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## **Textile CEOs Demand Action on China at Washington Unity Event**

**Textile Coalition Agrees to Launch Major Media and Grassroots Campaigns in the Carolinas**

**International Groups Back Industry Efforts to Counter Looming Chinese Takeover of World Textile Trade**

July 21, 2004

WASHINGTON, DC – In the largest lobbying effort by the textile industry in Washington in more than 15 years, more than 100 textile CEO's and representatives lobbied 48 House and Senate offices from more than 25 states. The purpose of the visits was to seek Congressional backing in persuading the Bush Administration to act to keep artificially low-priced Chinese imports from flooding the US market once quotas on imports from China are removed on January 1, 2005.

Allen Gant, Chairman of the National Council of Textile Organizations, said, "This industry, in collaboration with over 90 textile and apparel groups from 49 countries around the world, is appealing today to the Bush Administration to stop China from taking over world trade in textiles and apparel. Unless the Administration steps to the plate, over the next two years, 75 percent of the 702,000 U.S. textile and apparel workers along with 30 million other workers around the world will lose their jobs. Orders are already shifting – our industries need to see results from their governments."

Gant said, "Specifically, the U.S. textile industry has asked the Administration to recognize that China poses a severe threat to the domestic textile industry and to use appropriate safeguard actions, as allowed under WTO rules. To date, the Administration has refused to consider safeguard actions before the actual occurrence of damage in the marketplace. The U.S. textile industry and the developing world cannot afford to wait for actual damage to occur because millions of jobs will be lost. Instead, we urge that a comprehensive safeguard mechanism be put into place prior to January 1 that will cover the more than \$60 billion in textile and apparel imports still under quota."

U.S. textile job losses have accelerated dramatically during the last five years. In the Carolinas alone, more than 94,000 textile jobs have been lost while imports from China have increased by almost 400 percent. In categories where China has already been removed from quota, imports have increased by over 900 percent during just the last 27 months. The government has agreed to remove all remaining Chinese quotas on January 1, 2005. Auggie Tantillo, Executive Director of the American Manufacturers Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC) said, "A tragedy of enormous proportions is not only about to befall hundreds of thousands of US workers but also dozens of countries that are important U.S. allies in the war against terror. And all of this because China does not play by the rules and governments continue to let China off the hook."

Textile leaders also announced that the industry had agreed to launch a major media and grassroots campaign in the Carolinas. The media campaign will include print, radio and billboards highlighting the loss of textile and manufacturing jobs and lack of effective government action.

Another component of the grassroots campaign will seek to reach as many of the 156,500 textile and apparel employees and their families in the Carolinas as possible. It will utilize voter registration drives, major rallies, picnics and leafleting and direct mail. The campaign will be officially launched on August 17 in North Carolina at which time the industry will open a campaign office, also in North Carolina.

James Chesnutt, Vice Chairman of NCTO, said, "Our back is to the wall. With China's enormous unfair trade advantages, this 200-year-old industry, still the largest manufacturing employer in America, will be wiped out within two years if the government does not act. We have no choice but to organize our workers, their families and their communities and let them know the consequences of continued government inaction. The industry has agreed to make the necessary expenditures in the Carolinas to ensure that it gets its message heard in Washington, DC."

On the international front, industry leaders confirmed that Mauritius had sent a request to Director General Supachi of the World Trade Organization and that the 70 member African-Caribbean-Pacific Group of Nations (ACP) had voted to back the Mauritius request.

Jonathan Stevens, Vice Chairman of the National Textile Association, said: "The unity this industry has shown here today should send a message that its critical needs must not be ignored. We are asking for a simple thing – for the government to use the textile safeguard in precisely the way the WTO set it up to be used. No changes, no adjustments, just use it in the way the WTO rules allow it to be used. And save hundreds of thousands of American jobs in the process."

At the press conference, the industry was joined by representatives from Turkish, African and Mexican Textile and Apparel Groups.

For more information on the worldwide coalition against a Chinese takeover of textile and apparel trade, go to [www.fairtextiletrade.org](http://www.fairtextiletrade.org).

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