



Special Statement On Strike Being Held in Bavet Town

Strikes that do not comply with the procedure of the labour law have seriously affected the growth of the garment and footwear sector which is a major source of income to the national economy and a major employment source for around 600,000 people in Cambodia. Obviously, in late December 2013 and early January 2014 strikes and demonstrations caused by the union federations representing the minority of workers in this sector had resulted in a lot of damage to public and private property and seriously affected the social security and investment climate.

Over the last recent months, even though the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training issued a Notification on holidays for 3 days: 14, 15, 16 April which were paid holidays for Khmer New Year, most garment and footwear factories had allowed their workers to have additional days off until 21 April 2014 and were replaced with other days off. This is a habit that most factories always practice every year. Thus, when the workers did not return to work on 17 April 2014, it did not mean they participated in the strike provoked by some union federations. However, due to the failure in Phnom Penh, some union federations, especially the Collective Unions of Movement of Workers (CUMW) led by **Pav Sina**, has diverted the direction from leading strikes in Phnom Penh to leading strikes in special economic zone in Bavet town. It is surprising that this union federation forces the employer to provide \$50 for each worker with the accusation that the employer has promised to provide this money for them in exchange of not joining the strike provoked by the 8 union federations recently. This is an exaggeration and is an illegal action that is not different from extortion.

GMAC regrets that the Royal Government as well as local authorities has not paid attention and allowed this illegal action to occur, with no effective measures to deal with it.

GMAC sees that this action is developing to violence as some strikers have thrown stones at the factory and have threatened workers, not allowing them to enter the factory to work and destroyed factory property. This situation will spread to other areas where garment and footwear factories are located in if there is no action to prevent it. Thus, GMAC would like to insistently appeal to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training as well as other relevant authorities to carry out their role in preventing this situation immediately in order to guarantee the safety and security for investors and workers who intend to enter the factory to work. Ignoring and allowing the union to do things freely means the destruction of investors' confidence in the Royal Government in protecting their safety and legal interests.

GMAC hopes that the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training as well as all relevant institutions and authorities will implement their role most effectively in preventing this situation from spreading to other textile, garment and footwear factories in Bavet's special economic zones as well as other areas and must avoid any act of violence that has been happening. GMAC would also like to appeal to all workers to return to work as usual and wait for resolution between their representative and the employer in accordance with the legal procedures. The participation in this strike will affect your wage as **the employer will enforce the labour law, not providing wage and benefits** during the strike.

Phnom Penh, 25 April 2014
Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia

