

After more than 15 years of fruitful collaboration, the Samha Group (with head office in Damascus, Syria) and the Benetton Group are taking different paths.

Ponzano, 27 June 2011 - The agreement for production under license and distribution of Benetton products by the Syrian Samha Group has expired and will not be renewed: the Benetton manufacturing hubs are now consolidated in well-defined geographical areas which, due to logistical requirements, do not include the middle-eastern area and are exclusively centred on direct production.

The renewed strategic plans of the Samha Group are now orientated towards a different type of offer and positioning of the merchandise produced and distributed.

Benetton Group will continue to invest in Syria, serving the Syrian customers with its fashionable and colourful clothes distributed through "United Colors of Benetton" shops.

During a meeting at Villa Minelli in Ponzano Veneto, the Italian headquarters of the Benetton Group, Luciano Benetton, Chairman of the Benetton Group, hosted Ahmed Samha, Chairman of the Samha Group, thanking him personally for the *"Effective and profitable brand development activity undertaken in the markets of Syria, Egypt and Jordan, assuring a high quality product at competitive prices"* and adding that, *"With different strategies in the future, the possibility of the two Groups working together again is not to be ruled out."*

Mr. Samha gave his thanks, stating that it had been a great satisfaction *"to feel part of the Benetton family and to have been able to collaborate in the success of an entrepreneurial project of an international and global level"*. He too expressed his hope that *"his entrepreneurial projects would cross paths again with those of the Benetton Group in the future"*.

Today, the Benetton Group is present in 120 countries around the world. Its core business is fashion apparel: a group with a strong Italian character whose style, quality and passion are clearly seen in its brands, the casual *United Colors of Benetton* and *Sisley*, brand for "independent people". The Group produces over 150 million garments every year. Its network of over 6,000 contemporary stores around the world, offers high quality customer services and generates a total turnover of over 2 billion euro.

More information:

+39 0422 519036

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