

Glenn J. Chamandy
President & Chief Executive Officer
Gildan Activewear, Inc.
600 de Maisonneuve West, 33rd floor
Montréal (Québec)
H3A 3J2 Canada

October 21, 2011

Dear Mr. Chamandy:

We write to express our grave concern about reports of serious violations of internationally recognized labor rights at a factory in Haiti, Genesis S.A., which produces largely or exclusively for Gildan. We have received reports that the leaders of a newly formed industry-wide labor union in Haiti's apparel sector have been subjected to retaliatory dismissals at several factories, including Genesis. As members of the Haitian and International human rights communities, we compel you to take swift action to ensure that your contractor remedies any labor rights violations that have been committed.

This new union, *Sendika Ouvriye Takstil ak Abiman* (SOTA), received its registration from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST) on September 16, 2011. According to the union federation of which SOTA is a part, and according to labor rights and human rights organizations in the United States and Canada, six of the seven workers who serve on the union's executive committee were fired or forced to resign shortly thereafter by the factories where they worked. Genesis was the first factory to terminate members of SOTA's leadership: one worker was forced to resign on September 23, and three workers were dismissed on September 26. The fact that nearly all of the union's executive committee members were fired within weeks of their emergence as union leaders, as well as the specific circumstances of the dismissals, strongly suggest that these firings were direct results of these workers' decision to exercise their rights to freedom of association and freedom of speech. While Genesis has claimed that these workers were fired as part of a small business-related layoff, unrelated to their union status, this explanation defies both probability and logic. This would mean that 100% of the union leadership was laid off purely coincidentally, while less than 6% of the workers overall were terminated.

As we know you are aware, dismissing workers in retaliation for lawful union activities is prohibited under internationally recognized labor standards, under Haitian law, and under your company's own code of conduct. If these reports are correct, Gildan is obligated to act without delay to use its influence to bring about the reinstatement of the dismissed workers and to ensure that no further violations of workers' rights are committed at Genesis.

We are particularly troubled that these apparent violations have taken place in Haiti, a country whose people have suffered enormously in the wake of the 2010 earthquake and whose economic development is an urgent priority for the United States government. Job creation has been touted as one of the most important priorities to spur economic and sustainable development in Haiti. But these jobs cannot come at the expense of the basic human rights of Haitians. International private and public investors must support workers rights to representation and collective bargaining as outlined in the ILO Convention on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining (C 98).

As a corporation operating in the United States and Canada, we know you are aware of the importance to many North Americans of Haiti's recovery and the well-being of the Haitian people. Multinational corporations operating in Haiti, and benefiting from the labor of the Haitian people, have a special obligation to demonstrate respect for the rights and the aspirations of the workers who make their products and to ensure that their local business partners do the same.

Exercising their right to advocate for fair wages and safe and decent conditions of work is an important means by which the people of Haiti can improve their economic circumstances, overcome the poverty that has long plagued the nation, and secure a viable future. When workers pursue such efforts, employers must respond with respect and good faith engagement, not with attempts to crush the workers' movement and their hopes for a better life. As organizations based both in Haiti and the United States, we believe Haiti's future success will be based on local experts being leaders of their own destinies.

We urge you to take all necessary action to ensure that any harm done to the workers in Haiti who produce your apparel is fully remedied in a manner satisfactory to workers and their representatives, and that their rights of association are respected going forward. We also ask that you promptly provide us with a specific and detailed account of your response to these reports of violations of workers' rights.

Sincerely,

Beyond Borders

Bri Kouri Nouvel Gaye

Bureau des Avocats Internationaux

Environmental Justice Initiative for Haiti

Epple Seed Arts

Haiti Support Group

Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti

International Action Ties

International Labor Rights Forum

Let Haiti Live

National Lawyers Guild International Committee

Other Worlds

Quixote Center/Haiti Reborn

SweatFree Communities, ILRF

TransAfrica

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

UnityAyiti

U.S. Labor Education in the Americas Project (USLEAP)

Teresa Cheng, International Campaigns Coordinator, United Students Against Sweatshops

Bill Quigley, Loyola University College of Law, New Orleans, LA

Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research

cc:

Laurence Sellyn, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, Gildan

Peter Iliopoulos, Vice President, Public and Governmental Affairs and Taxation, Gildan

Kenneth H. Merten, U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti

President William J. Clinton, Co-Chair, Interim Haiti Recovery Commission

Cheryl Mills, Counselor and Chief of Staff to the Secretary of State and U.S. Representative to the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission

Sandra Polaski, Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs, Department of Labor