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Fast Retailing backs ILO project in Bangladesh



DHAKA - Uniqlo owner Fast Retailing has announced its support for a new International Labour Organization (ILO) initiative to enhance social security protection for garment workers in Bangladesh.

Fast Retailing is backing the Employment Injury Scheme (EIS), which will run for an initial period of three years with the option of being extended for another two, as part of its long-running partnership with the ILO.

EIS, the first ever scheme of its kind in Bangladesh, provides compensation for garment workers and their families in the event of injuries, disabilities and deaths caused by workplace incidents.

Yukihiro Nitta, group executive officer and head of sustainability at Fast Retailing, said: "Fast Retailing recognises that one of our most important responsibilities is to protect the security and safety of the people who help to make our clothes.

"Our ongoing partnership with the ILO is built on a commitment to finding solutions to issues faced by all workers in Asia - not just those in our supply chain - through systemic social protection measures and improved working environments across the region.

"The new EIS pilot provides a pathway to a significant new safety net for workers in Bangladesh - one of our key manufacturing locations. We are delighted to be able to support it."

Fast Retailing is among just six brands to offer early support for the project and has pledged to make a voluntary financial contribution to help fund the pilot.

The ILO and German development agency GIZ will support government officials and employers' and workers' organisations in implementing EIS which is also being funded by the governments of Netherlands and Germany.

Fast Retailing entered into its partnership with the ILO - to improve social security systems and worker environments in Asia - back in 2019.

It has already led to the largest ever privately-funded, ILO-led social security initiative, a national employment insurance system in Indonesia, which was established in November 2020.

Fast Retailing committed to provide US\$1.8 million in funding over a two-year period for ILO projects in Asian supply countries where it has production bases - Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam.