Geneva, 30 May 2013

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Dear Sir, Dear Madam,

Recent garment factory collapse in Bangladesh – UNDG A-P Op-ed (FT 16 May 2013)

While we all share the shock and sadness following the tragedy of the Rana Plaza building collapse, as well as recognising the urgent need to ensure that such incidents do not happen again, the desire of Mr Ajay Chhibber, Chair of UNDG A-P to lay blame for the disaster at the feet of the World Bank “Doing Business” report is misplaced and unhelpful.

“Doing Business” is a useful tool in understanding the extent to which governments can create an environment that is conducive to business development. It is certainly not viewed by business as a means to create an environment devoid of proper rules and regulations. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the government of Bangladesh has looked to the “Doing Business” report to lower legal standards.

It is clear from where Bangladesh ranks in “Doing Business” that problems arise from not doing enough to ensure that the proper rules and inspection systems are in place that may have prevented this incident.

The “Doing Business” report is therefore a tool which helps identify areas for improvement, rather than somehow causing tragedies to occur.

It is time now to address the underlying problems countries such as Bangladesh face, rather than blaming World Bank reports, globalisation, or the capitalist economic system. Blaming is easy; seeking real solutions that will work on the ground is harder. How is UNDG-AP intending to contribute?

Yours sincerely,

Brent H. Wilton
Secretary-General

The International Organisation of Employers is the largest global network of the private sector, with 150 business and employers’ organisation members around the world. It is the voice of business in international labour and social policy debate, in the ILO, and other UN agencies, as well as in the G20 and other intergovernmental processes.