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**APPAREL AND FOOTWEAR COMPANIES
HOST CHEMICAL SAFETY SEMINAR**

Leading brands in the apparel and footwear industry held their fourth seminar as a group for suppliers on Restricted Substances Lists (RSL) today at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Hong Kong. The mission of the Apparel and Footwear International RSL Management (AFIRM) Group is to reduce the use and impact of harmful substances in the apparel and footwear supply chain. The Phylmar Group serves as AFIRM's facilitator. We appreciate the co-sponsors of the Seminar: Bureau Veritas, DyStar, Intertek, MTS, Rudolf Group, SGS, SMQ, and Zydex Industries.

In 2004, a group of companies began working to bring together product chemistry, safety, regulatory and other experts within the apparel and footwear industry striving to share best practices in RSL management, information and experiences. These companies formed the Apparel and Footwear International RSL Management (AFIRM) Working Group; current membership includes adidas-Group, C&A, Gap Inc., H&M, Hugo Boss, Levi Strauss & Co., New Balance, Nike, PUMA, s.Oliver, Tesco, and Timberland. Their vision is to be a recognized global center of excellence, providing resources for sustainable, self-governing RSL implementation across the apparel and footwear supply chain. This will result in the supply chain having knowledge about RSL and chemical safety, assuring that consumers and workers are safer from the impact of harmful substances, and the environment is cleaner. This will improve customer confidence. The guiding principles of AFIRM are as follows:

- Chemical product safety must be understood in the global supply chain as an integrated whole, from workplace to consumer.
- Chemical product safety can only be achieved through partnership among retailers, suppliers and manufacturers.
- Retailers must encourage suppliers' and manufacturers' self-governance of chemical product safety within their spheres.

Each of the companies has developed its own guidelines for managing chemicals in textile supply chains, and some continue to provide training to their own suppliers. The seminar today is the fourth time AFIRM as a group has provided such information to suppliers. While there is no RSL common to all companies, the training covered an explanation of RSL, the importance to consumers, recent legal requirements, common causes of failures and non-compliance, recommendations for implementing the RSL, testing, case studies, and company water, energy and waste sustainability activities.

Attendance was by invitation only. Invitations were extended by AFIRM companies to chemical manufacturers, fibre producers, dye-houses, garment manufacturers and laboratories; pre-registration was required. A total of 600 individuals pre-registered. For more information, contact Elizabeth Treanor at +1.916.486.4415 or etreanor@phylmar.com.

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