

Sri Lanka - A destination for ethical apparel sourcing

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The Joint Apparel Associations Forum (JAAF) was established in 2002, as the apex body of the textile and apparel related associations in Sri Lanka.

The major objectives of JAAF in the post-Multi-Fiber Agreement era is to transform the industry from “manufacturer” to a provider of a “fully integrated service”; increase market penetration to the premium market segments; and become internationally recognized as the superior manufacturer of specific product categories. The success of JAAF initiatives lie in understanding the needs of the industry and negotiating them under one umbrella, while ushering best global practices. In keeping with its goals JAAF, along with MAS Holdings and other co-sponsors, invited Global Reporting Initiative {GRI} to Sri Lanka. GRI is an independent international organization that develops and disseminates globally applicable sustainability reporting guidelines. GRI stands out as the pre-eminent organization in the world in this area. Sustainability reporting is a means by which an organization’s stakeholders can obtain a transparent picture of the organization’s performance in a given year. These GRI guidelines allow a corporate entity to report on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of their activities, products and services. The strategy of positioning Sri Lanka as an ethical sourcing destination has resulted in GSP Plus concessions being recently granted to Sri Lanka. This is an important instrument that helps boost Sri Lanka’s exports to the European Union. GRI’s two-day workshop, which was held in De-

cember 2005, served as a valuable opportunity for corporates in Sri Lanka to gain an insight into how they can benefit from its guidance.