



## CAN Official Statement

For 20 years, hundreds of producer organizations worldwide have been involved in the creation and development of the international Fairtrade Labelling movement and its central body Fairtrade International (FLO).

Since last year, the three Fairtrade Producer Networks (NAP<sup>1</sup>, CLAC<sup>2</sup> and Fairtrade Africa) which represent more than 800 producer organizations in 60 countries, and are co-owners of Fairtrade International, have united their efforts to participate more fully in the system.

Fairtrade Labelling (FLO) is the only social & environmental movement co-owned by producers at the international level, not only in terms of decision-making processes but also shared operational responsibilities, which uses the market as a tool to benefit marginalized producers.

The three Fairtrade Producer Networks (NAP, CLAC and Fairtrade Africa) share the belief that collective empowerment, self determination and democratic independent grass-root organizations are the key to enable small farmers and workers to break their isolation, overcome the large imbalances of economic power in food trade chains, achieve sustainable living conditions, protect their environment and foster sustainable development in their communities. They share the common goal of strengthening and broadening the producer base in the three continents and contribute to growing significantly the impact of Fair Trade, considering that market growth is important not as an end, but as a tool to benefit marginalized producers.

At this very promising moment for Fairtrade International, the three Producer Networks are very disappointed to learn that Fair Trade USA has resolved to leave the Fairtrade Labelling system (FLO), all the more so as they have not been consulted prior to this decision. They are also disappointed to see that Fair Trade USA has chosen to define its own orientations rather than forming part of the global vision, key principles and shared strategy endorsed by all members of Fairtrade International<sup>3</sup>. The Producer Networks cannot support this unilateral action on the part of Fair Trade USA, which goes against their aspirations and interests.

Following imminent departure of Fair Trade USA from the global Fairtrade Labelling system (FLO), the Producer Networks will be watchful to ensure that benefits are maintained for small farmers, workers and consumers. They are committed to seeing their certified products available to consumers in the USA. They will actively participate in strengthening democratic and independent producer organizations all over the world so that the overall impact of Fair Trade continues to grow over time, fostering equity and transparency in global trade, without creating unfair competition for small farmers and their organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Network of Asian Producers (NAP)

<sup>2</sup> Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores de Comercio Justo (CLAC)

<sup>3</sup> The strategy of Fairtrade International is described in the document called "Making the difference"; it aims at defining and implementing a unique global vision, based on clear principles principles, adapted to local needs and interests, and in direct coordination with Producer Networks