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AAFA Comments on Situation in Haiti, Mobilizes Apparel Foundation

Arlington, VA – American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) President and CEO Kevin M. Burke today released the following statement regarding the recent earthquake disaster in Haiti.

“Our hearts go out to those who have been directly affected by this tragedy. As with any disaster or emergency, we are closely monitoring this situation and are offering assistance to any AAFA members affected.

“With news of this earthquake, AAFA immediately began reaching out to members who are active in Haiti and has maintained communication with them throughout the day. At this time, our members are focusing on the safety of their workers and supporting rescue and relief operations to help the people of Haiti.

“Members have called upon AAFA to serve as a conduit to provide immediate relief and help members obtain important information from government and industry stakeholders. Although we are beginning to get a clearer picture of the impact this earthquake has had on the region, it could be some time before we are able to make full assessment about the status of Haiti’s important apparel industry, which will be vital to rebuilding Haiti after this devastating event.

“The AAFA Apparel Foundation, AAFA’s charitable arm, began coordinating with disaster relief organizations early this morning to offer assistance. In the coming days, the AAFA Apparel Foundation may be calling on members to donate clothing, footwear, and other resources to those in need.”

Background

Haiti and the Apparel Industry

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The apparel industry is the single largest sector of the Haitian economy. Haiti is the seventeenth largest supplier of apparel to the United States. For the first ten months of 2009, Haiti exported more than \$424 million worth of apparel to the United States, up 22% from the same period in 2008. AAFA has been a strong advocate of bringing economic opportunity to Haiti by supporting Congressional approval of the *Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Engagement Acts of 2006* (HOPE Act) and *2008* (HOPE II).

The AAFA Apparel Foundation

The AAFA Apparel Foundation, the charitable arm of the AAFA, works with various organizations to facilitate their solicitation, collection and distribution of apparel, footwear and other necessities to victims of disasters anywhere in the world. The Apparel Foundation was incorporated in 1988. If you are interested in learning more about the AAFA Apparel Foundation or contributing to relief efforts, please contact [Marti Rust](#) at (703) 797-9037.

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The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. AAFA's mission is to promote and enhance its members' competitiveness, productivity and profitability in the global market by minimizing regulatory, commercial, political, and trade restraints.