

Investor Coalition Calls on Companies to Adopt Vigorous Policies to Protect Against Human Trafficking Violations in Supply Chains

Formal Human Rights Policies Incorporating Increased Vigilance and Training Viewed as Essential to Guard Against Material and Reputational Risk.

New York, NY, May 18, 2011 - Today a coalition of institutional investors from the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) are sending a statement to 25 target companies asking them to make eradicating human trafficking and modern day slavery in their supply chains a top priority.

According to the UN Palermo Protocol of 2000, *human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring and/or receipt of a person for the exploitative purposes of prostitution, forced labor, slavery or servitude.*

It is estimated that every year over 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders for the purpose of enforced labor while millions more are enslaved within their own countries. As traffickers target economically vulnerable populations, women and children are especially susceptible to this crime.

Sr Kathleen Coll, Administrator of Shareholder Advocacy for Catholic Health East said, ***“As people of faith we are focusing on human trafficking in the supply chain as a matter of social justice. But as investors, we evaluate the companies in our portfolio in terms of their ability to adequately assess and manage risk.”***

Citing recent legislation mandating increased supply chain disclosure (the California Transparency in Supply Chain Act) and the Conflict Minerals Special Disclosure Provision of the Dodd-Frank Financial Reform Act, the statement requests that companies voluntarily develop human rights programs that will preemptively address what they will inevitably be required to do by law.

Lauren Compere of Boston Common Asset Management said, “We view comprehensive supply chain assessments as essential measures of sound governance to protect the brand and, consequently, our investments. When companies move proactively to put adequate safeguards against human rights risks in place, investors and consumers are reassured that management will be prepared to respond, should the occasion arise.”

The statement will be sent to high profile companies across the Apparel, Agriculture, Food and Beverage, Travel and Tourism, Technology and Retail sectors. A series of recommended steps are outlined in the statement including specialized training programs for employees, vendors and contractors and explicit clauses in contracts with all suppliers and host governments in the supply chain to *ensure conduct consistent with human rights standards*. Beyond individual company action, investors also call on companies to partner with other industry leaders and non-governmental organizations in multi-stakeholder initiatives and public-private partnerships that are actively confronting this issue.

Laura Berry, Executive Director of ICCR said, ***“ICCR has been advocating for formal company human rights policies for nearly 20 years. Our supply chain work began in the 1980s with sweatshop labor in the apparel industry. Since then we’ve focused of forced child labor in cocoa, cotton, coffee and tobacco farming, and slavery in Brazil in the production of pig iron.”***

Rev David Schilling, Program Director Human Rights and Resources, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility said, ***“It’s next to impossible to completely eradicate the exposure to human rights violations from multi-linked supply chains but the best companies understand that it’s better to confront this issue head-on. They actively look for and report on these violations everyday and have strong remediation policies in place to address them...and that’s what sets them apart from their competitors.”***

Contact:

Lauren Compere, Director of Shareholder Engagement, Boston Common Asset Management

(617) 960-3912 (Direct) or lcompere@bostoncommonasset.com

About the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (www.iccr.org):

Currently celebrating its 40th year, ICCR is the pioneer coalition of active shareholders who view the management of their investments as a catalyst for change. Its 300 member organizations with over \$100 billion in AUM have an enduring record of corporate engagement that has demonstrated influence on policies promoting justice and sustainability in the world.

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