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**Fashion Revolution research reveals shamefully low levels of transparency amongst global fashion brands**

***Fashion Revolution Week (18 April – 24 April)***

Global fashion brands must do more on transparency, Fashion Revolution warns, as it launches its inaugural [***Fashion*** ***Transparency Index***](http://fashionrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/FR_FashionTransparencyIndex.pdf) today to mark the start of Fashion Revolution Week (18th – 24th April 2016).

Three years ago on 24th April, 1,134 people were killed in the Rana Plaza garment factory collapse in Bangladesh. The factories operating in that building made clothes for over a dozen well-known international fashion brands. It took weeks for some companies to determine whether they had relationships with those factories, despite their clothing labels being found in the rubble.

More transparency equals greater consumer and regulatory accountability in the supply chain. As a result, to track the fashion industry’s problem in this area and progress over time, Fashion Revolution and Ethical Consumer have partnered to publish the first edition of their *Fashion Transparency Index* which includes 40 of the biggest global fashion brands and ranks companies according to the level of transparency in their supply chain.

The average score for the 40 brands we surveyed is 42% out of 100, with Levi Strauss & Co coming top of the class with 77%. Chanel meanwhile came bottom with just 10%, closely followed by Forever 21, Claire’s Accessories, Hermes, Louis Vuitton and Prada, sending a strong signal that luxury brands in particular have much more work to do.

Carry Somers, Co-Founder of Fashion Revolution said: “Lack of transparency costs lives. It is impossible for companies to make sure human rights are respected and that environmental practices are sound without knowing where their products are made, who is making them and under what conditions. When companies are working in a transparent way, this also implies openness, communication and accountability across the supply chain and with the public”.

The research reveals that:

* Most companies have publicly available policies on environmental and labour standards but there is a notable absence of long-term thinking in their sustainability strategies, or at least that they are sharing publicly;
* 40% of companies do not appear to have a system in place to monitor compliance with labour standards, and to continually improve standards, with responsibility at the executive board level;
* Only 5 of the companies (Adidas, H&M, Levi Strauss & Co and Nike, which includes Converse) publish a list of all or the vast majority of their Cut-Make-Trim suppliers;
* 60% of companies surveyed appear to be tracking their first-tier CMT suppliers but are not publishing this information publicly;
* Only two companies (Adidas and H&M) publish details of their second-tier suppliers (fabric and yarn mills and/or subcontractors);
* 28% of companies do not communicate about monitoring difficult issues in the supply chain (eg. improving conditions for homeworkers, eliminating forced labour, or eradicating Sumangali practices, a form of child labour)
* Only 11 companies show evidence of working with trade unions, civil society or NGOs on the ground in supplier countries to improve working conditions, and H&M, Inditex, Levi Strauss & Co, Primark and PVH appear to be involved in the most multi-stakeholder initiatives;
* Half of the companies surveyed appear to have nothing in place to monitor where raw materials come from, or at least do no share this information publicly;
* 20% of companies do not disclose how they work with non-compliant factories in order to improve conditions – Levi Strauss publishes the most information about their corrective action plans.

To be acknowledged, Levi Strauss & Co, H&M, Inditex (Zara, Pull & Bear, Bershka, etc.), Adidas and Primark are the most transparent global fashion companies, compared to the rest of the brands surveyed.

Carry Somers, continued: “The public do not have enough information about where and how their clothes are made. Shoppers have the right to know that their money is not supporting exploitation, human rights abuses and environment destruction. It was recently reported that Islamic State has taken over ¾ of the cotton fields in Syria. How do we as consumers know that we aren’t supporting ISIS or slave labour with the next cotton garment we buy? There is no way to hold companies and governments to account if we can’t see what is truly happening behind the scenes. This is why transparency is so essential.”

Orsola de Castro, Co-Founder of Fashion Revolution added: “Ours is not an endorsement but an illustration of what is in the public domain and what the brands voluntarily provided via a questionnaire. We live at a time where there are many fashion contradictions, and some of the greatest offenders are also some of the greater investors in sustainable solutions”.

A team of researchers selected fashion brands based on annual turnover. Brands were assessed both via a questionnaire and by information they made publicly available.

Bryony Moore, lead researcher and Ethical Consumer Research Associate said: “The results show that while some companies are making reasonable efforts to make their supply chains more transparent, there are a large number of companies who fall far short and are still seemingly operating with little knowledge and control of their supply chain. Some companies have nothing more than a Code of Conduct.”

While the first edition of the Fashion Transparency Index only contains 40 companies, Fashion Revolution will be asking that members of the public contact their favourite brands to encourage them to opt in to the Index. We aim to include 100 brands in 2017. This invitation is open to all fashion brands and retailers worldwide with at least £36 million annual turnover, who will be encouraged to publish more about their policies, practices, products and the people making their clothes – answering the question #whomademyclothes.

Fashion Revolution Week takes place from 18th to 24th April in 89 countries worldwide. Visit fashionrevolution.org to find an event close to you. Together we can make change happen.

-Ends –

For more information, contact [press@fashionrevolution.org](mailto:press@fashionrevolution.org) Tel: 020 7440 7695 / 07886 301486.

**Notes to Editors**

Transparency means companies know who makes their clothes – from who stitches them right through to who dyed the fabric and who farmed the cotton.

The Fashion Transparency Index uses a broad brushstroke approach - the ratings are designed as an indicator of the level of transparency practised by the companies surveyed. It looks at companies’ information provision and data sharing in five main areas:

1. **Policy & Commitment - what are the standards and goals the company sets itself for the protection of workers’ rights and the environment? And do they make these public?**

**2. Tracking & Traceability - how well does the company know its supply chain and what does it make public?**

**3. Audits & Remediation - how does the company go about checking its supply chain for compliance with its policies and standards? And what is its approach to dealing with suppliers who fall below these standards? Do they make these public?**

**4. Engagement & Collaboration - which organisations and stakeholders does the company work with to ensure its suppliers and their employees are treated well? And do they make these public?**

**5. Governance - what checks and balances does the company have in place within its own organisation, to ensure its initiatives take place as planned? And do they make this public?**

Please Note: This Index is a living document, and the 40 brands surveyed in this Index are invited to provide further information in order to update their score. Information is correct as of 15th April.