Statement of Support for the YESS Initiative

As the supporters of this statement, we acknowledge it is important for us to work together to create and advance an international ethical and sustainable cotton value chain. YESS: Yarn Ethically & Sustainably Sourced, an initiative of Responsible Sourcing Network, aspires to impede forced labor in cotton harvesting and yarn production. It will do this by engaging, educating, and enabling yarn spinners to implement a due diligence system to identify and address forced labor. YESS will also coordinate its activities with sustainable cotton and apparel initiatives to avoid duplication and promote harmonization across the industry.

Cotton produced by forced labor is documented in at least nine countries.¹ There is a gap in the transparency between where forced labor occurs in the cotton fields and the facilities in which different cottons are blended and spun together. YESS aims to close this gap by training cotton yarn spinners on the OECD due diligence system to address forced labor and verifying that the system is being implemented correctly.² YESS will also be in a position to provide insight on the various sustainable cottons spinners are processing.

The value of developing and implementing YESS is to:

- Assist companies to comply with anti-slavery regulations.
- Increase marketability for spinners and brands.
- Give consumers assurance that brands are working together to encourage ethical and sustainable cotton production.
- Minimize verification costs and improve efficiencies.
- Train and enable spinners to implement effective due diligence systems.
- Establish an industry-wide traceability approach and a global list of verified spinners and mills.

We, the supporters, express our commitment toward ethical and sustainable cotton and yarn sourcing. We confirm our endorsement of the development and implementation of the YESS initiative and encourage our peers to join us.

To add an organization to this statement, go to: http://www.sourcingnetwork.org/yess/.

¹ There are nine countries listed on the U.S. Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor and Forced Labor, https://www.dol.gov/ilsa/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods/ for cotton or cotton seed produced with forced labor. They are: Benin, Burkina Faso, China, India, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

² The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Developments (OECD) is developing a Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector, https://mneguidelines.oecd.org/public-consultation-guidance-for-responsible-supply-chains-in-the-garment-and-footwear-sector.htm. YESS will evolve to adjust to any OECD due diligence changes or to meet the needs of additional due diligence/verification systems.

9 August, 2016