FLA Board Adopts Resolution on Closure of Jerzees de Honduras
Additional Remedial Actions Recommended to Russell

Washington, D.C. – At its February 12, 2009 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Fair Labor Association (FLA) issued a resolution with nine recommendations to Russell Corporation to address concerns about a pattern of associational rights violations alleged to have taken place in its Jerzees de Honduras (JDH) plant. Russell Corporation is an affiliate of the FLA and holds licensing relationships with FLA-affiliated colleges and universities.

Allegations that freedom of association was being violated at Jerzees de Honduras surfaced following Russell’s announcement on October 8, 2008 that it would close the factory in early 2009. Freedom of association recognizes and respects workers’ rights to organize and collectively bargain. The FLA launched three independent investigations to study the closure and recently released the reports, as well as its own conclusion and recommendations.

“The reports commissioned by the FLA support a finding that Russell’s decision to close JDH was principally a business decision determined by economic factors,” states the resolution. “But the Board is acutely aware of the serious allegations of violations of the freedom of association guarantees contained in the FLA Code of Conduct by managers of the JDH factory, including allegations of threats to and intimidation of union workers and leaders in the factory.”

As an FLA affiliate, Russell Corporation has made a commitment to enforce the FLA Workplace Code of Conduct in their supplier facilities. The Board determined that Russell should do more to address JDH “management mistakes that led to a failure to adhere to the FLA standards on freedom of association” and issued a resolution that includes nine remedial steps that the apparel company should take to protect workers’ associational rights throughout their supply chain. These steps go beyond the recommendations already presented in the FLA report of January 28, 2009, which can be found on the FLA website under News Releases and Statements.

The resolution adopted by the Board considers the findings of the three recently released reports. The Board also heard from senior-level representatives of the Russell Corporation and consulted with a wide range of constituents, including members of the university community, non-governmental organizations, and other FLA-affiliated companies, before issuing its recommendations.
The Board presented the resolution and recommendations to Russell Corporation at the board meeting, and Russell has agreed to these steps. They have further agreed to engage other stakeholders such as the Honduras-based union for JDH, the Workers Rights Consortium (WRC), and others as they develop and implement their action plan for improving respect for freedom of association throughout their supply chain and mitigating the negative impact that the closure of JDH may have on the workers and union organizing in Honduras.

To view the complete FLA Board Resolution on the Russell Corporation’s Closure of Jerzees de Honduras and the FLA reports, visit the FLA website News Releases and Statements.

About the Fair Labor Association
The Fair Labor Association (FLA) is a collaborative effort to improve working conditions in factories around the world. By working cooperatively with forward-looking companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and colleges and universities, the FLA developed a workplace code of conduct based on ILO standards, and created a practical system of monitoring, remediation and verification to achieve these standards. For more information on the FLA, please visit our website at www.fairlabor.org.

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