

Fair Labor Association Names Sharon Waxman President/CEO

Sharon Waxman, a lifelong advocate for human rights who has held leadership positions on Capitol Hill, at the U.S. State Department, and at the International Rescue Committee, has been named President and CEO of the Fair Labor Association (FLA), effective December 1. She was elected by the organization's 19-member Board of Directors, which includes six representatives each representing civil society, universities and industry, and an independent chair.

As Vice President for Public Policy and Advocacy at the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Waxman directed the IRC Washington office and led global policy and advocacy teams based in Africa, the Middle East, Brussels, Geneva, London, New York and Washington. Previously, as Deputy to the Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, she worked extensively on labor rights issues in overseeing the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

As Senior National Security Advisor to U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), she worked on a broad range of human rights issues and served as a chief negotiator for his work as Judiciary Refugee subcommittee chair. As Associate Staff to the Senate Appropriations Committee she developed strategies to support programs related to health, education, democracy and children and guided an initiative to provide assistance to the Solidarity movement in Poland.

Waxman has served on the Board of the US Global Leadership Coalition, which includes members of the business, development, humanitarian and defense communities and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She received her Masters of International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and her B.A. in Middle East Studies and International Development from the University of California, Berkeley.

Board Chair Kitty Higgins, a former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Labor, said, "I am delighted that Sharon Waxman has agreed to serve as President of the FLA. Throughout her career she has used her extensive management and leadership skills to build diverse coalitions and develop consensus to achieve important objectives. She has earned the confidence, respect and affection of her bosses, her peers, and those who have worked for her. She has demonstrated a deep commitment to meeting human needs and promoting fair treatment of all people. We look forward to working with her to build on the many strengths of the FLA and enhance even further its positive impact on the lives of workers around the world."

Waxman said, "I am deeply committed to the values that underlie the FLA's mission and I look forward to working with the FLA's industry, civil society, and university affiliates to promote workers' rights and improve conditions for workers around the world. Much of my professional life has been spent building and sustaining coalitions to achieve shared policy goals, and undertaking challenges that require both a deep commitment to basic principles and a constant search for the allies and partners necessary to achieve those goals."

Michael Posner, a founder of the FLA and a board member from 1999 through 2009, said, "Sharon is the perfect leader for the FLA at this important moment in the organization's history. She combines political savvy, management experience, and a distinguished record of serving the interests of working people around the world." The founding executive director and later president of Human Rights First, Posner served as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor from 2009 to 2013 and is currently co-director of the Center of Business and Human Rights at NYU Stern School of Business.

The FLA (www.fairlabor.org) is a 15-year old organization with the mission to combine the efforts of business, civil society organizations, and colleges and universities to promote and protect workers' rights and improve working conditions globally through adherence to international standards. FLA conducts independent monitoring and verification to ensure that the FLA's workplace standards are upheld wherever FLA affiliates source their products. The FLA works to identify root causes of non-compliance with its code of conduct, and to develop improved methodologies for sustainable compliance. While initially focused on apparel and footwear factories, it has recently added major programs in agriculture and electronics. The FLA is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with other offices and staff around the world.