

Promote Responsible Recruitment Practices for Migrant Workers in Taiwan
-Taiwan Textile Federation and Textile Enterprises Work Jointly with AAFA, FLA and Brands
to Align with Global Labor Standards

Taiwan's textile industry has long been committed to innovation in functional and eco-friendly textiles, becoming a strong partner for international brands. To address domestic labor shortages, textile companies have recruited foreign workers to sustain the industry's production and operations, creating a win-win situation for brands and suppliers.

Recently, Transparentem accused several Taiwanese textile factories engaging in labor abuses concerning migrant workers. In response to Transparentem's report released on February 11, the Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF), as a key promotional body in Taiwan's textile industry, makes the following statement:

1. Be investigated textile mills actively collaborate with brands and third-party audits, proposing corrective action plans and commencing implementation

Taiwanese textile enterprises comply with labor laws set by Taiwan's government and actively align with international brands' and global standards' responsible recruitment requirements for migrant workers. The suppliers under investigation have actively cooperated with the third-party audits and have proposed Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). As stated in the report published by Transparentem, apart from one supplier currently undergoing a third-party audit, all other suppliers have already developed CAPs. Most of the corrective measures are implementing through collaboration between buyers and suppliers.

2. Taiwan's government strengthens advocacy for responsible recruitment and direct hiring to advance labor rights

In Taiwan, Foreign workers have the same minimum wage rates as domestic workers, and are equally protected by Taiwan's Labor Standards Law. In response to Transparentem and brands, The Taiwan Ministry of Labor has requested the Ministry of Economic Affairs to jointly strengthen employer advocacy for responsible recruitment and direct hiring of migrant workers to align with international labor standards. In addition, Taiwanese law has stipulated that if an employer entrusts an agency to recruit migrant workers, the agency can only collect the registration and introduction fees required for recruitment from the employer, but not from the migrant workers.

3. TTF builds an international platform to facilitate the alignment of Taiwan's textile industry's migrant worker recruitment practices with global standards

For promoting responsible recruitment of migrant workers, TTF invited textile enterprises to hold several meetings last year. On December 5, 2024, TTF engaged in discussions with representatives from the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), Fair Labor Association (FLA), brands as well as representatives of Taiwan government and textile enterprises. The meetings resolved to establish a joint working group to actively discuss matters related to responsible recruitment. Currently, representatives from brands and suppliers have been invited to participate in the working group, and the first meeting is scheduled to be held at the end of February.

Regarding the report released by Transparentem, TTF highlights the following two points and calls for support:

1. Joint Efforts by International Buyers and Taiwanese Suppliers to Promote and Implement Responsible Recruitment of Migrant Workers

The report released by Transparentem details the Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) proposed by the investigated Taiwanese suppliers and the efforts made by buyers. It also suggest buyers not to "cut and run" from the investigated suppliers but rather to collaborate with them to resolve the issues. Additionally, the report suggests that if suppliers are required to reimburse migrant workers for previously paid recruitment fees, buyers should consider to provide financial support to suppliers as needed. TTF expresses agreement with this perspective. This aligns with the purpose of the working group jointly formed by AAFA, FLA and TTF to drive related initiatives.

2. Resolving Recruitment Fees Paid by Migrant Workers to Their Home Country Agents Requires Government-to-Government Negotiations

Taiwan's Ministry of Labor has pointed out that the recruitment fees paid by migrant workers to local agencies in their home countries before coming to Taiwan are determined by each migrant-sending country. To alleviate the financial burden on migrant workers, the Ministry of Labor has recommended to these countries that such fees be capped at one month's salary. Taiwan continues to raise this issue through bilateral meetings with migrant-sending countries. Therefore, TTF agrees with Transparentem that intergovernmental negotiations are essential to address this systemic issues.

TTF and the Taiwanese textile industry, through joint dialogue and efforts with international organizations and buyers, will develop guidelines for the employment of migrant workers suitable for Taiwan's textile companies to follow by referencing international labor standards and the practical experience of Taiwanese textile companies. TTF will also continue to engage with Taiwan's government agencies to align with international labor standards through public-private partnerships.

The Taiwan Textile Federation (TTF) was established on November 25, 1975 with government guidance and support from the textile industry itself.

TTF has aimed to provide a versatile range of services, including market promotion, industrial development, market information, and help with the improvement of design capability, production, and management, to Taiwan textile companies to ensure their continuing development, up-grading, and future prosperity.