



## Fair Trade movement welcomes support by the European Commission to Fair Trade

**5 May 2009 (Brussels) - The Fair Trade movement welcomes the adoption today of a Communication<sup>1</sup> on Fair Trade by the European Commission, *'Contributing to Sustainable Development: The role of Fair Trade and non-governmental trade-relayed sustainability assurance schemes'*. The Fair Trade movement is pleased that the EC recognizes Fair Trade's values and has referenced the principles defined by the Fair Trade movement and offers to continue working together with the European Union, EU Member States and regional and local authorities to the benefit of marginalised producers and poor workers in the South.**

Rob Cameron, Chief Executive Officer of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) stated, on behalf of the four main Fair Trade networks FLO, WFTO, NEWS and EFTA! *'We welcome today's announcement as a very positive step forward. The EC Communication will be welcomed by producers throughout the Global South, especially now during uncertain economic times. Fair Trade's goal is to support marginalized producers and workers in the South. European consumers have already pledged their commitment to Fair Trade and it is great to see the EC acknowledging this. We look forward to the future support this Communication will generate.'*

The EC Communication provides an update on developments arising since the last EC Communication on Fair Trade (1999) and suggests preliminary considerations on the role of public authorities and stakeholders in the field of Fair Trade.

The EC Communication acknowledges not only the exponential market growth of Fair Trade, but also the achievements by the Fair Trade movement since then, namely the adoption of a Charter of Fair Trade principles<sup>2</sup> and the setting up of independent verification and control systems.

Fair Trade offers better trading conditions to marginalized producers and workers in the South who are disadvantaged in conventional trade. Integrating the pillars of sustainable development (economic, environmental and social), Fair Trade offers marginalized producers and workers a tool to alleviate poverty and improve their lives. Fair Trade has become all the more relevant in the current global economic crisis, as the world's poor suffer the effects of the economic recession disproportionately. Over a million and a half producers and workers throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America already benefit from the better deal that Fair Trade offers. Worldwide, consumers spent over 2.3 billion Euros on Fairtrade certified products in 2007. This represents a 47% annual increase.

A key instrument available to public authorities across the EU to *"share the burden of sustainable development"* is their public purchasing policies. A large number of EU, national, regional and local authorities across the European Union have already put in place policies and passed legislation on public procurement and Fair Trade. The Fair Trade movement looks forward to the upcoming European Commission guidelines on social considerations on public procurement and trusts they will, in the framework of existing EU rules on public procurement, provide practical *"can-do"* guidance on the role that public authorities can play, in practice, in supporting marginalised producers and poor workers in the South. The Fair Trade movement offers to work together with the European Commission services to identify best practices and constructive benchmarks for public authorities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Text of the EC Communication and press release by EC and other organisations available under: [www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=8](http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=8)

<sup>2</sup> The Charter of Fair Trade Principles (Jan 2009) provides a single reference point for Fair Trade through a concise explanation of Fair Trade principles and the two routes by which they are implemented. Available under: [www.fairtrade-advocacy.org](http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org)

### **World Fair Trade Day & Pledge for Fair Trade campaign**

The EC Communication on Fair Trade has been issued on the eve to the World Fair Trade Day, which will be celebrated worldwide on 9 May 2009.

Sergi Corbalán, Coordinator of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, a joint initiative of the four main Fair Trade networks FLO, WFTO, EFTA and NEWS!, stated "*The fact that World Fair Trade Day falls this year on Europe's Day (9 May) could not be more timely. European Union citizens are increasingly supporting Fair Trade, through the choices they make as consumers. The European Union, EU Member States, regional and local authorities should follow suit and upgrade their support to Fair Trade as a tool for marginalised producers and poor workers in the South to trade their way out of poverty*".

World Fair Trade Day, aiming at promoting global awareness of Fair Trade, is a global festival of Fair Trade with events organized worldwide on the second Saturday of May. More information [www.worldfairtradeday09.org](http://www.worldfairtradeday09.org)

On this occasion, the Fair Trade Advocacy Office is officially launching the *Pledge for Fair Trade* campaign, with the involvement of Fair Trade movement actors across the EU. Its main objective is to call on future Members of the European Parliament to support Fair Trade and marginalised producers and poor workers in the South, if elected.

Candidates across the European Union, in particular on and around World Fair Trade Day (9 May), are being asked to make the pledge. A number of current Members of the European Parliament have already made the pledge and explained their specific reasons why they glad to do so: [www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/pledge](http://www.fairtrade-advocacy.org/pledge). The text of the pledge reads:

*If elected as Member of the European Parliament (2009-2014):*

*I will strive to ensure that the European Parliament and other EU Institutions give, as far as possible, public support to Fair Trade.*

*In particular, I will do my best to ensure that the needs of marginalised producers and poor workers in the South are reflected across all EU policy areas and adequate EU support is made available for Fair Trade projects that help them to trade their way out of poverty.*

*The Fair Trade Advocacy Office speaks out for Fair Trade and trade justice with the aim to improve trading conditions for the benefit of small and marginalised producers and poor workers in developing countries. Based in Brussels, the office coordinates the advocacy activities of the four main Fair Trade Networks: Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International [FLO](#), World Fair Trade Organisation [WFTO](#), Network of European Worldshops [NEWS!](#) and European Fair Trade Association [EFTA](#). These four networks bring together over 1.5 million Fair Trade producers from more than 60 countries, 20 labelling initiatives, hundreds of specialized Fair Trade importers, 3000 worldshops and more than 100,000 volunteers.*

**Contact:** Sergi Corbalán. Fair Trade Advocacy Office Coordinator. Rue du Commerce / Handelsstraat 124 - 1000 Brussels (BE). Tel: +32 (0) 2 217 36 17. Email : [corbalan@fairtrade-advocacy.org](mailto:corbalan@fairtrade-advocacy.org)