



Urgent Call to Save Fair Trade SPP, Small Producers' Symbol

29 06 | VI General Assembly
2017 | VI Asamblea General
SPP Global Assemblée Générale

As small producers' organizations and companies committed to fair trade, participating in the General Assembly of "*Símbolo de Pequeños Productores Global*" (Spanish for: "Small Producers' Symbol Global"), or **SPP Global**, meeting on this day, June 29, 2017, in our Sixth General Assembly, we wish to attest to and share our vision and our historic perspective on fair trade.

Many of us, as small producers' organizations participating in the Small Producers' Symbol (SPP), have been among the founders of fair trade. We have fought to build a fair market for our products for nearly three decades, with support and collaboration by thousands of companies and institutions, and millions of activists and consumers around the world. Along the way, we have also struggled to make the voices of organized small producers heard, and for these producers to not be viewed as merely 'recipients,' but as primary actors.

Although fair trade currently represents a small percentage of world trade, the achievements realized have been significant for millions of families in thousands of communities and towns in the Global South. With fair trade, solidarity markets around the world have made a quantitative leap forward in terms of volume and a qualitative leap forward in terms of impact on the realities for small producers in marginalized areas around the world.

After 30 years of fair trade, there are many achievements to celebrate, primarily in terms of an increase in local capacities for generating dignified living for the families and communities of small producers. Fair trade has been a factor of stability that has allowed us to increasingly develop our capacities for positively transforming the lives of small producers' families.

Fair trade is not a paternalistic or picturesque philanthropic action that offers handouts to the poor and thus mitigates the damages caused by massive exploitation and inequality. Nor is it a certification system for placing the responsibility for these injustices on the shoulders of small producers, thus washing their hands of any blame. In fair trade, organized small producers take ownership of the value chain in which they are the foundation, with the aim of offering products that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable to consumers.

Unfortunately, we find today that there are visions, practices and models under the fair trade banner that are so incongruent that they go against the principles and values of genuine, solidarity-based, inclusive fair trade. These practices and models are endangering access to markets for our products, and also signify a risk to the credibility, and therefore survival, of fair trade and of the small producers' organizations and committed companies in which we participate.

Many of the 'bad practices' in fair trade are associated with the role played by major intermediaries and brands in fair trade—which have managed to enter into fair trade and then repeat the abusive schemes from conventional markets within the fair trade market.

First of all, the increasing participation of private production companies in the various fair trade schemes (including large private plantations) generates situations characterized by unfair competition that causes small producers to lose their markets and their prospects for the future.

We are making an urgent call for the entire fair trade movement to declare that the cannibalization of fair trade by major commercial and productive corporations will not be permitted, since they reproduce the traditional schemes of exploitation, abuse and concentration of power and wealth, while taking over a movement and a market that were created precisely to fight against such an economic model.



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We will continue to create local and international fair trade markets based on the values of horizontal and participative democratic organization, of equality, equity, solidarity, economic justice and environmental, social and ecological sustainability. We will continue to work for genuine, profound, inclusive and democratic fair trade that truly transforms the way in which markets and economies are established.

Today there are numerous articles in communication media that not only forecast the death of fair trade if it fails to return to its original objectives, but that also claim that fair trade is already dead. In order to demonstrate that this is not the case, we must come together and bring new life into fair trade, while curing all of its ailments. We will not allow fair trade to be snatched away from us.

Let's save fair trade! Long live fair trade!