



For Immediate Release
Tuesday, February 2, 2010

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AAFA Statement on Senate Introduction of Haiti Reconstruction Legislation

Arlington, VA – American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) President and CEO Kevin M. Burke today released the following statement after the introduction of the *Renewing Hope for Haiti Act* by Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) in the U.S. Senate.

“I applaud Senators Wyden and Nelson for working quickly to introduce legislation aimed at providing support for the long-term needs of the Haitian people.

“As one of Haiti’s leading exports, apparel will be critical in the recovery process. By proposing to extend certain provisions of the *Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act* (CBTPA) and the *Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Act* (HOPE), this legislation is a solid first step toward rebuilding certainty and stability for Haiti’s apparel and footwear industry.

“While I hope Congress moves quickly to pass this legislation, more work remains to be done to ensure long-term recovery in Haiti. The U.S. apparel and footwear industry, through the newly established Haiti-AAFA Recovery and Reconstruction Team (HARRT), will continue working with companies active in Haiti and U.S. government officials to make sure needs are addressed in a timely and responsible manner.”

Background

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, *Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act* (CBTPA) and the *Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Engagement Acts of 2006* (HOPE Act) and 2008 (HOPE II).

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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.