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## FLA Applauds BJ&B Settlement Shows Importance of Collective Bargaining Process, says FLA President

**Washington, DC** -- The FLA today applauded the agreement reached earlier this week by the union and management at the BJ&B factory in the Dominican Republic that results in additional severance payment for workers, now totaling three months.

"The agreement reached today, which flows from extraordinary efforts on the part of many stakeholders, is an important marker in the continuing efforts to ensure the rights of workers," said Auret van Heerden, FLA President. "Complying with the legal requirements is essential, but without good industrial relations practices even a generous settlement may not be accepted by all parties. The fact that the parties returned to the table and agreed upon better terms reaffirms the strength of the collective bargaining process and the importance of the industrial relations process, both in the employment relationship and when companies downsize or close their facilities."

Since the owners of the BJ&B facility announced in February their intention to close the factory, the FLA has been engaged in efforts to achieve a just resolution for workers. These actions included working closely with FLA-affiliated companies who contracted with the BJ&B facility to promote dialogue between workers and management.

Earlier this month, the FLA participated in a meeting convened by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. That meeting included the factory's owners, unions, brands and the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC). Following the meeting, the FLA released a joint statement with the WRC that included a series of recommendations concerning severance for the workers.

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One of the recommendations was that BJ&B enter into a dialogue with the BJ&B union and its parent federation to reexamine the overall severance package for workers. Both organizations indicated that they believed that collective bargaining was the appropriate framework for conducting such dialogue.

Noting the constructive role played by FLA affiliated companies, affiliated universities, and the FLA itself, FLA President van Heerden commented that “the process, though complex, ultimately reaffirms the strength of multi-stakeholder engagement in protecting the rights of workers.”

The Fair Labor Association (FLA) is a nonprofit organization committed to ending sweatshop conditions in factories and building innovative and sustainable solutions to labor rights violations. The FLA marshals the power and commitment of socially concerned companies, colleges and universities, civil society and human and labor rights groups in its mission to protect workers’ rights and improve working conditions in factories worldwide by promoting adherence to international labor standards.

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Note to Editors: The documents issued by BJ&B and FEDEROTRAZONAS related to the agreement, and the agreement itself are available in both English and Spanish on the FLA web site, [www.Fairlabor.org](http://www.Fairlabor.org).