

## Taking a Deeper Look

Just how global is the clothing industry? Examine the manufacturing labels of clothing items that students are wearing today. Without looking at a label, can you figure out where a piece was manufactured? In 2000, about 87 percent of the clothing purchased by Americans was imported. About 65 percent of the clothing manufactured in the United States was exported.<sup>2</sup>

### Is there a correlation between the cheapest labor and the highest value of imports?

Below is a partial list of countries or areas that produced clothing imported to the United States in 1996. U.S. apparel workers received an average hourly wage of \$9.56.<sup>3</sup>

Country	Value of Imports, 1996	Average Hourly Wage in U.S. Dollars
China	\$ 3,769,503,724	\$ .28
Hong Kong	\$ 3,860,786,010	\$ 4.51
Mexico	\$ 8,413,000,000	\$ 1.08
Italy	\$ 1,148,774,723	\$ 14.32
Kenya	\$ 7,379,281,000	\$ .30

### Do the math. Transportation is what percentage of the total production cost?

Typical Estimated cost of producing/distributing a shirt in Asia<sup>4</sup>

Finished fabric	\$ 4.80	
Labor/supervision	\$ 2.60	
Buttons, labels	\$ .75	
Customs duty	\$ 1.45	
Global travel	\$ .40	(by containership; container holds 35,000 shirts/fabric)
Design, marketing	\$ 2.40	
Shipping to stores	\$ .90	(by truck around the United States)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13.30</b>	<b>production/distribution price</b>

### Debating global dollars and “sense”

- What are the outcomes of global manufacturing and global use of natural resources? Research further and debate your point of view.
- If you were a shirt manufacturer, where would you produce your shirts? Why?
- Inexpensive transportation results in the opportunity to offer employment to people of underdeveloped countries. How might this opportunity affect cultural traditions in those nations?
- Global transportation of goods, although fast and inexpensive, consumes fuel, generates pollution, and might contribute to global warming. How important is this?
- In 2002, California imported 80 percent of its wood products, including paper, from abroad, since much of its own forest area was being preserved. Other nations with less stringent rules cut down virgin forests that many believe protect the world from global warming. As global citizens, should we use other nations' resources while preserving our own?
- Should standards for safety and ecological preservation become global? Can every country afford these standards?