



Better Buying, first independent global index rating buyer practices, urges participation to make garment supply chain a better place to work

11 July 2018, Hong Kong — Better Buying has today attended the 25th Hong Kong Fashion Week for Spring/Summer to share the initiative's latest developments and findings during the Fashion Summit seminar. In the four-day event organized by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), buyers and suppliers seek not only market intelligence and sourcing opportunities, but also possibilities for equitable supplier-buyer partnerships featured by two-way dialogues and transparent yet anonymous performance evaluations.

Dr. Marsha Dickson, co-founder of Better Buying and key speaker of the session, shared in the Hong Kong Fashion Week Seminar “Essential Testings and Ratings for Textiles and Garments” some key findings from Purchasing Practices Index Report Spring 2018:

- The length of a relationship between buyers and suppliers does not have an impact on the nature of buying practices
- Over 60% of the suppliers are not incentivized for being compliant to buyer codes of conduct while incentives are essential to improving purchasing practices
- Suppliers in China/Hong Kong has higher average Order Risk-to-Reward percentage (over 100%) than the rest of suppliers in other locations in East Asia

Released on May 22, Better Buying Purchasing Practices Index Report Spring 2018 is the first benchmark report of Better Buying Initiative. It rates 65 leading brands and retailers' purchasing practices and contains ratings from 156 suppliers across 24 countries. The report marks a successful first step towards the mission to transform one-way top-down relationships between suppliers and buyers into win-win fair partnerships.

After 2013 Bangladesh Rana Plaza tragedy caused the death of 1127, Dr. Dickson, with 25 years experience in apparel industry, determined to review if the unfair labor practices across the globe can be improved. “Current business practices are unsustainable and need to be overhauled if we expect companies to achieve financial, environmental, and social sustainability goals,” said Dr. Dickson.

Her vision is shared by Mr. Felix Chung, Member of the Legislative Council of HKSAR (Textiles and Garment Sector), who opened the seminar with calling for “fair trade” instead of “trade war” given possible impacts of current Sino-US relation on HK manufacturing. “As the result of 20 years manufacturing practices, suppliers have to meet high standards set by buyers in order to participate in the business, while suppliers have little say when encountering unfair situations. After the development over two decades, improvements have been made in almost all aspects of the industry, so should the one-way buyer-supplier relationship,” said Mr. Chung.

For buyers seeking transformation in themselves, Better Buying is also viewed as a platform where they find open and honest feedbacks. “Change is the word that excites us,” said Ninh



Trinh, Regional Director of Responsible Sourcing at Target Corporation, “We source in thousands of factories over 40 countries. The reason we partner with Better Buying is we see this initiative as quite transformative. The data is valuable feedback we don’t usually get from daily talking with our suppliers. It’s anonymous and confidential. We want to use these data to drive change.”

“Many of our members are international brands. They purchase from developing countries and wish to provide the best working conditions to workers. But what they have been doing has reached a bottleneck,” GAO Yun, Regional Director of Southeast Asia and East Asia at The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), expressing her concerns in the seminar, “More and more we find out buyers’ behavior is part of the problem. To go through the bottleneck, we have to look at the behavior of buyers.” Earlier this year, Better Buying and ETI announced collaboration in Bangladesh to support and promote responsible buying practices within garment industry supply chains. Over an 18-month period, the partnership will invite Bangladeshi suppliers to anonymously evaluate their buyers using the Better Buying online rating platform. “Supplier’s voice should be heard by international brands.”

To end the sharing, Dr. Dickson urged suppliers to participate in the second rating cycle of Better Buying Initiative which goes until 3 August. “Just 4 steps: Register basic information, Search/Add buyer, Rate, and Submit,” explained Dr. Dickson, “Ratings will come out as integrated results so your ratings will not be identifiable. Better Buying will help suppliers to take things in your own hands.”

For more information, contact: info@betterbuying.org.

Reference notes:

ETI Apparel brands and retailer members: Arco, Asda, Asos, Boden, Bonmarche, BTC Group, Burberry Group PLC, C&A, DAKS, Debenhams Retail, Fatface, Gap Inc, H&M, HOBBS, Hunter Apparel Solutions Ltd., Inditex, Jack Wills Ltd., John Lewis Partnership, Mackays, Marks & Spencer, Marshalls, Matrix APA, Mayoral Moda Infantil, Meltemi Company Clothing, Men’s Warehouse UK, Monsoon Accessorize, Mothercare, N Brown Group, New Look Retailer, Next Retail, Orsay, Pentland Brands, Primark (ABF Limited), Regatta, River Island, Rohan Designs, Ruia Group, Sainsbury’s, Shop Direct Group Ltd., Stella McCartney, SuperGroup Plc, Tchibo GmbH, Tesco, The White Company, Whistles, White Stuff, Bestseller, Global Fashion Group, Jabong, KappAhl, Li&Fung, Misguided, Mr Price Group Limited, Oliver Bonas, Promo International, Rowlinson Knitwear, Reiss, Ricosta, Sea Folly, Smallworld accessories, Skins, Zeeman.