

## 'Sweatshop' shame firms targeted

Fuelled by the West's insatiable desire for ever cheaper clothes, millions of textile workers are enduring "slave labour" conditions, according to Anita Roddick, the **entrepreneurial** founder of the Body Shop cosmetics chain. According to her, this situation cannot be allowed to continue and she is heading a push to "shame" multi-national companies, whose clothing is made in factories in Bangladesh, into demanding fair treatment for workers. She says that only pressure from Western **consumers** can bring change.

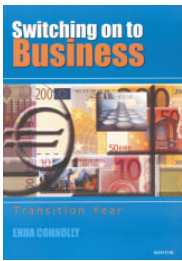


Anita said she was angered by the low pay, long hours and denial of basic rights for the estimated two million women making up the vast majority of workers in Bangladesh's textile industry. The entrepreneur is part of an international group, including US-based campaigners, the National Labor Committee, that is hoping to stir the conscience of the clothes-buying masses in the West.

"I don't know if it will work - one hopes it will - but the sweatshop economy is accepted by everyone", says Anita. "It's not an anti-corporate campaign, it's an attempt to put a human rights concerns into these **corporations**", she says. "We are launching a popular, grassroots **campaign** to shame the largest apparel companies in Europe and the US into signing a pledge that any worker sewing garments in Bangladesh will be guaranteed her maternity leave with pay. For the women and their infants this is literally a matter of life and death, since their below-subsistence wages mean they have no savings in reserve. The companies that are smart enough to sign up will be listed in our websites. Those who refuse will be even more prominently displayed." Once the firms are displayed on the websites, consumers will be able to make up their own minds whether to buy their goods.

Anita Roddick blames the Western corporations who use textile factories in the **developing world** for putting pressure on local owners, who in turn impose "slave labour" conditions on **staff** to keep **profits** up. "The factory owners say it's driving them crazy because every time a buyer comes from the West they want 'cheaper, cheaper, cheaper'," she said. Along with other campaigners, she hopes to win ethical treatment for workers one right at a time. "What amazes me is how we don't have a sense of moral outrage about this," she says. "We just don't look for the human face behind it. We are not educated in global studies even in high schools." She believes attitudes to workers' rights need to change worldwide, not just in Bangladesh but in newer markets like China too - and the change needs to come from the West.

1. Is it acceptable for businesses to locate a business in a location to avoid having to pay its employees fair wages?



# Switching on to Business

## EXTRA!

Chapter 9

## CHOOSING A SUITABLE LOCATION HANDOUT 1

# Suzuki locates factory in India

Japanese auto firm Suzuki has **located** a new diesel engine factory and a second car assembly plant in India.

The project, valued at about 10 billion yen (€91 million), is aimed at boosting Suzuki's share of India's fast-growing car market. The assembly plant is being run jointly with Maruti, a local Indian firm, as a **joint venture**.

Indian firm Maruti, set up to provide affordable cars for the Indian market, has been collaborating with Suzuki since the early 1980s. It has become India's dominant car maker, capturing a large chunk of the **market** with popular small vehicles. India's car market is tipped for rapid growth in the years ahead as rising incomes enable more people to upgrade from motorcycles and scooters.

Although known mainly for its motorcycles, Suzuki is now a major global producer of small cars.



1. Would you recommend that Suzuki open a factory in Ireland?
2. List the reasons that a firm may have for choosing a business location.