**ROYAUME DU MAROC**

Ministère délégué auprès du Ministre de l'Industrie, du Commerce, de l'Investissement et de l'Economie numérique chargé du Commerce extérieur

المملكة المغربية

الوزارة المنتدبة لدى وزير الصناعة والتجارة والاستثمار والاقتصاد الرقمي المكلفة بالتجارة الخارجية

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Mr. Joshua Teitelbaum,
Chairman
Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements
Room H3 100, U.S. Department of Commerce,
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, Washington, DC 20230
United States of America

- 1 AVR 2016

**Subject:** Request to Modify the Rules of Origin for Certain Apparel Articles under the United States-Morocco Free Trade Agreement

Dear Mr. Teitelbaum,

On behalf of CROSSING, I hereby submit this request regarding the amendment of rules of origin applicable to certain apparel articles, to allow the use of certain third-country fabrics not commercially available in the countries of Morocco and the United-States, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4.3 of our Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Crossing is a garment manufacturer based in Morocco and is one of the best fast fashion brands focusing on creating authentic fashion looks and fashionable clothing based on high quality standards, at reasonable prices. The company is specialized in casual products made from Denim, Cotton, Cotton blends and various other fabrics and their product categories include women's wear, menswear and kids wear, with pants, skirts, jackets, shirts and casual dresses "classified in subheading USSH 620640 and USSH 620452".

The total capacity of the company is three millions garments/year, with a highly flexible production model to deliver a diverse product range in different categories; designed, manufactured and delivered to customers within 8 to10 weeks or even less if the material is available. The company exports to France, Spain and England and intends to export more than 10% to the United States markets in case of partial or total acceptance of this request, which will have a positive impact of creating 500 jobs in its ecosystem in the next five years.

Currently, CROSSING, sources in Morocco and has been using the Tariff Preference Level "TPL" provision of the FTA with the United States to allow duty-free access for garment sector. However, knowing that this flexibility was expired on December 31st, 2015, the company will face serious difficulties and loss of employment in the sector.

According to CROSSING, the fabrics used in its productions are not commercially available in the territories of Morocco and the United States. That is why we request to allow importation from third countries, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4.3 of our FTA.

Parcelle 14, Business center, ailenordBdErriyad,
Hay Riad B.P 610, Rabat Chellah, Maroc

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The fabrics subject to this request are composed of:

(1) 100% LYOCEL classified under HTUS 551612/551611
(2) LYOCEL/COTON classified under HTUS 551641/551642/551643
(3) COTON/POLYESTER classified under HTUS 521142/521049
(4) COTON/POLYESTER/ELASTHANE classified under HTUS 52114210/ 521049
(5) Corduroy with COTON classified under HTUS 580122
(6) Corduroy POLYESTER classified under HTUS 580132

These fabrics are classified under HTUS 5516.12, 5516.11, 5516.41, 5211.42, 5516.43, 521049, 580122 and 580132; And knowing that the government of Colombia has already requested the fabrics under HTS 5801.22 on march 28th, 2013 and got an approval from your Government, which is a confirmation that such fabrics are not available in the United States.

CROSSING relies on the importation of such fabrics, not commercially available in either country, to manufacture apparel goods based on specifications highly required by their customers, the US buyers; these specifications require Tencel, dual Corduroy fabric and velvet. Knowing that some corduroy fabric is already designated as short supply as described in the parg (b) from Chapter Rule 2 to Chapter 62 as listed in the Annex 4-A of the Morocco-U.S. FTA "Corduroy fabrics of subheading 5801.22, containing 85 per cent or more by weight of cotton and containing more than 7.5 wales per centimeter"

According to that, it is our hope that your government takes appropriate steps to initiate speedy consultations with the government of Morocco and undertakes the necessary measures to complete rapidly all the necessary reviews and assessments.

Meanwhile, we would like to reiterate our request for the renewing of TPL and we are waiting for any further consideration by the US Congress and US Administration on this issue as the textile sector is one of the key industries of Moroccan economy, as a driver of growth in terms of job creation and export development. Moreover, 80% of jobs created by the textile sector are intended for women, who are usually the family support.

We believe that working cooperatively can accelerate the process to ensure that the benefits of the FTA are not interrupted nor reduced for U.S or Moroccan companies. The Government of Morocco stands ready to work with the Government of the United States to achieve this mutually beneficial outcome.

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The attention of your good offices to consider this request at an early opportunity would be much appreciated. If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the focal point Ms. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director of the International Trade Relations. I would like to know who is designated by you to handle this consultation between our two governments.

Sincerely,

Mohammed ABBOU
Ministre Délégué auprès du Ministre
De l'Industrie, du Commerce, de l'Investissement
et de l'Economie Numérique
Chargé du Commerce Extérieur

Mohammed Abbou
Minister Delegate In Charge of Foreign Trade
Kingdom of Morocco

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