



April 22, 2020

The undersigned organizations, representing the full spectrum of the textile, apparel, footwear, travel goods, and fashion industry across the globe, are coming together in these unprecedented times to make a joint appeal to our governments, our stakeholders, and our supply chain partners.

The COVID-19 Pandemic is a major health crisis that requires the united and undivided efforts of billions of people - including first responders, health professionals, policy makers, essential service providers, and citizens. Many in our industry have been playing their part by suspending/limiting operations to keep their workers and consumers safe consistent with global health guidelines AND empowering or repurposing facilities, factories, and supply chains to produce and distribute items of personal protective equipment and other urgently needed medical materials.

Working with our friends, families, and our communities, together we can AND will stop this deadly Pandemic.

But this health crisis has also triggered a potentially deadly economic crisis. As businesses have closed, revenues and cash flow have dried up. The resulting liquidity squeeze has adversely hit many companies, their workers, and multiple layers of suppliers all around the world. Contracts are being cancelled, workers are being furloughed, and factories and businesses are being closed. With each passing day, this damage is compounding and harming more and more stakeholders. We need to coordinate and accelerate our efforts to limit and mitigate this damage, and make sure it is not irrevocable. As we continue to dedicate our efforts to fight this Pandemic, we must also come together to fight the economic crisis that has also been created.

It is with this in mind that we issue this general appeal and set of principles.

- Governments, with the support of international financial institutions, must enact temporary stimulus measures to ensure liquidity.
  - These measures must be as flexible as possible so that employers across the supply chain can gain access to relief as quickly as possible.
  - These measures should benefit both employers and their workers.
  - Although temporary, these measures should be easily extendable, and quickly extended, should the crisis prove more durable than may be currently expected.
- Governments should undertake temporary duty deferral and tariff relief to support liquidity and cash flow, and keep workers employed.
  - At a minimum, governments should immediately defer collections of duties for a period of 180 days.
  - Where appropriate, such as in the case of items of personal protective equipment or items used by lower income consumers, government should also suspend duties.
- Governments should refrain from imposing new trade restrictions and should not impede production or delivery of PPE, its intermediate products, and raw materials.

We welcome the G-20 [statement](#) that speaks to many of these items, but it is now up to individual governments – and others who are not part of the G-20 – to implement and follow through on these commitments. Words mean a lot, but the actions will determine how fast and how well we can emerge from this crisis.

In that vein, supply chain partners need to do their part too. Individual companies should take action that minimize disruptions, facilitate payment for work that has been undertaken, and ensure workers continue to be treated with full respect while ensuring their health and safety. Companies need to continue working, alone and with their supply chain partners, to ensure that supply chains are best positioned to weather this crisis.

These actions in the next 90 days will not only help dictate how fast we can recover, but also will say a lot about who we are as an industry and as a people. Our industry literally touches everybody on the planet, and we have an on-going commitment – to our workers and consumers – to ensure that the industry that emerges from this crisis is responsible, sustainable, viable, and healthy.

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**The American Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia**

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