

## Responding to the Crisis: Worker and Industry Perspectives Background on Speakers

**Kalpona Akter** is the Executive Director of the Bangladesh Centre for Worker Solidarity (BCWS). A former child worker in Bangladesh's garment factories herself, Kalpona now campaigns for fair wages, workplace safety, and the right to form labor unions and collectively bargain. Kalpona has also been a leading figure linking Western consumers with Bangladeshi garment workers, helping to forge a potent alliance between consumer groups, student groups, international government bodies, and Bangladeshi workers. Kalpona was a key player in advocating for the ground-breaking Accord for Fire and Building Safety, a legally binding agreement under which hundreds of clothing brands have committed to making necessary repairs in the factories where their clothes are made.

**Michael Bride** brings many years of experience to his work as Vice President, Corporate Responsibility at PVH. Based in New York, Michael is charged with ensuring that PVH's Corporate Responsibility policies, both human rights and environment, are respected and enforced throughout the company's supply chain. Michael previously served as Deputy Director for Workplace Programs and Bangladesh Stakeholder Engagement for the Bangladesh Accord. Previously, he led Global Strategies for the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) in Washington, DC and, before that, serving as General Counsel for the Communications Workers' Union and Organizing Officer for the bank workers' union in his native Ireland. A qualified barrister in Ireland and an attorney licensed in the State of New York, Michael also holds an LL.M in International Law from Georgetown Law (with a specialization in International Human Rights Law), a postgraduate diploma in Arbitration Law from University College Dublin, and a first class honors business degree from De Montfort University in the UK.

**Rubana Huq**, President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), is a businesswoman and a poet. She is not only the first woman to serve as BGMEA president but also the first occupant of the post with a PhD. Rubana is also the Managing Director of Mohammadi Group, a family business conglomerate that began by exporting ready-made garments, and has since diversified into software, digital distribution, real estate, power generation, and a television channel called Nagorik. She was featured in BBC's 100 Women. Rubana won the SAARC Literary Award for her poems in 2006. She is the former CEO of TV Southasia, a collaborative platform of South Asian electronic media based in Kolkata. She also sits on the board of trustees for the Asian University for Women. Rubana holds a PhD in English Literature from Jadavpur University in Kolkata and MA in English from East West University in Dhaka. She was married to Annisul Huq, the late mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation. Together they have four children and two grandchildren.