



For Immediate Release

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FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION ISSUES SECOND PUBLIC REPORT
-- More Independent, Rigorous and Comprehensive--
-- Expands Reporting from 6 to 25 Global Companies --

Washington, D.C. (August 19) – The Fair Labor Association issued its Second Annual Public Report today, providing the public with an impartial, in-depth view into what 25 diverse companies did in the past year to improve working conditions in the factories where they produce apparel and footwear around the world. The new report includes updated progress reports on company labor compliance programs, FLA's evaluation of the first labor compliance program to be accredited and an overview of FLA's findings from its unannounced independent external monitoring visits to company supplier factories. It also features an in-depth report on the challenging issue of freedom of association, and case studies of third-party complaints received by the FLA during 2003.

“The Fair Labor Association is making good on what it promised following its groundbreaking first report,” said Aurret van Heerden, FLA President and Chief Executive Officer. “FLA’s Second Annual Public Report draws upon more rigorous and comprehensive monitoring and verification, more independent monitoring, more company reports, and special features. Although there is still much more work to be done, we are pleased and proud of the increased level of company participation, accountability, and transparency -- and improved conditions for factory workers.”

During FLA's second year of monitoring (January-December 2003), FLA-accredited monitors conducted 110 independent monitoring visits in 20 countries. During the visits, the monitors evaluated factory compliance with the FLA Workplace Code of Conduct and applicable national and local laws. FLA’s Public Report complements the FLA tracking charts, very detailed reports that summarize and follow-up on the FLA monitoring visits to company supplier factories.

"The FLA continues to lead the way in developing a transparent, credible monitoring process," said Michael Posner, FLA Board Member and Executive Director of Human Rights First (formerly Lawyers Committee for Human Rights). "The FLA's reports are the most comprehensive public records of both continuing problems in supplier factories and companys' efforts to remedy those problems."

Reports are included for 10 FLA Participating Companies: adidas-Salomon, Eddie Bauer, GEAR for Sports, Liz Claiborne, Reebok, Nordstrom, Nike, Patagonia, Phillips-Van Heusen and Zephyr-Graf-X. There are also reports on 15 university licensees. As of the end of Year Two, only Reebok footwear's compliance program was eligible for FLA accreditation since it chose a two-year and not three-year implementation period. An evaluative report on Reebok footwear's labor compliance program is included in the report.

“By reviewing FLA’s reports of unannounced independent audits of company suppliers, and reading FLA’s overview of company labor compliance programs, a concerned consumer or shareholder can gain valuable perspective into a company’s approach to improving factory conditions,” noted Linda F. Golodner, FLA Board Member and President, National Consumers League.

Robert Durkee, FLA Board Member and Princeton University’s Vice President and Secretary, noted the inclusion this year of university licensees. “The licensees included in this report are major suppliers of college and university merchandise. The report allows colleges, universities, students and faculty to learn more about what these companies are doing to improve factory working conditions and the lives of workers.”

Elizabeth Borrelli, FLA Board Member and Director of Public Affairs and Corporate Social Responsibility at Eddie Bauer, said, “While we don’t own or manage any factory producing our products, Eddie Bauer commits to exercising its influence with suppliers to protect the rights of factory workers. In addition to educating consumers, shareholders and stakeholders, it is our hope that FLA’s Second Annual Public Report will also serve as a resource for other companies beginning labor compliance programs or seeking to learn good practices in workplace human rights.”

The Fair Labor Association, formed in 1999, is a non-profit organization that combines the efforts of industry, non-governmental organizations, colleges and universities to promote adherence to international labor standards and improve working conditions worldwide. FLA’s Workplace Code of Conduct is based on the core labor standards of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

“While the FLA must continue to make improvements in monitoring and in public reporting, we believe that our efforts to push the boundaries in this field will ultimately contribute to more rigorous systems for corporate accountability and improved conditions for workers around the world.” said van Heerden. “We look forward to continuing to explore ways to improve workplace conditions and to communicate company activities to the public.”

To review the FLA’s Second Annual Public Report, visit www.fairlabor.org/2004report.

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