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PRESS RELEASE

AEPC opens clothing trade show in South Africa

New Delhi, Mar 19 -- The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) today unveiled a clothing and textiles trade show in South Africa which is one of the fast growing markets globally.

The buyers-seller meets at Cape Town on March 19 and 20 alongwith similar events at Johannesburg on March 23 and 24 have been organised in collaboration with the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council and the Synthetic and Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council.

The mega show has been organised under the market access initiative assistance scheme of the commerce ministry.

Indian exports of readymade garments to South Africa slipped to 49.78 million dollars last year from 51.14 million dollars in 2007.

AEPC officials said the South African annual imports of apparel are to the tune of a billion dollars. Focused research and development of product-specific market strategies are required to capture the market, they said.

"India has already proved that it is not only a reliable supplier but has ably demonstrated that it believes in progressive growth of the industry," said council's chairman Rakesh Vaid who led the 40-member team of exporters. "During the mega

trade show, a strong platform will be available to South African buyers for concluding long-term sourcing decisions."

China with a share of 78.4 per cent is currently the top supplier of apparel to South Africa. Cambodia, Mauritius, Myanmar and Bangladesh are other major suppliers which have registered a fast growth in recent years.

In South Africa, textile and apparel industry is the sixth largest employer in manufacturing sector and 11th largest exporter of manufactured goods. The industry employs 230,000 workers directly and another 200,000 in dependent industries like transport and packaging.

For potential investors, opportunities lie in three areas:

- middle-to-high-end apparel with possibilities to expand into the US and European markets
- large-scale manufacturing of industrial textiles using polyester and other fibers
- cotton spinning, weaving and knitting utilising local and sub-Saharan African cotton.

India exported garments worth 9.7 billion dollars to various countries in 2007-08. The AEPC represents over 8,000 small, medium and large exporters across the country.