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Apparel Companies Reveal Best Practices in Purchasing
Brands speak to improving factory conditions and saving money

SAN FRANCISCO-- In a new report, Gap Inc., Timberland, Nike, Levi Strauss & Co., Nordstrom, Jones Apparel, and Phillips-Van Heusen share examples of how changing their purchasing practices resulted in improved working conditions and cost reductions.

Amy Galland, author of *Best Current Practices in Purchasing: The Apparel Industry* and Research Director at As You Sow, states “after years of turning to suppliers to reduce factory compliance violations, brands are now looking inward to learn how their corporate practices have a negative impact on suppliers.”

The report provides specific company examples in five areas - corporate culture, designing and buying, forecasting, production management, and pricing – showing how decisions made at headquarters ripple through the entire supply chain. For example, one company reported that it reduced its air-shipping charges 80% due to improved purchasing practices.

“Brands have historically made last-minute changes that forced factories to use excessive overtime and pay insufficient wages. By installing procedures that reduce these changes, companies have improved factory working conditions and increased speed to market,” said Patricia Jurewicz, Director of As You Sow’s Responsible Sourcing Network.

“Nike understands that in order to make systemic, long-lasting, positive changes for contract factories and workers, we need to emphasize our internal decision-making processes in collaboration with the factories. The work we’ve been doing for the past few years is definitely starting to show rewarding results,” said Hannah Jones, Nike VP Sustainable Business and Innovation.

Rev. David M. Schilling, Director of the Human Rights Program at the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), commented, “The report is an excellent resource for companies who want to improve their purchasing practices, as well as for faith-based investors who have been working to improve factory conditions for over two decades.”

The report will be presented in a webinar on Tuesday, July 20 at 9am PDT (12pm EDT) by As You Sow with representatives from Gap Inc., Timberland, and ICCR. Register for

the webinar at <http://bit.ly/PPWebinar>. View an embargoed copy of the report at <http://www.bit.ly/pprpt>.

As You Sow is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1992, dedicated to increasing corporate environmental and social responsibility. Its Corporate Social Responsibility Program is one of the nation's leading proponents of shareholder engagements providing research and advocacy to catalyze positive change within publicly held companies. (www.asyousow.org)

The **Responsible Sourcing Network** is a new project of As You Sow fostering global value chains that are accountable to the people and natural habitats they touch, down to the raw commodity level. (www.sourcingnetwork.org)

The **Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)** is a membership association of 275 faith-based institutional investors, including national denominations, religious communities, pension funds, foundations, hospital corporations, asset management companies, colleges, and unions. ICCR builds a more just and sustainable world by integrating social values into corporate and investor actions. (www.iccr.org)