

ITMF urges governments across the globe to support their respective textile industry

Dialogue and close cooperation between stakeholders of the textile supply is paramount

Against the backdrop of the Corona-pandemic, which has spread across the entire globe, the International Textile Manufacturers Federation (ITMF) is urging governments to increase the support their textile and apparel industries to overcome this period of an unprecedented demand and supply shock.

The results of second ITMF Corona Survey which were released before, revealed that on average orders are down by -31 % and the turnover for 2020 is expected to drop by -28 %. In our lifetimes such a demand shock is unprecedented.

“The textile and apparel companies around the world are struggling and with them millions of workers and employees. In such times, both the public and the private sectors must work closely together, to avoid an economic and social meltdown”, ITMF President, Mr. Kihak Sung, emphasized on April 9, 2020. Some industrialised countries have sophisticated instruments like short-time work. To avoid laying off workers, companies are reducing their working hours and wages, with the government making up some of the employees' lost income. Most governments in developing countries do not have the necessary mechanisms in place and are lacking the resources. “Therefore, it is important to find creative solutions between governments, international institutions and the private sector, that can be implemented quickly, Mr. Sung added.

The Corona-pandemic has forced governments around the world to introduce lockdowns and all sorts of exit restrictions, leading to a sudden closure of all sorts of “offline” business for textiles and apparel. Within a few days, shops and stores of any kind selling “unessential” products had to close, cutting of global demand of textiles and apparel. In the past three weeks, ITMF has conducted two surveys among textile companies around the world. The [first ITMF Corona-Survey](#) in the second half of March indicated already the dire consequences of this demand and supply shock: orders were down by an average of around -8% globally and turnover in 2020 is expected to be down on average by -10.5% compared to 2019. The [second ITMF Corona-Survey](#) conducted at the end of March and beginning of April highlighted the devastating impact the Corona-pandemic has on the global textile industry. Across all continents, orders dropped on average by dramatic -32 %. On average, companies around the world expect their turnover to plunge by -29 % compared to 2019.

Furthermore, the ITMF Corona-Survey revealed that the companies are struggling with many issues. The two most important and pressing issues are, first, to keep the workforce safe, and second, to have enough liquidity to cover all the running expenses. Both issues are essential for the survival of each company. In the short-term, the safety and health of everyone working in a company is indispensable. In the medium-term, the availability of liquidity is crucial. In such a situation it is important that governments step in, if possible, with the support of international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank to provide fibre, textile and apparel companies with financial assistance. “The ITMF is asking

governments to provide banks with additional credit facilities backed by guarantees of states and/or international institutions, to suspend any taxes or any other forms of social levies and contributions, etc. with the objective to provide companies with enough liquidity to overcome this critical period”, Mr. Sung noted.

At the same time the ITMF is asking all stakeholder in the supply chain to work closely together. Above all, ITMF is asking retailers and brands to refrain from making use of any ‘force majeure clauses’ in their contracts with suppliers. These would lead to a cascade of cancellations of orders that are ready for shipment or in the process of completion. Instead, brands and retailers as well as all other stakeholders in the supply chain should have dialogues and look for creative solutions that allow partners to survive this unprecedented period together.

While the supply chain is certainly disrupted dramatically, all stakeholders should do their part not to destroy it. If otherwise healthy companies go under because of insufficient numbers of orders and/or a lack of liquidity, the supply chain will not be capable to produce the necessary number of products with the necessary quality and speed once demand is returning.

ITMF was founded in 1904 and its members are associations and companies in the fibre, textile, apparel, home textile, textile machinery and textile chemical industry in almost 60 countries around the world, that are employing directly and indirectly millions of people.

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