



September 30, 2010

Hun Sen
Prime Minister
Kingdom of Cambodia

Prime Minister,

I am writing on behalf of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (“AAFA”), the national association of the apparel and footwear industries. Our members produce and market apparel and footwear throughout the United States and the world. In short, our members make everywhere and sell everywhere, including Cambodia.

Our member companies are fully engaged in ensuring that the apparel and footwear we produce are manufactured under lawful, humane and ethical conditions. Our association’s mission statement, developed in 2001, reinforces this strong commitment by stating that AAFA should focus on “Ensuring that individuals employed in the sewn products industries are afforded opportunities, and are treated with fairness and respect.”

Through the Better Factories Cambodia program and the strong continuing commitment of you and your government, the garment industry in Cambodia has truly become the embodiment of these values.

We fear, however, that recent events in Cambodia could jeopardize your country’s reputation as the model for social responsibility.

We applaud the Government of Cambodia’s recent efforts to mediate an end to the general strike that occurred earlier this month.

However, I write to express our concern about recent events that took place after the strike, particularly with regards to repeated news reports of dozens of strike leaders being barred from returning to their factories. Further, we have heard numerous reports that entire workforces in some factories were temporarily barred from returning to work. This response to a lawful and peaceful strike, and to the legal resolution of that strike by your government, has caused serious apprehension among our members, many of whom are major buyers and producers of garments from Cambodia.

We hope the government will respect the rule of law and follow a peaceful approach in attempting to resolve the issues raised by the strike. Specifically, we urge the government to constructively engage all stakeholders – workers, producers and buyers – in order to resolve the garment wage issues that sparked the strike as soon as possible. We are seeking your leadership in establishing the appropriate, peaceful and respectful dialogue among all stakeholders to make this resolution a reality.

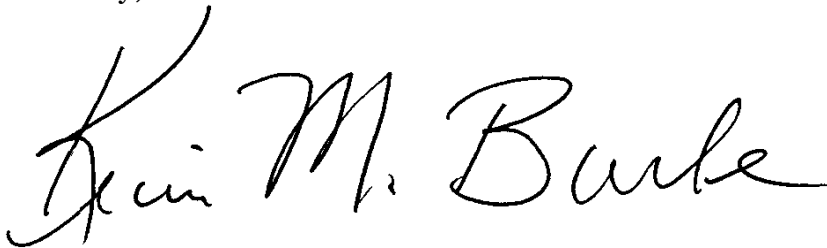
Further, we urge you to work with the employers to immediately remove their suspensions of the strike leaders and ensure that all the factories comply with the return-to-work order issued by the Minister of Social Affairs. A resolution of these particular issues would play an important role in meeting our goal of “Ensuring that individuals employed in the sewn products industries are afforded opportunities, and are treated with fairness and respect.” Applying the rule of law to and guaranteeing the freedom of association based on an individual’s decision without undue pressure is critical for all.

We urge the government to be transparent and open as it works to resolve these issues as well as the overall wage dispute.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. We look forward to continuing our long-term and mutually beneficial relationship with Cambodia.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please contact me at 703-797-9037 or kburke@apparelandfootwear.org if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Burke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin M. Burke
President & CEO

CC:

- Mr. Van Souieng, President, Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC)
- Mr. Ken Loo, General Secretary, Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC)
- Tuomo Poutiainen, Director, Better Factories Cambodia