



Press Release

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Oxfam launches the first CSR Guidebook for garment industry

Business sector is essential to help alleviate poverty and sustainable development

As an active promoter of corporate social responsibility (CSR), Oxfam Hong Kong launches the first corporate social responsibility guidebook: *Good Fashion: A Guide to Being an Ethical Clothing Company* today. *Good Fashion* is developed to facilitate garment sector for developing and implementing CSR policy. By producing *Good Fashion*, Oxfam aims to raise awareness among business sector on the importance of CSR and encourage them to put CSR principles into practice.

John Sayer, Director General of Oxfam Hong Kong, said, "Oxfam Hong Kong has been engaging with the business sector on CSR since 2004. Our engagement effort with companies is driven by our fundamental belief that business sector plays a critical role in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. We seek therefore to encourage positive actions by companies through providing information and analysis from our on-the-ground experiences of the impacts upon poor people, whether as workers, producers or citizens." Oxfam believes the goals of achieving a strong, stable and vibrant economies and helping poor people ultimately can both benefit to business corporations. In the past few years, Oxfam has maintained constructive dialogue on CSR with various companies. While more local companies are willing to adopt CSR, the major challenge is putting CSR into practice based upon their existing operation and fulfilling international standards at the same time. To help these corporations tackling this challenge, Oxfam compiled the *Good Fashion* for sharing tips to put CSR in practice.

Kalina Tsang, Coordinator – Private Sector of Oxfam Hong Kong, added, "In addition to monitoring the CSR performance of business corporations, facilitating them to formulate and adopt CSR policies and practices is also important for promoting CSR in Hong Kong. Following the global trend of increasing expectation on CSR from investors and consumers, we trust *Good Fashion* can help the garment industry to address the issue. Under economic turmoil, implementing CSR indeed helps improve corporate operation and reputation. We would see it as a win-win solution for addressing the impact brought by economic downturn."

The 71 pages *Good Fashion*, which is divided into four sections, is a comprehensive guidebook pinpointing practical tips for implementing CSR throughout the production process such as merchandising and manufacturing. *Good Fashion* also includes CSR insights from various stakeholders including workers, community organisations, union representatives, and other groups. Online resources and a simple checklist are also included for companies' reference.



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Global Sourcing Compliance Manager of Esprit Holdings Limited Raymond Leung said, “*Good Fashion* is a comprehensive tool to help companies with less CSR experience to build up their capacity for managing their business risk associated with their business partners in the supply chain. I especially like the “9-step compliance model” which provides a practical approach for the brands or buying companies to integrate the CSR concept into their operating practice. I believe business sustainability will be further enhanced when business operation are accommodating to the changing business environments including the increasing demand of social and environmental compliance.”

Oxfam has been focusing its CSR effort in the garment and footwear sector where the agency has researched the treatment of workers within supply chains. In 2004, Oxfam released the first research report *Turning the Garment Industry Inside Out – Purchasing Practices and Workers’ Lives* and advocating garment companies to improve their merchandising and CSR practices. In 2006, Oxfam published a Transparency Report that studied the information disclosure practice of 16 leading Hong Kong garment retailers for consumers and investors to make ethical purchasing and investment choices. Subsequently, Oxfam hosted the first-ever round-table meeting in Hong Kong on good supply chain labour practice and achieving better CSR. A sustainability reporting seminar for the apparel and footwear industry was also held in 2008 to introduce international reporting standard and guidelines. In the same year, Oxfam launched the *Corporate Social Responsibility Survey of Hang Seng Index Constituent Companies*, the first ever report which ranked the Hang Seng Index companies by evaluating these companies’ CSR performance. This year, Oxfam released the *Transparency Report II: Have Hong Kong Garment Companies Improved Their Reporting on Labour Standards*, which measured 26 Hong Kong garment companies’ reporting on their supply chain labour standards.

***Good Fashion: A Guide to Being an Ethical Clothing Company* is available at:**

http://www.oxfam.org.hk/fs/view/downloadables/pdf/report/Good_Fashion_en.pdf

About Oxfam

Oxfam Hong Kong is an independent development and humanitarian organization working against poverty and related injustice. We recognize that much poverty is caused by injustice and that poverty alleviation requires economic, social and structural change. We work with people facing poverty and with partner organisations on development, humanitarian, policy advocacy and public education programmes.

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