

April 24, 2018

**Via email: [Stephen.Wetmore@cantire.com](mailto:Stephen.Wetmore@cantire.com)**

Stephen Wetmore  
President and CEO  
Canadian Tire Corporation  
2180 Yonge Street  
Toronto, ON M4P 2V8

Dear Mr. Wetmore:

The United Steelworkers represents 225,000 working women and men across Canada. We all shop at Mark's, Sport Chek, Sports Experts or Canadian Tire.

We are writing on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rana Plaza because we are concerned about worker safety and human rights in your global supply chain, particularly in the garment sector.

There is much about Canadian Tire to admire. Your company's media campaign "*We all play for Canada*" evokes a strong sense of community and a caring Canada. Playing for Canada must include taking responsibility for the impact our actions have on human rights outside of our borders.

The supplier codes of business conduct of the Canadian Tire corporate family, which are available on-line, set standards for suppliers and address issues of workers' rights and safety. Under the codes "suppliers will employ employees who are, in all cases; present voluntarily, not put at risk of physical harm due to their work environment, fairly compensated and allowed the lawful right of free association." The corporation commits that it "will not knowingly do business with suppliers who do not meet the standards outlined in this Code."

Our concern is around the performance of your suppliers against these standards, how these standards are interpreted in practice, and the degree to which your company enforces and applies the codes. The problem is that there is no transparency. Human rights watchdogs and labour advocates are unable to independently verify that garments sold under Canadian Tire's private labels are manufactured in factories that are safe and where workers' rights are respected, and can't ask Canadian Tire for corrective action in specific factories when problems arise.

In essence, the Canadian public is asked to trust that your companies are doing the right thing.

Unfortunately, we all know examples of what we thought were exemplary corporate citizens only to find that they were not to be trusted, and had for example, engaged in bribery of foreign officials, colluded together to fix prices, or falsified environmental monitoring equipment in their product.

More importantly, there are credible complaints from workers in garment factories in Bangladesh that their rights to freely organize into trade unions are routinely violated, that they are not paid living wages, that they face daily harassment, including gender-based violence in their workplaces, and that recommended corrective action plans under the Accord and the Alliance have still not been completed. Similar concerns will be heard from workers in many other countries.

In that context, at a minimum, much greater transparency from Canadian Tire is needed.

Canadian Tire's current add campaign endorses the idea of testing, and promotes your products as '*tested for life in Canada.*' Are you prepared to '*test for life in Bangladesh*' or other countries in your supply chain? Are you prepared for independent tests that verify that workers' lives, safety and rights are protected and respected in garment factories that manufacture your private labels?

In 2016, nine international labour and human rights organizations formed a coalition to advocate for transparency in apparel supply chains (*Follow the Thread*: [www.icar.ngo/publications/2017/4/20/follow-the-thread-the-need-for-supply-chain-transparency-in-the-garment-and-footwear-industry](http://www.icar.ngo/publications/2017/4/20/follow-the-thread-the-need-for-supply-chain-transparency-in-the-garment-and-footwear-industry)).

The coalition asked leading retailers, including Canadian Tire, to endorse a Transparency Pledge as a minimum standard for supply chain disclosure. Under the Transparency Pledge a company would agree to publish on its website on a regular basis (such as twice a year) a list naming all sites that manufacture its products.

The list should provide the following information:

1. The full name of all authorized production units and processing facilities.
2. The site addresses.
3. The parent company of the business at the site.
4. Type of products made.
5. Worker numbers at each site.

Will Canadian Tire take the Transparency Pledge and disclose the names and addresses of suppliers in its global garment supply chain?

**United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union**  
Syndicat international des travailleurs unis de la métallurgie, du papier et de la foresterie, du caoutchouc,  
de la fabrication de l'énergie, des services et industries connexes

Canadian Tire would not be the first to take this progressive step. Nike and Adidas have put disclosure into practice. Other leading Canadian retailers have moved or are moving toward partial or full disclosure. Canadian Tire can be a leader in this area, and we urge you to act.

As you know, the *Alliance for Worker Safety*, of which Canadian Tire has been a member, has announced that it is winding down operations in Bangladesh by the end of this year. Responsibilities for deepening and sustaining the program of inspections and remediation of garment factories in Bangladesh will be transitioned to a new entity. However, it is likely that the new entity will be captured by the interests of factory owners, and that it will not be up to the task of independently ensuring worker safety in factories which Canadian Tire sources from.

As you review what Canadian Tire will do to maintain and sustain progress in Bangladesh we urge you to consider joining with many other retailers in signing the *Accord for Building and Fire Safety*. Such a move would signal a strong commitment to worker safety, be welcomed by trade unions in Canada and Bangladesh, and clearly set Canadian Tire apart from Walmart and other the human rights laggards in the sector.

We want to be sure that workers employed in your global supply chain are:

- treated fairly and with respect at work
- paid a living wage
- able to exercise their rights to form unions and bargain collectively
- work in safe factories.

Sincerely yours,



Ken Neumann  
National Director for Canada

CC: PJ Czank, President, Mark's  
TJ Flood, President, FGL Sports  
Patrick J Connolly, Chair, Canadian Tire Brand and Community Committee

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