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The AFL-CIO is pleased to offer comments on the possible withdrawal, suspension or limitation of GSP benefits for Bangladesh in response to the Federal Register notice of April 12.

Over a period beginning in 1990, the AFL-CIO has been petitioning for the workers in the export processing zones to have the right to organize and bargain collectively. In response to the GSP petitions and pressure over the past fourteen years, the Government of Bangladesh made specific promises and agreements for deadlines on changes labor law in the Export Processing Zones. These deadlines – in 1995, 1997, 2000 and 2004 – have been repeatedly missed by the Government of Bangladesh.

With regard to the last deadline of 2004, the Government of Bangladesh gazetted an official notice on January 31, 2001 that said that all workers in EPZs “will have their legal rights and related rights in the Zones and this will be effective from January 1, 2004.” On December 31, 2003, the Bangladeshi government filed another notice effectively canceling the official notice which requiring workers in the zones to have their legal rights as of January 1, 2004.

FOA

As of the date of this submission, the Bangladesh Government has not fulfilled its repeated promises to extending the rights to organize and collectively bargain to the Export processing zones of Bangladesh. Therefore, the AFL-CIO calls for duty-free treatment under GSP be withdrawn for all products from Bangladesh.

Bangladesh 2004
response to FR: select comments