

Press Release: RMG Industries of Bangladesh Seminar

August 2, 2016

American Institute of Bangladesh Studies (AIBS) hosted an afternoon Seminar on “RMG industries of Bangladesh: Trade, Industrial Relations, and Workers' Rights” on July 31, 2016 at the CIRDAP International Conference Center (CICC) located in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Three distinguished speakers from Brooklyn Law School, Rajshahi University, and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology presented their empirical findings in the seminar. Honorable State Minister for Labor and Employment of Government of Bangladesh Mr. Md. Mujibul Haque was present in the seminar as the chief guest. Dr. Golam M. Mathbor, President of AIBS, chaired the event. The seminar was attended by academic scholars, representatives from labor organizations, advocacy groups, owners’ associations, journalists, and other interested personnel.

The presenters discussed that although Bangladesh is making strides to maintain favorable work environments in the garment factories, there are still numerous challenges such as lack of safety measures, labor representations in decision-making, competitive salary packages, and a social safety net. Some recommendations that were discussed included implementing a worker-centered model instead of corporate social responsibility model of development, designing sustainable and substantial social safety nets for various occupational disaster survivors, and making sure that workers representation occurred during every decision-making process.

In his remarks, the Labor and Employment Minister Mr. Haque described various measures that his ministry has taken over the years to avoid accidents like Rana Plaza. He also emphasized the need for accountability of the international buyers of the garment industries and maintained that only profit-generating motivation from the buyers and owners is not sustainable for the industry.