



## WORKER RIGHTS CONSORTIUM

### **WRC Statement on Agreement with Lands' End – April 5, 2004**

Lands' End has agreed to a set of actions that constitute, in the view of the WRC, proper remediation of the harm done to workers blacklisted by Primo S.A. de C.V., a Lands' End supplier in El Salvador.

This agreement – the product of several months of discussion involving Lands' End, Sears, the WRC, and the FLA – calls for Lands' End to provide several vital forms of assistance to the Just Garments apparel factory. Just Garments is a new enterprise that has offered employment to the blacklisted workers. It is the first factory in the history of the export apparel industry in El Salvador to sign an accord with a union – the accord is a prelude to a collective bargaining agreement, which the factory has pledged to negotiate as soon as production is underway. Due in large part to widespread blacklisting of trade unionists, there has never before been an accord or a collective bargaining agreement in any export apparel factory in El Salvador.

Just Garments, as a new business in a tough industry, is doing the difficult start-up work that faces any new production facility. And Just Garments is doing it in the face of significant hostility from other businesses in El Salvador, due to the factory's commitment to respect freedom of association.

By providing essential machinery, a substantial amount of cloth, and 100 hours of valuable technical assistance to Just Garments' management and workers, Lands' End will make a critical contribution to making Just Garments a success and enabling the company to provide secure employment, under good working conditions, to the blacklisted trade unionists and many other workers. The WRC can report that the workers at Just Garments are greatly encouraged by this forthcoming aid. Lands' End and Sears have also agreed to evaluate Just Garments as a potential supplier, once the factory is up and running smoothly.

Lands' End has also taken and/or agreed to take a number of steps having to do with personnel practices at Primo and with the broader problem of blacklisting in El Salvador. The details of these items and of the agreement vis-à-vis Just Garments can be found on the WRC website at: [www.workersrights.org](http://www.workersrights.org). The WRC will continue to monitor Primo and its hiring practices.

Obviously, it would have been better to have resolved this case far sooner. However, it is also clear that in taking the steps it has agreed to, Lands' End is demonstrating a commitment to a fair resolution for the affected workers, consistent with the company's code of conduct obligations. This is encouraging, not only with respect to the present case,

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but in terms of the prospects for future compliance by this licensee throughout its supply chain.

Direct intervention by universities played a central role in this case and a positive outcome would not have been achieved without it. Administrators and students at numerous institutions, in seeking to protect the rights of the affected workers, have demonstrated, as in prior cases, that collegiate licensing can be a powerful instrument for promoting greater respect for internationally recognized worker rights.