



For Immediate Release  
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### **New Better Buying Initiative Aims to Eliminate the Barriers to Code of Conduct Compliance Caused by Purchasing Practices**

**Geneva, Switzerland, May 12, 2016.** A multi-stakeholder workshop held May 12 introduced Better Buying, an initiative that will collect suppliers' anonymous ratings of brands and retailers' purchasing practices. Supplier ratings will be combined and scored to identify publicly those buying companies with the best purchasing practices. Still in its feasibility stage, Better Buying is expected to become fully operational in 2017.

"The purchasing practices of brands and retailers have been discussed for over a decade, yet the challenges for suppliers in accommodating demands for low prices and quick production continue," said Marsha Dickson, Irma Ayers Professor of Human Services at the University of Delaware who co-leads Better Buying. "By providing a way for suppliers to safely voice a wide range of concerns and providing the information publicly, we hope to create a race to the top among brands and retailers as they consider ways to transform their business practices in support of human rights in their supply chains."

"Better Buying will provide more detailed information for brands and retailers on a broader set of purchasing practice issues than has commonly been available in the past," commented Doug Cahn, principal of The Cahn Group, who co-leads Better Buying. "Better Buying is designed to showcase the buyers with better practices and help companies share and learn about ways to improve. We expect Better Buying to result in better business practices and better protections for workers."

The initiative began in August 2015 with background research on purchasing practices and ways to build a credible rating system. Face-to-face consultations with manufacturers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, and Vietnam followed. A survey of suppliers was used to narrow down potential measures of purchasing practices to those that are most important for business success and workplace conditions in factories, and that have readily available data that suppliers would be willing to provide in rating buyers' purchasing practices. The Geneva workshop identified refinements that can improve the value of Better



Buying for all stakeholders. Testing the methodology for inputting and scoring data will begin this summer.

Whether adequate time has been allowed for production, extent that actual orders vary from capacity booked, and whether contractually agreed payment and terms have been met are examples of measures that suppliers will be asked to rate.

“Ratings systems are becoming increasingly important to socially responsible investment firms and mainstream asset managers,” commented Bennett Freeman, former Senior Vice President, Sustainability Research and Policy, Calvert Investments (2006-15) and Chair, Advisory Board, Responsible Sourcing Network (RSN). “Better Buying gets down to the level of core operational functions and has the potential to make a significant impact.”

Seed funds for Better Buying have been provided by C&A Foundation (see: [www.candafoundation.org](http://www.candafoundation.org)). Fair Factories Clearinghouse (see: [www.fairfactories.org](http://www.fairfactories.org)) is the technology partner for the initiative.

## **About**

The University of Delaware (UD) is a privately chartered university with roots to its founding in 1743. UD’s Sustainable Apparel Initiative (UDSAI) promotes environmental sustainability and social responsibility in the apparel and retail industries. Established in 2008 in collaboration with key industry partners, UDSAI leverages the department’s extensive expertise in apparel and textiles sustainability and social responsibility, consumer behavior, and apparel design to research, design, create, and demonstrate a framework of guidelines, practices, programs, and solutions to shape the character of the apparel and retail industries in their evolution toward sustainability.

The Cahn Group is a corporate responsibility consultancy dedicated to promoting long-term business success to companies and communities. The Cahn Group is led by Doug Cahn, a recognized leader and corporate responsibility practitioner with more than 25 years of direct experience in corporate offices and on factory floors.

For more information, see: [www.betterbuying.org](http://www.betterbuying.org)

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