

## PRESS RELEASE

### AEPC appeals for uninterrupted manufacturing at factories

- **Wants essential service sector tag for apparel export industry**
- **Willing to follow stricter safety measures to prevent infection**
- **Says lockdowns will waste year-long efforts to revive industry**

**DELHI NCR, 12 April 2021:** Concerned over possible imposition of lockdowns due to a resurgence in coronavirus infections, **Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC)** has urged the government to keep factories free from lockdowns and requested for essential service sector tag for the labour-intensive apparel export industry.

For ensuring uninterrupted manufacturing at factories, the Council has written letters to **Hon'ble Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, Hon'ble Health Minister Shri Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Textiles Minister Smt Smriti Zubin Irani, Hon'ble Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal**, their **Secretaries**, and **Chief Ministers** of some states including Tamil Nadu.

"The industry, which supports over 13 million workers directly and many more indirectly, in rural and backward areas and largely comprises MSMEs, will be severely impacted by the disruption, if the lockdown is again imposed in the factories," **AEPC Chairman Dr A Sakthivel** wrote in his letters to the government.

"Being one of the most labour intensive industries, while we are concerned about the health and safety of the workers, we are also concerned about their livelihoods," he said while thanking the government for undertaking one of the largest vaccination drives in the world for protecting the people of the country.

All factories have been taking stringent measures and following strict health protocols, as per the MHA guidelines and other advisories. The regular tests and check-ups are also being done, he said. The apparel exporters are willing to follow even more strict safety measures but would want to avoid even partial lockdowns.

"It is requested that the work at the factories are not disrupted by lockdown and we also request for exempting the apparel export industry as an essential service sector," the **Chairman** said, adding that such lockdowns create widespread disruption and impact not just in the short term but also the long term health of the industry.

**Dr Sakthivel** said that the apparel export industry recently got back on track, migrant labourers were back, orders have started stabilizing and exports are looking up. "The lockdown, at this point, will disrupt the last one year of hard work put in by the industry in getting back on the global map and on the survival path," he said.