and employees' representatives met on 23 April 2020. All matters, government decisions and Defence Orders that affect the sector have been discussed.

It was stressed by all parties to abide by and implement those decisions concerning the employees' lives and their protection which ultimately protect the textile industry sector of Jordan.

Starting 2 April 2020, the Government had opened up for migrant workers residing in Development Zones to resume work being of low contact with external world, along with protecting them and maintaining their safety as well as safety of work environment on condition that health conditions measures identified by Ministry of Health are applied, otherwise work of companies violating those conditions shall be suspended until they are corrected.

Main topics discussed in the meeting are:

1. Salaries of workers for March were paid without deductions, being all factories were closed since 18 March 2020, using all electronic payment methods and banks accounts, and avoid cash payment as possible in particular to Jordanian workers who do not have e-payment methods. Unfortunately, very few small exporting companies in the Development zones had not settled March month salaries on the excuse that they did not have cash or they lacked permits to effect payment of salaries. It was agreed to solve this problem in cooperation with Ministry of Labor to verify and check truthfulness of excuses.
2. Further, last decision concerning resumption of work with 50% Jordanian workers capacity in satellite branches as a first stage, and requesting employers to comply with occupational safety and health SOPs as a condition to resume work until their return to work fully was discussed. In addition, cooperation with the Trade Union using electronic means shall be increased to raise awareness of workers to protect themselves and their families.

3. It was agreed on transportation means of Jordanian labor force as directed by Ministry of Labor to maintain social distancing for workers' protection.
4. It was agreed to expedite travel of migrant workers whose contracts expired, back to their home countries as they were unable to travel since 18 March 2020 because of airport closure. It was agreed by parties to communicate with concerned embassies to facilitate workers' travel procedures.

It is imperative to note that textile and clothes' sector relies mainly on the US market, based on the US-Jordanian Free Trade Agreement since 2010. As all suppliers are global brands owners, and due to the current circumstances, some brands have stopped or reduced their orders, or requested postponement of payment of shipped goods. This will weaken production and make employers unable to meet their obligations, which will reflect on number of workers and their re-employment.

Therefore, we wish that the Government communicates with decision makers at the US Embassy and the international enterprises in the US to support us as they did in years 2005 up to 2009 to increase goods orders in Jordan, continue work and enhance importance of this sector in building distinguished relations since 1994. The initial impact of this crisis shall lead to shrinkage and contraction of the sector. It is important to maintain the sector and be ready to prosper again upon end of this crisis, God Willing.

Farhan Afram

President,
Jordan Garments,
Accessories and
Textiles Exporters'
Association (JGATE)

/signed/

Ihab Alqadri

Representative,
Jordan Chamber of
Industry
Clothes and Apparel
Sector,

/signed/

Fathallah Omrani

President,
General Trade Union of
Workers in Textile,
Garment & Clothing
Industries

/signed/

Cc:

- The Hashemite Royal Court
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Industry and Trade
- ILO BWJ