



For Immediate Release

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GLOBAL APPAREL COMPANY JOINS ALLIANCE TO IMPROVE LIVES OF FACTORY WORKERS IN SUPPLY CHAINS

Baltimore, Maryland, USA, 24 April 2003 – Inditex, S.A. -- a leading apparel company in Europe -- has joined the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities (GA) to support worker and community development and workplace improvements in the Asia Pacific region. As one of the world's largest fashion groups, Inditex, S.A. sources from over 2,000 factories in Europe, Asia and Latin America that are involved in textile design, production and distribution. This new partnership will greatly expand the reach and capacity of the GA, which is now operating in China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

“To have deeper impact on workers’ lives, it is critical to go directly into the factories themselves,” said Jose María Castellano, Deputy Chairman and CEO, of Inditex, S.A. “The Global Alliance’s approach goes beyond monitoring in factories to listening directly to workers and managers, and then delivering sustainable programs that make a real difference in the workplace and in people’s daily lives. For a global company such as Inditex, this multi-stakeholder approach that engages companies, factory owners, NGOs, and workers themselves makes good business sense.”

The GA, a partnership of non-profit, public and corporate organizations, is an initiative of the Baltimore-based International Youth Foundation. Established in 1999 -- with partners that include Nike, Gap, Inc., and the World Bank – the GA’s mission is to improve the lives and future prospects of workers involved in global production and service supply chains, the majority of whom are women. The GA also seeks to promote collaboration among the private, nonprofit and public sectors in support of these efforts.

GA’s partnership with Inditex, S.A. will help develop and pilot new worker development programs and services, as well as support workers and managers in the Inditex supply chain in the Asia Pacific region.

This will be accomplished through:

- Needs assessments to determine the priority needs and aspirations of workers and their communities as well as workplace issues
- Workplace capacity building activities consisting of supervisory skills training to line supervisors and mid- and senior managers together with training for workers in life skills for a cooperative workplace
- Worker development programs, primarily in the areas of basic health or reproductive health and personal finances or other priorities that surface in the needs assessment

For Carol Michaels O’Laughlin, Executive Director of the GA, this new partnership is a logical extension of the on-going work of the Alliance. “We commend Inditex for joining the Alliance,” she said. “They recognize the importance of GA in improving the conditions within the workplace, enhancing workers skills and opportunities, and contributing to local development schemes. Inditex is clearly a leader in strategic corporate responsibility.”

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Inditex, S.A., with headquarters in Arteixo, Spain, is a leading apparel company in Europe. Inditex, S.A. sources from over 2000 factories in Europe, Asia and Latin America who are involved in textile design, production and distribution. Its unique management methods, based on innovation and flexibility, and its successes, have turned Inditex into one of the world’s largest fashion groups. Inditex, S.A. currently operates 1,564 stores in 44 countries and has over 30,000 employees. Its fashion retail chains include Zara, Pull & Bear, Massimo Dutti, Bershka, Stradivarius and Oysho.

The Global Alliance for Workers and Communities was launched in April 1999 to improve the workplace experiences and life opportunities for workers in developing countries. A public/private partnership of foundations, global companies and international institutions, the Global Alliance aims to improve the lives of workers in the global production and service supply chains. Members of the Global Alliance include Nike, Gap, Inc., the World Bank and now Inditex. The Alliance also collaborates with Pennsylvania State University and St. John’s University. To learn more about the GA, visit www.theglobalalliance.org

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) is dedicated to supporting programs that improve the conditions and prospects for young people where they live, learn, work and play. Since its founding in 1990, IYF has worked with hundreds of companies, foundations, and nongovernmental organizations to scale up existing programs and build long-term strategic partnerships. Currently operating in nearly 50 countries and territories, IYF and its partners have helped more than 26 million young people gain the skills, training, and opportunities critical to their success. To learn more about IYF, please visit www.iyfnet.org.