

Promoting the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the GFT Sector

Sustainability
Recommendation
Paper



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FABRIC Cambodia



RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS HUB
CAMBODIA
RBH NETWORK



Textile, Apparel, Footwear & Travel Goods Association in Cambodia



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Sustainability Recommendation Paper on Promoting the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the GFT Sector

Disclaimer

The organizations involved in this paper broadly support the view that the inclusion of persons with disabilities is an issue in Cambodia that could be improved.

This paper presents findings related to inclusion in the GFT sector; however, it is important to note that not all parties and organizations may agree with every viewpoint expressed. The same applies to the selection of initiatives and projects of companies, development partners, and civil society organizations mentioned in the paper, which are non-exhaustive examples chosen for several reasons, including the ease of access to information for authors.

The selection does not constitute an endorsement over other existing examples. Despite any differences, all organizations have put their names and logos on this paper in solidarity.

They are committed to actively participating in resolving the issues outlined and supporting efforts to improve inclusion in the garment sector. This collective action underscores their dedication to meaningfully addressing inclusion and promoting a more equitable working environment for all garment sector workers in Cambodia.

Findings presented in this paper should not be attributed to any organization without the context of this important disclaimer. The intention of this paper is to facilitate cooperation among various entities representing different stakeholders in the garment supply chain for the greater good. The essence of this paper is collaboration and joint action, and it is anticipated that readers will engage with it in this collaborative spirit.

Five Key Takeaways:

Sector Importance & Trends: The garment, footwear, and travel goods (GFT) sector is crucial to Cambodia's economy, attracting substantial foreign investment and serving as the primary employer and export sector. As global trade integration progresses, the sector must adhere to international standards for sustainability and human rights (new HREDD Laws). Factory owners want the process of hiring persons with disabilities to become easier, and foreign investors want their Cambodian partners to be compliant with HREDD laws.

Inclusive Employment: Integrating inclusion concepts into vocational skills development and job readiness training is essential to avoid mismatches and enhance the employability of persons with disabilities.

Multi-Stakeholder Efforts are Needed: Addressing data and information gaps requires joint efforts and coordination mechanisms among the private sector, public sector, and civil society. This includes collaboration between civil society organizations and government entities, as well as between buyers and factories/vendors within the private sector. The private sector can significantly contribute, especially at the factory level that directly affects workers' daily experience. Human resource processes and procedures can anchor inclusion in the workplace and promote more reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities.

Legal and Regulatory Framework: Cambodia has established national laws and guidelines to promote inclusion. However, significant improvements are needed in the enforcement of these laws and the implementation of related policies at multiple levels.

Ongoing Dialogue and Recommendations: Dialogue between public and private stakeholders has resulted in concrete recommendations for more inclusive employment practices in the GFT sector. Key recommendations include improving reporting and accountability mechanisms, making skills training and matching initiatives more inclusive, strengthening law and policy enforcement, and enhancing collaboration between different actors.



Executive Summary

The Sustainability Recommendation Paper on **Promoting the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Garment, Footwear, and Travel Goods (GFT) Sector** aims to strengthen diversity and equal employment opportunities in Cambodia's GFT sector.

Despite being Cambodia's largest employer and leading export sector, the GFT sector struggles to employ persons with disabilities, who are significantly underrepresented in the workforce. Existing national laws and guidelines are often not effectively enforced, and factories mention difficulties in reaching the required quotas. A comprehensive approach is therefore needed to improve disability inclusion within the sector.

Key Challenges

The paper identifies several key challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the GFT sector:

- 1. Transportation:** Limited transportation options for persons with disabilities.
- 2. Accessibility:** Inaccessible working environments that limit mobility and pose safety risks. Additionally, many factories lack reasonable workplace adjustments to accommodate various types of disabilities, including those who return to work after accidents.
- 3. Low levels of awareness of disability rights and obligations:** Non-compliance with disability employment quotas indicates a lack of awareness of disability rights and relevant laws, policies, and the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities.
- 4. Labor Inspections:** Lack of transparency and accountability in government inspections, as well as a lack of understanding about various impairments and the reasonable accommodations necessary to provide decent work for persons with disabilities.
- 5. Limited job matching opportunities:** Even if companies want to comply with the disability employment quotas, limited job matching opportunities make it difficult to hire persons with disabilities who are ready for employment.
- 6. Limited Access to Education and Training:** For a variety of reasons, many persons with disabilities have had (and continue to have) limited access to education and vocational training opportunities, although many are highly competent and skilled. It's important to recognize and support the diverse capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities and remove necessary barriers to access ongoing education and vocational training opportunities.
- 7. Discriminatory Societal Norms and Attitudes:** Cultural attitudes that perpetuate discrimination.
- 8. Evidence-Based Advocacy:** Insufficient data and examples of successful inclusion, as well as a lack of comprehensive data on the challenges and issues faced by persons with disabilities in the sector, to support advocacy efforts.

Recommendations

The recommendations are drawn from comprehensive consultations with stakeholders, including government agencies, factories, trade unions, and civil society organizations. These recommendations are designed to create a more inclusive GFT sector by addressing policy, awareness, accommodation, mentorship, and collaboration needs.

1. For the Government

- Provide funding for the National Action Plan on disabilities and establish a technical working group for policy support.
- Actively engage with OPDs to participate in the decision- and policy-making processes with the government.
- Mandate accessibility training and audits for garment factories to raise awareness about legal obligations and policy frameworks
- Provide skills and job-matching opportunities for both OPDs and employers
- Continue investing in inclusive job and skills training programs that align with the labor market needs of the GFT sector
- Establish and monitor regulatory requirements for building accessible workplaces
- Integrate safe and accessible transportation into public health and employment programs.
- Ensure transparency in policy implementation and reinvest fines into promoting disability inclusion.
- Strengthen inter-ministerial linkages for better coordination.
- Establish national standards and practical guidelines for inclusive business operations.
- Facilitate civil society and business coordination for disability inclusion initiatives.

2. For Factories

- Develop comprehensive disability inclusion policies aligned with Cambodian laws and international standards, involving workers with disabilities in the planning process.
- Invest in reasonable accommodations and ensure safety regulations cater to the needs of persons with disabilities.

- Provide safe and accessible transportation for all workers, including those with disabilities.
- Conduct regular awareness campaigns to prevent discrimination and establish peer support groups for workers with disabilities.
- Work with relevant government and other agencies to actively recruit and train workers with disabilities, aiming to meet and exceed employment quotas so that persons with disabilities are proportionately represented in the labor force.
- Make training sessions inclusive and develop partnerships with OPDs for tailored training.
- Utilize civil society support for job training and vocational matching.
- Share and learn best practices from local and international examples.
- Enhance transparency in policy implementation and public investment.

3. For Buyers

- Establish and enforce comprehensive codes of conduct that include disability inclusion, labor rights, and sustainability for suppliers.
- Prioritize suppliers committed to disability inclusion and diversity, integrating specific requirements into contracts.
- Collaborate with industry associations and NGOs to share best practices and resources.

- Allocate resources for supplier support in disability inclusion and sustainability.
- Ensure supply chain transparency through detailed reporting.
- Participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives to address inclusion and sustainability.
- Promote awareness of disability rights and policies among stakeholders.
- Support civil society in documenting successful practices and raising consumer awareness.
- Facilitate platforms for sharing best practices and aligning strategies with government initiatives.
- Advocate for supportive policies and tailored strategies for sustainable sourcing and production.

4. For Civil Society

- Support factories in achieving compliance with government policies through training and advocacy.
- Enhance disability inclusion strategies and empowerment programs.
- Coordinate with NGOs, government, and private sector stakeholders to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Facilitate job readiness skills and vocational training.
- Advocate for inclusive workplaces and awareness of disability rights among stakeholders.



The Way Forward

Building a more inclusive garment industry for persons with disabilities requires a unified effort. This is crucial, as the garment industry often sets the standard for employment practices across the country.

While a legal framework exists, greater collaboration is needed to integrate inclusive practices into the education sector and vocational training centers and to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities. The government could improve its enforcement of disability inclusion policies (such as the quota system) and further invest in skills training. The private sector should implement these policies, provide reasonable accommodations, and enhance its efforts to recruit persons with disabilities, but may need (and has requested) additional support to do so. Civil society and development partners can advocate for disability rights and improve job readiness skills.

Ongoing dialogues facilitated by GIZ-FABRIC and partners address industry challenges and develop strategies for sustainable transformation in Cambodia's garment sector. These efforts align with the GFT Sector Development Strategy 2022-2027, maintaining Cambodia's reputation as a responsible and competitive sourcing destination.



1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Recommendation Paper

The **garment, footwear, and travel goods (GFT) sector** is of vital importance to the Cambodian economy. Following the integration of Cambodia into the global trade system, the industry has attracted significant foreign direct investment, particularly from China, and has been the **country's main employer and dominant export** sector for many years. This was enabled by preferential market access for Cambodia to main consumer markets, such as the US and the EU, based on Cambodia's status as a least-developed country (LDC). At the same time, with the support of the international community, notably the ILO's Better Factory Cambodia (BFC) program, Cambodia aims to ensure good working conditions in the sector that comply with national labor law as well as with the requirements of global buyers in the industry.

Over the years, these buyers – mostly international fashion brands – have intensified their social as well as ecological responsibility commitments, and various international standards and certifications have emerged to measure and verify their performance. An even more recent trend is the emergence of international *legal* requirements for industrial players sourcing globally to ensure **human rights and environmental due diligence** across their supply chains. An example of such pieces of legislation is the German Supply Chain Act of 2021, which entered into force in 2023 and significantly expands due diligence requirements for German companies – and accordingly inspires cooperation concerning sustainability in supply chains around the world. On 24 May 2024, the European Parliament also voted to adopt the long-awaited EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), which will be transposed into legislation in all EU Member States and thus further extend the scope and coverage of due diligence requirements.

Against this background, the Cambodian Government launched the **GFT Sector Development Strategy** in 2022. This strategy outlines a comprehensive set of measures that can be taken to support the sustainable transformation of the industry to remain competitive in the face of these recent developments. Maintaining the industry's competitiveness is also a high priority as Cambodia is set to graduate from the LDC status to become a lower middle-income country by the late 2020s, which means that trade preferences to markets will be phased out in the medium term. To stay competitive, an outstanding sustainability performance should become the hallmark of GFT products “made in Cambodia,” as it would give buyers continued incentives to procure from Cambodia. This, however, would require a concerted effort of

all relevant stakeholders to make the industry's sustainable transformation a reality.

German development cooperation (via GIZ) has supported the sustainable development of the textile industry in Asia and specifically Cambodia since 2014 through various projects on regional, national, and global levels. The relevant cooperation activities in Cambodia are implemented by GIZ under the heading “FABRIC” (Fostering and Advancing Sustainable Business and Responsible Industrial Practices in the Clothing Industry in Asia), which constitutes an integrated implementation structure of various commissions of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). To support the roll-out of the GFT Sector Development Strategy in Cambodia, GIZ-FABRIC is engaging in **extensive dialogue with public and private partners as well as with civil society** to develop concrete recommendations for action to realize the ambitious agenda. These efforts included a series of public-private dialogue events in 2023 and 2024 organized in cooperation with the Responsible Business Hub (RBH), which is embedded in the European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia (EuroCham) and supported by Cambodia's GFT sector association, TAFTAC.

As a result of the continuous dialogue, GIZ-FABRIC, along with several partners, including CARE, RISE, and individual experts, have prepared **Sustainability Recommendation Papers (SRP) for the Cambodian GFT Sector** on the following topics:

- Preventing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment (GBVH) at the Workplace
- Promoting the Inclusion of People with Disabilities into the GFT Sector
- Responsible Wage Digitization in the GFT Sector
- Promoting Textile Waste Management and Recycling in the GFT Sector
- Enhancing Sustainability Reporting in the GFT Sector

1.2 Background Inclusion in Cambodia's Textile Industry

Estimates of persons with disabilities in Cambodia vary significantly. According to the 2019 General Population Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia, nearly 5% of the population are persons with disabilities. These individuals often lack equal access to education, employment, clean water, and other key basic services and face increased vulnerability to gender discrimination, economic and social exclusion, conflict, and emergencies. While many workers

with disabilities possess considerable skills, they often lack opportunities to develop their potential. The majority of persons with disabilities struggle to participate as equals in their communities and are frequently excluded. Women and girls with disabilities are more likely to face discrimination compared to men with disabilities.

The GFT sector is Cambodia's largest formal employer. **As of June 2023, there were over 833,100 garment factory workers, according to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT). 80% of this number are women.** There is, therefore, significant potential for persons with disabilities to find meaningful employment in the GFT sector that meets decent work standards. Despite this potential and factory efforts to meet hiring quotas, CARE estimates that only 0.1% to 1% of employees in garment factories are persons with disabilities. The low employment rate of persons with disabilities in this industry is due to several challenges:

- Most garment factories do not provide reasonable accommodations such as ramps, accessible doors, toilets, and workstations. Additionally, information and documents are not available in alternative formats that are accessible to persons with different types of disabilities.
- While factories have general non-discrimination employment policies, most lack specific written disability inclusion policies. They do not have the capacity, skills, or clear systems for recruiting or identifying persons with disabilities, particularly given the sensitive nature of classifying types of disabilities and respecting the confidentiality of personal information.
- Transportation to and from factories, including cost and road safety issues, presents a major challenge for many persons with disabilities, deterring them from applying to or working in garment factories.
- There is limited awareness and understanding of disability rights and inclusion among garment factory management

and owners. Employers often fail to recognize the potential of persons with disabilities and do not offer work opportunities, harboring unconscious biases that employees with disabilities can only perform one skill, cannot move around the workplace, or lack the strength and energy to do the job well.

- There is limited knowledge among factory staff regarding the advantages of employing persons with disabilities, such as tapping into their unique potential (e.g. individuals with autism excelling in repetitive tasks), reduced turnover and absenteeism, improved company morale, enhanced customer representation, and bolstered brand reputation.

Core stakeholders in Cambodia's garment textiles sector include civil society organizations, brands, factory management, and the government. These stakeholders have specific roles and responsibilities in promoting disability inclusion and implementing necessary policies.

To ensure inclusive workplaces that embrace the talents of all workers:

- Factory management and brands need to adjust their concepts of inclusive workplaces and adopt more inclusive workplace system and culture that respond to the different types of disability needs
- Civil society organizations involved in employment promotion need to support job seekers with disabilities with job readiness skills and prepare potential employers to embrace diversity and inclusion.
- The government must provide and implement inclusive legal frameworks and supportive policies.

All actors need to work together to create an inclusive ecosystem that supports the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in the GFT sector.



2. Government and GFT Sector Existing Strategies

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework and Government Initiatives

The government, represented by ministries such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), the Ministry of Health (MoH), and the Disability Action Council (DAC), play a crucial role in introducing and enforcing protective laws and regulations to promote inclusion. These ministries collaborate to develop and enforce policies ensuring equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities in the workplace.

The Constitution of Cambodia specifically emphasizes the rights of persons with disabilities (Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 1993 - amended in 1999). Additionally, Cambodia has ratified and adopted international conventions and laws to promote and protect persons with disabilities, including:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women for issues involving Cambodian women with disabilities
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific”

These became the foundations for establishing national legal and policy frameworks such as:

- Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of People with Disabilities, 2009.
- National Action Plans on Disability (2014 - 2018, 2019 - 2023); and
- Inclusive and equitable policy for Cambodia employment and students of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodia, and quota for persons with disabilities in jobs.

The most recent National Disability Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023 established clear strategic objectives to increase the quality of life of persons with disabilities and promote their inclusion.

In 2018, the Government of Cambodia established Technical Standards for Physical Accessibility Infrastructure to ensure overall accessibility for persons with disabilities. However, compliance with these standards is not comprehensively monitored, and government regulations on the rights of persons with disabilities, including employment quotas, have only been partially implemented in garment factories and have not been

sufficiently enforced. According to Sub-Decree 108, **the national quota for employing persons with disabilities in the private sector is set at 1% for companies with 100 or more employees. Non-compliance results in a penalty of contributing 40% of a worker's wage to the MoSVY, which several companies often choose to pay instead of meeting the quota.** According to a report by the Persons with Disabilities Foundation (PWDF) of the MoSVY, cited by Khmer Time News on March 22, 2024, throughout 2023, the government collected nearly 1.3 billion Riel from the payment of contributions from 80 companies, factories, and enterprises that did not hire people with disabilities.(Source)

This 1% quota may also prevent the meaningful inclusion of different types of disabilities. To comply with this legal requirement, some factories may hire people with mild physical disabilities. However, other types of disabilities are rarely seen, such as people in wheelchairs or with visual or hearing impairments. Therefore, it is important to reevaluate and monitor existing legal and regulatory frameworks by the government to ensure that the policy implementation is yielding the desired result – meaningful social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

At the sub-national level, the government has also made several advances to support the employment of persons with disabilities, such as non-discrimination and quota provisions, specifically:

- Establishing and strengthening the coordination and capacity of the DAC, the Disability Action Working Groups, and the Provincial Disability Action Councils (P-DACs), which are responsible for advising, monitoring, and implementing disability-inclusive policies and programs.
- Supporting the involvement of Disabled People's Organizations and their representatives in the Commune Investment Plan development, which is a key mechanism for local development planning and budgeting.

Most recently, in 2024, MoSVY established provincial networks known as P-DACs to ensure inclusive and appropriate services for persons with disabilities. The national DAC oversees the establishment of these provincial networks. At the provincial level, P-DACs are chaired by a deputy governor and include representatives from key provincial departments such as the Department of Women's Affairs, the Department of Social Affairs, and the Provincial Health Department. These councils also include representatives from civil society, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and individuals with disabilities.

Their main roles and responsibilities include:

- Consulting and advising the provincial government on disabilities and rehabilitation.
- Assisting in the implementation of related policies and procedures.
- Monitoring progress on the DAC's national action plan.
- Providing status reports to the national Ministry.

These provincial councils tend to perform better in central provinces. **In contrast, remote provinces often lack the necessary number of members and, therefore, do not always have fully functioning councils.**

2.2 Private Sector Initiatives

International brands have embraced CSR initiatives and are increasingly focused on promoting diversity and inclusion, with companies such as Marks & Spencer, ASOS, and Tommy Hilfiger leading this shift. This encourages garment factories to adopt inclusive employment practices that align with CSR objectives, creating opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Factory management plays a critical role in fostering inclusive business practices, especially in recruitment. Factories may be motivated to hire more persons with disabilities for three main reasons: 1) promoting disability inclusion, 2) adhering to government policies, and 3) recognizing the advantages of employing persons with disabilities. To ensure inclusive workplaces, it is essential to work with factory management to establish suitable infrastructure and develop workplace policies

promoting zero tolerance for discrimination, including against persons with disabilities.

There are good examples in Cambodia where private sector-led initiatives are specifically promoting inclusion at the garment factories, such as:

TAFTAC/CGTI – Phnom Penh

The Textile, Apparel, Footwear & Travel Goods Association in Cambodia (TAFTAC) and the Cambodian Garment Training Institute (CGTI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA). The aim is to support CMAA in demining efforts and to support land mine victims and their families.

So far, TAFTAC has conducted fundraising and provided financial support to CMAA for demining efforts in Dara Sakor, Koh Kong province. Additionally, to support the victims and their families, CGTI has committed to offering training, scholarships, and employment opportunities in the garment, footwear, and textile (GFT) sector to the victims and their children who are interested.

The project also conducts assessments to determine if any training offered through the CGTI would be appropriate for specific mine survivors. Additionally, the project evaluates the willingness of these individuals to relocate to another province for employment opportunities.

Horizon-Outdoor - Kampong Chhnang

Horizon-Outdoor, a garment factory in Kampong Chhnang, successfully implements the Return-to-Work Policy. With a



dedicated HR team knowledgeable about the policy, the factory has guided several workers through returning to work after commuting accidents. Some workers perform the same tasks as before, while others engage in adapted activities based on their post-accident abilities. The HR team ensures access to necessary health and rehabilitation services and provides appropriate accommodations. Workers have expressed satisfaction with the factory's support and gratitude for the policy that allowed them to retain their jobs.

Mutita Textile Social Enterprise – Battambang

Mutita Textile Social Enterprise operates the Battambang Textile Center (BTC), known for its inclusive employment practices, particularly for workers with disabilities. Collaborating with NGOs and government entities, Mutita Textile has created a supportive work environment that ensures equal opportunities and fair treatment for all employees. By offering tailored accommodations and training, the firm empowers workers with disabilities to contribute actively to the production process. This inclusive approach benefits workers with disabilities and fosters a culture of acceptance and respect among all employees, highlighting the potential for social inclusion within Cambodia's garment sector. BTC's emphasis on facilitating work through minor alterations demonstrates the feasibility of replicating such initiatives in other garment factories with minimal capital investment.

La Paloma – Battambang

La Paloma, a garment factory in Battambang managed by the French NGO Children of the Mekong, employs individuals with and without disabilities. The factory is committed to offering dignified employment opportunities to people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including persons with disabilities, by providing proper accommodation and adapting to the work environment. Through its inclusive hiring practices and dedication to fair wages and working conditions, La Paloma empowers its workers and positively contributes to the local community, raising awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities. By collaborating with NGOs and social enterprises, the factory has extended its impact, serving as an exemplary model of corporate social responsibility.

2.3 Development Partner and Civil Society Initiatives

There are many excellent examples of how development partners and civil society organizations address workplace inclusion in Cambodia. CARE and GIZ Cambodia are currently implementing a project funded by the German Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ)

to strengthen the capacities of OPDs (Organizations of Persons with Disabilities) to support inclusion in the garment sector. The project includes an organizational capacity assessment to identify training needs and will create linkages between factories and local NGOs, bringing in expertise on inclusion. Networking and exchange activities at a regional level are also planned to identify and promote best practices.

Below are some examples of local OPDs working towards creating inclusive workplaces for persons with disabilities:

AIP Foundation - Phnom Penh

AIP Foundation, an NGO dedicated to road safety in Cambodia, has recently initiated the development of a Return-to-Work Policy aimed at factory workers who have experienced accidents either at their workplace or during their commute. This policy, currently in its pilot stage, is being implemented in 13 factories across the country, with plans for expansion to other factories and eventual adoption as a government-mandated policy for all factories nationwide. The policy ensures that workers have access to health and rehabilitation services following an accident, with job security guaranteed during their recovery period. It also covers both temporary and long-term disability benefits provided by the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and ensures proper accommodation and work adaptations upon return to work, including adjustments such as reduced working hours, reasonable accommodations, and enhanced accessibility measures.

People's Action for Inclusive Development (PAfID)

PAfID envisions an inclusive society where opportunities to participate in the cultural, social, and economic environment are open to all, especially for people with disabilities. The organization strengthens and supports the capacity of relevant actors, including OPDs, NGOs, government, the private sector, and communities at the grassroots and national levels.

Kampuchea Sela Handicap (KSH) - Phnom Penh

KSH is a non-profit organization based in Phnom Penh that employs 20 individuals with intellectual disabilities, which is rare across the Cambodian industry. Their approach to creating inclusive workspaces for persons with intellectual disabilities can serve as a model for garment factories. For example, they provide individuals with autism with repetitive tasks, leading to increased productivity compared to peers without disabilities. This example shows how persons with intellectual disabilities can actively participate and be included in work activities while contributing as valuable assets to the industry. KSH has achieved considerable success, with its jam being sold in numerous markets and supermarkets throughout Phnom Penh.



2.4 Good Practices from Other Countries

Business and inclusion networks in Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka are good examples from other countries. They provide information and guidelines regarding disability inclusion in the workplace. These guiding documents can support practitioners in policy implementation, create more opportunities for employees with disabilities, and encourage employers from an added-value perspective. These examples also include general policies aimed at raising awareness and advocating for persons with disabilities or focusing on brands adapting their clothing and branding for individuals with disabilities.

The following is a small selection of these various good examples from other countries:

Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSES) - Bangladesh (Source here)

The PSES project brought together the Bangladeshi government, private sector actors, and civil society organizations to promote and manage sustainable growth in Bangladesh's textile, garment, and leather industries. As part of this project, PSES established the Inclusive Job Centre (IJC), which provides counseling, training, and job referral services for persons with disabilities. More than 300 persons with

disabilities gained employment and accommodation in garment factories through this initiative.

Unipax - Vietnam

Unipax, located in Dong Nai, Vietnam, is characterized by its commitment to inclusivity by implementing accessibility improvements to support persons with disabilities in the workplace. The factory's proactive stance towards actively recruiting persons with disabilities has garnered praise from Better Work Vietnam, reflecting its dedication to diversity and equal opportunities.

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) - Jordan (Source here)

BWJ is a well-known success story from outside the Asian context. The program began in 2008 at the request of the Jordanian Ministry of Labour. One of its main goals is to improve working conditions and accessibility to employment for persons with disabilities within the rapidly growing Jordanian garment industry. To do this, BWJ engaged with stakeholders such as employers, employer representatives, and the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to develop guidelines for the Jordanian garment sector on how best to employ and accommodate workers with disabilities.

3. Key findings from Stakeholder Consultations

3.1 Stakeholder Consultations on Inclusion

Improving workplace inclusion within Cambodia's textile industry has long been a topic of discussion. The Responsible Business Hub (RBH) has been at the forefront of this dialogue. Hosted by EuroCham and TAFTAC, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), and other government stakeholders, as well as BFC, RISE, CARE, and GIZ, the RBH aims to build a sustainable textile industry aligned with the Cambodian Government's *Garment, Footwear, and Travel Goods Sector Development Strategy for 2022-2027*.

Stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, and government have been engaged in an ongoing exchange process supported by the RBH. Several dialogue events have

taken place, supplemented by key informant interviews. The latest event was held on 1 September 2023. Relevant sources and reports, such as „Uniting on Inclusion in the Garment Sector“ by CARE Cambodia, „Regional Tripartite Sectoral Meeting Towards a More Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Garment and Textiles Sector in Asia and the Pacific“ by the United Nations in Cambodia, and „Disability Inclusion“ by the Asia Garment Hub, informed the consultation on disability inclusion in Cambodia's garment sector.

Follow-up events with all relevant stakeholders were organized in March 2024. Hosted by GIZ-FABRIC, CARE, and RISE, a validation workshop gathered feedback on the major recommendations collected from previous stakeholder dialogues, including ongoing collaboration, dedicated dialogue events, and stakeholder interviews.



Additionally, CARE conducted further interviews with key informants from different stakeholder groups. Interviews were conducted with representatives from key government ministries (MoWA, MoH, MoLVT, and MoI), HR managers of garment factories, executive directors, senior management, and technical staff from organizations supporting persons with disabilities.

3.2 Major Findings

While the objectives defined in the National Strategic Disability Plan 2019-2023 were commendable and aimed at promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the following implementation gaps have been identified and need to be addressed:

- **Lack of financial** support for implementing the National Action Plan on Disabilities.
- **Absence of a technical working group** to support the implementation of policies and laws related to disabilities and rehabilitation.
- **Limited promotion and implementation of national plans**, regulations, and procedures for mainstreaming disability in development plans.
- **Continuation of discrimination** against persons with disabilities.
- **Limited cooperation** between civil society, development partners, ministries, and institutions responsible for disability issues.
- **Insufficient disability data management systems** and updates on disability data; and
- **Inadequate dissemination of relevant laws and regulations** on disabilities and rehabilitation nationwide.

A 2022 study was also considered. The study was conducted as part of the GIZ-funded project “Strengthening the Economic Resilience of Garment Workers with Disabilities during COVID-19 and Beyond,” implemented by CARE International in Cambodia in partnership with ADD International Cambodia. The rapid assessment, carried out from March to May 2022, aimed to examine garment factories’ practices related to Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion and to identify employment barriers for garment workers with disabilities.

Key findings from the assessment revealed significant gaps in guidelines, inclusive processes, and reasonable accommodations. Most workers with disabilities reported not asking for or requiring any special workplace adjustments to perform their tasks. Only one of the five participating

garment factories met the government criteria of employing at least one percent of workers with disabilities for businesses with over 100 employees. Additionally, none of the five garment factories had official, separate written disability inclusion policies for the workplace.

Both workers with disabilities and factory human resource managers participating in the assessment agreed that if employees acquire a disability, the factory should implement the **Return-to-Work Concept, refer workers to appropriate services so they can return to work, and offer opportunities to retain or gain experience in a different job.**

From this study, civil society organizations (CSOs) such as Better Factory Cambodia, the Cambodia Labor Confederation, Action on Disability and Development, Battambang Textile, and CARE Cambodia found that raising awareness about the social inclusion of persons with disabilities within factories was essential. Additionally, strengthening the management team of the factories to increase their readiness for disability inclusion in the workplace was found to be critical. Some examples of increased readiness include creating accessible infrastructure, establishing an inclusive workplace system and culture, workplace adjustment based on the needs of different types of disabilities, and advocating for better recruitment conditions for persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, an assessment of the capacity needs of OPDs working in the textile sector in Cambodia was conducted in 2024 under Social Inclusion in Textile Sector (SITS) funded by GIZ and revealed several critical gaps and challenges. At an organizational level, many OPDs lack adequate resources and financial support to fully implement their policies and planned activities to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Regarding human resources, many OPDs staff lack specialized training and capacity in key areas such as project management, advocacy, and disability inclusion. This, combined with unclear staff roles, responsibilities, and career development opportunities, hinders the OPDs’ ability to effectively advocate for the inclusion of persons with disability in the workplace and deliver on their mandates. Finally, some OPDs were found to lack a strong ethos of learning, knowledge-sharing, and continuous improvement, which are essential elements for driving meaningful advocacy for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the textile sector and sustainable change.

Beyond the internal organizational factors, the assessment also uncovered broader systemic issues, such as the lack of adequate networking, collaboration, and public-private

dialogue among OPDs, insufficient training opportunities for persons with disabilities to develop skills for the garment sector, persistent accessibility barriers and lack of reasonable accommodations in factories, and limited policy implementation and enforcement to promote the employment of persons with disabilities. Addressing these multifaceted gaps and challenges will require a concerted, collaborative effort involving capacity building, resource mobilization, strengthened partnerships, and targeted policy advocacy to truly unlock the potential of persons with disabilities in the textile industry and achieve their full and effective inclusion.

Below are some critical issues that have been found during these ongoing consultation processes around the inclusion in Cambodia's GFT sector:

- **Transportation:** Persons with disabilities face challenges in accessing transportation, including buses as well as the use of trucks or motorbikes
- **Accessibility:** The working environment inside garment factories poses accessibility issues, with spaces such as restrooms, lunch areas, entrances, and slopes inaccessible for individuals with disabilities. This lack of accessibility not only limits their mobility but also poses safety risks. Additionally, most factories or productivity system setups at individual factories were found to be not ready to provide inclusive workplace adjustment to respond to the different types of disabilities internally, especially for those who return to work after accidents.
- **Low levels of awareness of disability rights and legal obligations:** While government policies require that at least 1% of total workers be persons with disabilities for organizations with more than 100 workers, the actual recruitment rate is far lower. This discrepancy indicates a lack of awareness among factory owners and companies

regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, relevant laws and policies, and the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities.

- **Ineffective labor inspections:** Government inspections, which are meant to enforce labor law compliance, such as the 1% quota mentioned above, partly lack transparency and accountability.
- **Limited job matching opportunities:** Companies also find it difficult to meet the 1% quota, as stated by TAFTAC, which shared that they require support to reach the 1% criteria. This means that even when companies want to comply with this legal obligation, there are limited job matching opportunities for both OPDs and employers to easily find and recruit persons with disabilities who are ready for employment.
- **Limited access to education and training:** Barriers to accessing relevant education and skilling opportunities to increase employability still exist, preventing persons with disabilities from fully participating in the workforce in the garment sector. Such barriers may begin even before entering the workforce, such as the lack of support for students with accessibility needs in the educational system.
- **Discriminatory societal norms and attitudes:** the cultural environment is to pity persons with disabilities, the so-called "Karma Debt" that perceives persons with disabilities as not being empowered people with rights.
- **Evidence-based advocacy:** without evidence, it is difficult to do more lobbying. More data collection is needed, including distinguishing between accommodations for diverse types of disabilities. More examples of successful inclusion of workers with disabilities could be collected and made available. The existing trade unions could support this.



4. Recommendations

Recommendations are drawn from a desk review, ongoing consultations, and interviews. Stakeholders agreed that by implementing these proposed recommendations, the GFT sector in Cambodia can work towards improving disability inclusion and creating a more equitable and diverse workforce.

There is a need for stronger laws and policy reinforcement. Implementing policies that condemn discrimination against persons with disabilities and promote awareness of their rights and capabilities can help foster a more inclusive work environment, ensuring equal access to employment opportunities. **Holding factories and vendors accountable using the influence of brands can help promote compliance laws and policies that protect people with disabilities.** Recommendations include enforcing policies and laws effectively and creating inclusive environments for persons with disabilities.

Raising awareness and providing training is key. It remains crucial to conduct awareness campaigns and training programs to educate employers and co-workers about disability inclusion and the benefits of employing persons with disabilities. This will help to challenge existing biases or misconceptions. **Furthermore, it is important to enhance awareness and understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the advantages of hiring persons with disabilities among relevant stakeholders, including companies, factories, and trade unions.** Trade unions can play a key role in delivering awareness-raising initiatives to workers and persons with disabilities in communities.

There is a need to enhance reasonable accommodation and ensure that the workplace environment is physically accessible and inclusive, allowing all individuals to access it. This may involve installing ramps, accessible restrooms, and other accommodations to promote the mobility and independence of all individuals, including those with disabilities. This also includes providing assistive technology and equipment: Workers should be directed to National Rehabilitation Centers to access assistive devices such as crutches, wheelchairs, and artificial limbs. Additionally, factories should invest in specific equipment, such as specialized working tools, hearing and visual software, or adaptive working equipment, to empower employees to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently. Equally important is to ensure that factories and brands invest more in reasonable workplace adjustment, ensuring the needs of workers with different disabilities.

Establishing mentorship programs where experienced employees with disabilities offer guidance and support to



other individuals with disabilities can be highly beneficial.

These programs assist in navigating workplace challenges and fostering successful careers. In factories lacking experienced employees with disabilities, initial working groups can be formed to identify suitable reference employees who can then guide the mentorship programs.

Collaboration with organizations for persons with disabilities is essential. Partnerships with disability organizations and NGOs specializing in disability inclusion can provide valuable insights, resources, and support to bridge the gap between employers and individuals with disabilities.

Regular monitoring and evaluation of disability inclusion initiatives within the garment textiles sector is crucial. This can be done through inclusion audits to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives. Collecting data on employment rates, job satisfaction, and career progression of individuals with disabilities helps identify areas for improvement and track progress over time. The government should take overall responsibility but can establish joint responsibility mechanisms with private sector and civil society actors.

4.1 For the Government

The government can play a vital role in fostering disability inclusion within the GFT sector and contribute to its long-term sustainability. To reinforce and adjust its existing strategies to further promote sustainability in the garment textiles sector, we make the following recommendations to the government based on stakeholder consultations and sustainable best practices as below:

- **The Government of Cambodia to provide adequate financial support for implementing the National Disability Action Plan** and establish a technical working group to support the implementation of policies and laws related to disabilities and rehabilitation. This should include coordination between civil society actors and the business community, as well as improving registration procedures and conditions for determining disability assessments to promote transparency and accountability. Additionally, funds raised should be invested in protection measures and capacity building for people with disabilities to enhance their integration into enterprise production as a valuable human resource.
- **Relevant ministries and government agencies to actively engage with OPDs in the decision- and policy-making processes.** By ensuring their representation and participation in consultations and dialogue events during government planning and review processes with relevant entities such as MoSVY, DACs, MoLVT, and National Employment Agency (NEA), the policies can better reflect the realities and needs of the lived experiences of the persons with disabilities.
- **The government to mandate regular training and information sessions for garment factories and worker representatives** on the government's Technical Standards for Physical Accessibility Infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities, as well as other relevant guidelines and standards. This will help raise awareness of the GFT sector's legal obligations and policy frameworks.
- **Agencies such as NEA and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutes to provide skills and job matching opportunities for both OPDs and employers** to easily find and recruit persons with disabilities who are ready for employment. Enhancing the coordination between the supply and demand of employment opportunities will help factories to meet the 1% quota.
- **NEA, TVET Institutes, and other relevant government entities to continue investing in inclusive job and skills training programs that align with the labor market needs of the GFT sector.** This could involve establishing links with skills training centers and/or providing on-the-job skills training opportunities at garment factories for persons with disabilities. By removing barriers to further education and skills training, persons with disabilities can continue to grow their career trajectories beyond the minimum employment.
- **The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUPC) to establish regulatory requirements for building accessible workplaces,** such as accessible ramps, restrooms, and reasonable accommoda-

tion of the newly set-up factory premises and buildings. This will help embed accessibility in all future buildings. They can also conduct **routine audits and inspections to verify the presence of adequate infrastructure**, ensuring that factories are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities, and are in line with these regulations.

- **Integrate projects aimed at improving safe transportation for garment factory workers**, with a focus on road safety, into public health programs, employment conditions at factories, and disability inclusion initiatives.
- **Promote transparency and accountability regarding policy implementation to ensure that the government's disability inclusion measures meet their objectives.** For example, Sub-Decree 108, which articulates the penalties by companies that do not meet the 1% quota, could be reevaluated to ensure that it is an effective incentive for companies to hire more persons with disabilities. Additionally, while the primary purpose of the Decree is to encourage disability inclusion in workplaces, when the penalties are collected, such collection and reinvestment of the penalties should also be closely monitored to ensure that these funds are utilized proactively to support disability inclusion initiatives in other ways.

4.2 For Factories

Factories are in a great position to initiate change and create inclusive workplaces that have immediate impact on the workers with disabilities. Below are some recommendations to the factories:

- **Develop comprehensive disability inclusion policies in line with Cambodian laws and international standards** and create a simple action plan or strategy to implement these policies. This should include involving workers with disabilities (“nothing about us without us”), such as establishing a committee to oversee the design, implementation, and monitoring of these policies.
- **Invest in reasonable accommodation and ensure safety and emergency regulations** that consider the needs of persons with disabilities and align with government standards. This also extends to **making reasonable adjustments for workers to return to work** after gaining permanent or temporary impairments. In many cases, newly gained impairments do not affect the skills required to fulfill the task. However, it requires making necessary accommodations for workers to return to work. This also means that factories should invest more in providing reasonable workplace adjustments to cater for the needs of different types of disabilities.

- **Ensure safe transportation to and from factories** to prevent accidents that may cause disabilities. This should also include ensuring that these transportation methods are accessible for persons with existing disabilities.
- **Hold regular internal awareness-raising campaigns** to address stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities in the workplace. Establishing informal peer groups of workers with disabilities to ensure their collective voice is heard by human resources and trade unions. Additionally, information sessions on disability rights and non-discrimination, including details on the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), could help increase all workers' knowledge of disability rights and inclusion in the workplace.
- **Work with relevant government and other agencies, such as NEA and TVET institutes, to actively recruit persons with disabilities.** This can include conducting outreach to employ people with disabilities and building their own capacity to improve recruitment practices to meet the 1% quota.
- **Make internal skills and education training sessions and programs inclusive to allow participation by all staff members, including those with disabilities.** Partnering with OPDs and actively involving workers with disabilities to design inclusive training sessions will ensure that persons with disabilities can continue to access education and training opportunities.

4.3 For Buyers

Buyers are crucial in supporting government strategies for disability inclusion and promoting sustainability within their supply chains in Cambodia's garment textiles sector.

- **Buyers should establish comprehensive codes of conduct that explicitly address disability inclusion, labor**

rights, and environmental sustainability. These codes should be communicated to all suppliers and strictly enforced through regular audits and inspections.

- **Buyers can support government strategies by actively seeking suppliers prioritizing disability inclusion and diversity within their workforce.** This can include setting specific requirements for the employment and advancement of individuals with disabilities in supplier contracts. Buyers should ensure that factories are willing to collaborate with the government and civil society to foster an inclusive workplace environment that welcomes persons with disabilities.
- **Buyers should also collaborate with relevant industry associations and NGOs** that promote disability inclusion and sustainability within the GFT sector. These partnerships can create knowledge-sharing platforms and help identify best practices, provide resources, and facilitate training programs for suppliers.
- **Buyers should allocate resources to support suppliers in implementing disability inclusion and sustainability initiatives.** This can involve providing financial assistance, technical assistance, and training programs specifically tailored to improving inclusion practices and sustainable production methods.
- **Transparency within their supply chains** should be prioritized by requiring suppliers to provide detailed information on their disability inclusion and sustainability efforts. Additionally, buyers should promote information sharing and collaboration among suppliers to facilitate the exchange of best practices and encourage continuous improvement. Regular supplier assessments should be carried out to assess their suppliers' performance regarding disability inclusion and sustainability. This can be done through comprehensive evaluations considering factors such as working conditions, employee diversity, environmental impact, and compliance with local





regulations. Suppliers should be incentivized to continually improve their practices through performance-based contracts and preferential treatment for those demonstrating exemplary efforts.

- **Buyers should participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives** that aim to address the issue of disability inclusion and sustainability within the textile industry. These initiatives can bring together governments, industry associations, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders to collectively develop and implement strategies for positive change. They can also serve as mediators between civil society and factories to ensure the implementation of measures and recommendations.
- **Buyers should also support raising awareness and understanding of disability rights and policies among all stakeholders**, especially factory owners, companies, and trade unions.

4.4 For Civil Society

CSOs can contribute to a more inclusive GFT sector in Cambodia, providing equal opportunities and empowerment for persons with disabilities.

- **Civil Society can support factories to comply with government policies and provide training and support:**
 - **Increase factories' capacities and understanding of existing government policies** such as the **National Strategic Disability Plans 2018 - 2023, National Social Protection Policies 2018 - 2025, and Guidelines on Physical Accessibility 2019**. This will enable OPDs to effectively advocate for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the garment sector. Collaboration with factories is necessary to ensure compliance with the plans and policies.

- **Increase factories' capacities and understanding of disability inclusion strategies, particularly innovative and body-positive empowerment strategies.** These strategies can enhance the self-esteem, skills, and employability of persons with disabilities.
- **Better coordination and synergy must be created between OPDs and other NGOs** to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the garment sector.
 - For example, focusing on employment promotion by facilitating job matching and improving job readiness skills among persons with disabilities. Collaboration can be established with relevant NGOs and organizations to identify training programs, apprenticeships, and mentorship opportunities. The goal is to enable more persons with disabilities to acquire the necessary skills and work in the garment sector, supporting quality production.
- **Civil society organizations should continue playing a role in supporting the empowerment of persons with disabilities and promote matching initiatives:**
 - **Support initiatives that enhance employable skills and promote the empowerment of persons with disabilities in the garment sector.** This could include facilitating inclusive training programs, workshops, and vocational education.
 - **Collaborate with industry stakeholders, such as garment manufacturers and suppliers**, to establish inclusive and accessible workplaces and to raise awareness about the rights of persons with disabilities and the advantages of hiring them. This can involve advocating for reasonable accommodations, ensuring accessible infrastructure, and promoting an inclusive work environment that values diversity and embraces the potential of all workers.

5. From Recommendations to Actions

5.1 Actions by the Government

- To ensure the effective implementation of relevant policies, **linkages and synergies among the relevant ministries need to be strengthened**, e.g. between the Ministry of Labor (labor market needs, labor force survey), the Ministry of Education (Vocational training), the Ministry of Social Affairs (for developing and managing Disability Identification Database, promoting social inclusion and physical rehabilitation), the Ministry of Health (health-related requirements of employees with disabilities), Ministry of Land Management (monitoring and regulating accessible builds), as well as the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) (to solve infrastructure challenges). This could be done by strengthening effective communication and coordination mechanisms for better information and data sharing.
- **The government could set national standards for inclusive business operations and provide practical guidelines to the business community.** These standards and guidelines would help businesses monitor and evaluate their workplaces and implement relevant policies that align with national standards and address the specific needs of each business.
- **The government can also facilitate coordination between civil society actors and the business community.** This could include maintaining regularly updated business registers and supporting civil society umbrella organizations with up-to-date membership inventories, making them accessible to business communities.

5.2 Support to Factories

- **CSOs and relevant government agencies could support factories with services to promote inclusion.** For example, this includes providing job readiness training, needs-based vocational training, and facilitating job matching opportunities between OPDs or persons with disabilities and factories. It may also include supporting the factories' readiness to make necessary adjustments to welcome workers back to work after work-related or other accidents.

- **Civil society could play a role and support by raising awareness about policies and good practices** of implementation and offering job readiness interventions for people with disabilities to ensure a qualified labor force.
- **Development partners could support learning from good practice examples** and, for example, organize more study visits to countries where specific projects promoting inclusion in the garment sector have been successfully implemented.
- **Development partners could also support transparency and accountability regarding public investment and expenditures to implement policies.**

5.3 Support to Buyers

- **CSOs can support buyers in actively raising consumer awareness and promoting disability inclusion by sharing successful inclusion stories and best practices with them.** This will continue reinforcing the value-add of disability inclusion in the supply chain, including from the demand side.
- **By offering such support to buyers, civil society partners can empower them to contribute effectively to the sustainability of the garment textiles sector in Cambodia** while aligning their efforts with government strategies.
- **Partners can facilitate platforms and networks where buyers share best practices and lessons learned.** This exchange of information can help buyers align their strategies with government initiatives and collectively promote sustainability. Partners can work closely with buyers to advocate for policies and regulations that support sustainable practices in the sector. By engaging with governments and industry stakeholders, partners can help create an enabling environment for sustainable sourcing and production. Additionally, partners should collaborate with buyers to devise locally tailored strategies with realistic timeframes and expectations that can be effectively implemented on the ground.



6. Conclusions

6.1 Summary of Main Points

In summary, this paper presents the findings from several consultations with key stakeholders in Cambodia's GFT sector, focusing on disability inclusion and sustainability. The findings highlight the numerous challenges persons with disabilities face in accessing employment, transportation, and workplace facilities due to a lack of reasonable accommodations for them.

The findings highlight a lack of awareness and understanding of disability rights, policies, and the benefits of employing persons with disabilities among factory owners, companies, and trade unions. These issues undermine the potential contributions of persons with disabilities to the sector's growth and sustainability, as well as their well-being and dignity. By tapping into the talent and potential of persons with disabilities, the sector could achieve social inclusion and further improve its reputation as a responsible sourcing destination.

Additionally, the paper presents successful inclusion models and good practices from other countries, offering a roadmap for the Cambodian industry to follow.

Promoting disability inclusion requires collaborative and aligned action from all stakeholders involved. It is not solely the responsibility of the government but also the private sector, civil society organizations, and international buyers.

We must work together towards creating a more inclusive and sustainable GFT industry by:

- **Strengthening the role of stakeholders**, including OPDs, trade unions, government, factories, and buyers, to support persons with disabilities in the sector.
- **Holding factories and vendors accountable for complying with disability rights laws and policies**, using the leverage of brands and buyers.
- **Enforcing policies and laws effectively and transparently**, with adequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms and
- **Creating accessible and safe environments for persons with disabilities in the sector**, both in terms of transportation and workplace facilities.

6.2 Way Forward

All stakeholders must work towards a future where the Cambodian GFT industry is recognized for its commitment to inclusion and sustainability. Achieving this requires collaborative and aligned action from the government, the private sector, civil society, and persons with disabilities.

As the paper has shown, there is a legal and regulatory framework for workplace inclusion, and some awareness of its importance exists among stakeholders. However, **more collaboration is needed** to ensure the availability of evidence-based information on inclusion and to integrate it into needs-based vocational skills development and job readiness training. This will help avoid mismatches and promote the employability of persons with disabilities. More investment is recommended to make existing skills training and matching initiatives more inclusive.

The private sector should join the government in implementing national regulations and strategies, being accountable for their roles in sustainable development and social responsibility. Continued cooperation is needed to support the government, brands, and factories in advancing their workplace inclusion agenda in Cambodia. Ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue will be crucial for providing updates, exchanging best practices, addressing remaining issues, and coordinating joint actions.

GIZ-FABRIC, commissioned by BMZ, is a key stakeholder providing a platform for such dialogue in Cambodia, along with partners at the **RBH (EuroCham and TAFTAC)** and in close cooperation with **ILO-BFC and civil society partners**. This public-private dialogue aims to holistically **analyze issues and develop novel approaches to support the sustainable transformation of the Cambodian GFT sector**. Beyond dialogue, GIZ-FABRIC is committed to inspiring, coordinating, and monitoring multi-stakeholder action on the industry's most pressing sustainability issues.

This series of SRPs shall directly support the implementation of the Cambodian Government's GFT Sector Development Strategy 2022-2027. All relevant stakeholders are invited to participate in the dialogue and join forces for a sustainable GFT industry in Cambodia.

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