

December 18, 2023

His Excellency Hun Manet
Prime Minister
Kingdom of Cambodia

Subject: Urging Action on Cambodia Brick Kiln Industry

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the members of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), I am writing to express great concern regarding reports by some civil society and media that textile waste is being illegally used to partially fuel brick kilns in Cambodia. These reports allege that child labor, bonded labor, adverse health conditions, and environmental degradation are prevalent in Cambodia's brick kiln industry.

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. Representing more than 1,000 world famous name brands, AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its more than 3.2 million U.S. workers, and its contribution of more than \$490 billion in annual U.S. retail sales.

Our members value the strong, and growing, relationship with your country, which has risen to become the #3 supplier of travel goods, the #4 supplier of footwear, and the #6 supplier of garments to the U.S. market.

Our industry stands united against child labor, bonded labor, adverse health conditions, and environmental degradation. Just as important, our industry does not condone the practices described in these reports. Through our collective policies and practices, we work to prevent the illegal use of our branded products, or the waste generated from the production of our products, from being used in this manner. We continue to engage our suppliers to better manage their textile waste.

Meanwhile, we call upon the Government of Cambodia to:

- Re-double efforts to inspect brick kilns and ensure compliance with Cambodia's labor/environmental laws;
- Evaluate waste disposal pathways and ensure compliance with all applicable waste disposal rules and regulations;
- Support initiatives to improve/expand Cambodia's waste disposal system;
- Secure the release of bonded laborers in the brick kiln industry from their debt;
- Make efforts to transfer any child laborers in the brick kiln industry to appropriate schooling;
- Support brick kilns in addressing occupational safety and health as well as environmental impacts; and
- Engage, as needed, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and other international institutions to support the transition to more responsible practices.

We remain supporters of a responsible, and growing, garment, footwear, and travel goods industry in Cambodia. We welcome updates on your progress.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please contact Nate Herman of my staff at nherman@aafaglobal.org or +1.301.775.7633 if you have any questions or concerns about our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Lamar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephen Lamar
President and CEO
American Apparel & Footwear Association