



Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee

Inquiry into the role of development partnerships in agriculture and agribusiness in promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region

Submission from Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand Ltd
November 2015



Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Support projects and development partnerships that will encourage the recipient countries and their communities to take ownership of the development process. Developing rural capacity and empowering farmers to start, grow and maintain sustainable, income generating micro-enterprises selling into a growing market of specialized products like Fairtrade is an advantageous option to increase private sector competitiveness, improve international market access, and reduce poverty in the Indo-Pacific region.

Recommendation 2: Improve information sharing and channels of engagement for partners working in development, agriculture and agribusiness in the Indo-Pacific, to most effectively work together towards common development outcomes.

Recommendation 3: Promote multi-faceted and holistic development partnerships which engage a variety of complimentary partners within the development, agriculture and agribusiness sectors, and clearly articulate the purpose and objectives of the partnerships, the individual roles and the expected outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Support and encourage development partnerships which adopt a flexible approach to ensure targeted support for producers in the Indo-Pacific, based on assessment of the support producers require. In particular, producers should be supported to identify the interventions that best meet their needs.

Recommendation 5: Invest in gender analysis of supply chains in the Indo-Pacific to firstly establish where women are in their value chains and secondly, where barriers to women's participation exist and the business case for addressing them. This analysis could be done collaboratively with development partners to reduce costs and duplication.

Recommendation 6: Develop and communicate the business case for action on gender, including how it relates to sustainability.

Recommendation 7: Develop knowledge sharing systems, forums and processes which will enable producers, supply chain businesses and development partners to access relevant resources on gender and to learn from each other.

Recommendation 8: Develop appropriate indicators and processes for monitoring progress in all DFAT programs, partners and projects, such as Sustainable Development Goal 5¹ the UN Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles.²

Recommendation 9: Ensure private sector partnerships are underpinned by strong and independent standards, which focus on inclusive and sustainable development for producers in the Indo-Pacific.

Recommendation 10: Use the Sustainable Development Goals and indicators as 'goal posts' for development partnerships to work towards, and as the basis for regular monitoring and evaluation.



Effective development partnerships with small producers: Fairtrade's Approach

Most of the world's small producers are engaged in the agricultural sector. Latest estimates suggest that there are approximately 2.5 billion people involved in full- or part-time smallholder agriculture, managing an estimated 500 million small farms.³ By growing 70% of the planet's food they already play a central role in feeding the world's growing population.⁴ Smallholder farmers will therefore be a critical part of the solution to providing food and employment to the poorest people in the world and, by extension, have the greatest impact on poverty reduction. At the same time, small farms can be commercially viable, with small producers being the main investors in agriculture in many countries.⁵ But many farmers are trapped in the cycle of poverty, made worse by decades of price volatility and underinvestment in agriculture, and are now facing threats from a changing climate. Recently, there has been a slow tide turn in policy (for example from IFAD, FAO, UN, EU)⁶ where small producers have begun to be recognised as playing a pivotal role in achieving food security, efficient development processes and long-term improvement of livelihoods.

In Fairtrade ANZ's experience, development partnerships with small holder producers in agriculture and agribusiness can be very effective in promoting prosperity, reducing poverty and enhancing democracy and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. For example, Fairtrade ANZ currently supports more than 20,000 producers and their communities in the Pacific and Fairtrade sales globally generated over \$AUD154.6 million in Fairtrade Premium for producers, which is invested by producer organisations in community and business development activities. Globally, sales of Fairtrade certified products in 2013 amounted to €944million, which generated an estimated €95.2million in Fairtrade Premium for producer organisations to invest in business and community development.⁷

The engagement of small scale producers in global supply chains is essential for poverty alleviation. In this regard, effective development partnerships require equitable and long-term engagement with producers, which facilitates ownership and empowers producers to increasingly take responsibility for their own development. In particular, Fairtrade encourages the following principles for development partnerships with producers in the Indo-Pacific:

- Producers are supported to have a fair share of the value of their product and receive a fair price for their work.
- Small producers are organised in strong, democratic organisations, such as cooperatives, that represent them within the supply chain. This not only influences the supply chain and maximises production by realising economies of scale, but also increases the capacities of small producer groups to lobby towards governments and to balance the macro-economic trade policy developments that have an adverse effect on them.
- The diversification and moving up the value chain through engagement of small producers in the first stages of processing, is encouraged so as to increase sustainability and encourage access to diverse markets for small producers. This is particularly important if we consider climate change



effects, the existence of an increasingly concentrated commodity market, and the current context of high price volatility primarily caused by financial speculation.

- Transparency in the supply chain is ensured, where producers and consumers understand and have full information on the supply chain process.
- Supply chains serve local communities' long term needs and allow local producers to benefit from their work through democratic participation and ownership.
- As much added value of the supply chain as possible stays in-country.

Recommendation 1: Support projects and development partnerships that will encourage the recipient countries and their communities to take ownership of the development process. Developing rural capacity and empowering farmers to start, grow and maintain sustainable, income generating micro-enterprises selling into a growing market of specialized products like Fairtrade is an advantageous option to increase private sector competitiveness, improve international market access, and reduce poverty in the Indo-Pacific region.

Fairtrade partnerships in agriculture and agribusiness in the Indo-Pacific

Fairtrade is a market-based poverty alleviation and development mechanism which uses the FAIRTRADE Mark to drive consumer demand. As the most widely recognised and trusted ethical label in the world, the FAIRTRADE Mark allows consumers to identify products that have been produced and traded under international standards for sustainable production and just conditions and also enables growers to improve the visibility of their commodities on supermarket shelves. The Fairtrade system is uniquely underpinned by development and empowerment as its core principles. These principles are documented in the Fairtrade Standards, which establish criteria that encourages the development of transparent and sustainable supply chains and are implemented by all the actors in the certified supply chain and audited independently by FLO-CERT.

Partnerships are a key component of the Fairtrade system. The Fairtrade system is about bringing market drivers together to change things for the better through long-term, equitable trading partnerships. This is reflected in Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand's (Fairtrade ANZ) mission "to connect disadvantaged producers and consumers, promote fairer trading conditions and empower producers to combat poverty, strengthen their position and take more control over their lives."

Agriculture and agri-business are a fundamental driver of poverty reduction and greater sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific. Fairtrade's global experience over 25 years demonstrates that poverty reduction is best achieved by empowering the poor by developing their entrepreneurial capacity, facilitating market linkages and communication through the supply chain and promoting buyers' engagement in long-term sustainability. Development partnerships which facilitate ownership, whereby individuals and communities can take ownership of their own development, build their leadership and business capacity are therefore central to Fairtrade's approach to economic development.

Fairtrade ANZ currently partners with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to build demand from businesses and consumers for Fairtrade certified products sourced predominantly from the Indo-Pacific. Fairtrade ANZ's approach to development partnerships is expanded below.



Fairtrade Standards: a framework for sustainable supply chain development

Fairtrade facilitates effective development partnerships via the Fairtrade Standards, which provide a framework for sustainable supply chain development. The Fairtrade Standards promote social, economic and environmental development and have the following key objectives:

- ensure that producers receive prices that (at a minimum) cover their average costs of sustainable production;
- provide an additional Fairtrade Premium which can be invested in projects that enhance social, economic and environmental development;
- enable pre-financing for producers who require it;
- facilitate long-term trading partnerships and enable greater producer control over the trading process; and
- set clear criteria to ensure that the conditions of production and trade of all Fairtrade certified products are socially, economically and environmentally responsible.

Under the Fairtrade system, the entire supply chain is independently audited for compliance with the Fairtrade Standards, which means consumers can be confident that products carrying the FAIRTRADE Mark have been produced, traded and manufactured in a way which aims to enhance the social, economic and environmental development of marginalised farmers.

A holistic approach: development partnerships along the entire supply chain

The Fairtrade system spans the entire supply chain from producers in developing countries to 125 countries around the world where Fairtrade certified products are sold. This approach ensures consumer demand and market linkages, as well as best production practices and development for producer organisations. In this way, the Fairtrade system provides a holistic approach to ensure sustainable economic growth and improved livelihoods for producers. In particular, Fairtrade ANZ partners with:

- **Smallholder producer organisations** to help producers gain Fairtrade certification and develop market opportunities through the delivery of training, guidance on certification requirements, improved quality and productivity and facilitation of relationships with buyers. In Fairtrade ANZ's experience, producer organisations enable smallholder farmers to more effectively participate in development partnerships by enabling producers to join forces. Under the Fairtrade Standards, governance of producer organisations must be set up in a transparent way which does not discriminate against any members (including women) and requires that all members of an organisation have to the opportunity to participate in democratic decision-making processes.
- **Exporters and local governmental organisations** to coordinate the provision of extension services to farmers to improve yields and quality.
- **Traders/Importers, Manufacturers, Retailers and Other Distribution Channels** to strengthen the supply of Fairtrade Certified products and ensure cooperation and integration along the value chain.
- **Consumers, NGOs and other advocates** to raise awareness of the benefits of the Fairtrade system and to increase the demand for products produced and manufactured using sustainable supply chains.
- **Government** to deliver projects which promote prosperity and reduce poverty for small holder producers and engage in discussion on how to improve domestic and international policies to



enable fairer trade and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. Fairtrade ANZ currently partners with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (**DFAT**) to build demand from businesses and consumers in Australia for products sourced from Fairtrade producers, predominately in the Indo-Pacific, as well as the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (**MFAT**) to support Fairtrade producers in the Pacific to develop sustainable production practices and obtain market access for Fairtrade certified products.

The variety of Fairtrade ANZ's partnerships suggest that effective development partnerships often require a variety of skills, expertise and resources from a number of different organisations or sectors to come together to achieve common objectives.

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Recommendation 3: Promote multi-faceted and holistic development partnerships which engage a variety of complimentary partners within the development, agriculture and agribusiness sectors, and clearly articulate the purpose and objectives of the partnerships, the individual roles and the expected outcomes.

Tailored support and innovative approaches

Whilst most of the rural poor in the Indo-Pacific share a number of economic, demographic and social characteristics, small producers are not all the same and the factors affecting their development vary according to their particular context. Fairtrade ANZ supports the recognition in DFAT's *Strategy for Australia's aid investments in agriculture, fisheries and water* that agricultural interventions need to be carefully tailored to specific market, agro-ecological and policy contexts. In Fairtrade ANZ's experience, the most effective approach to the development of partnerships is one that is built on an in-depth analysis of the support required by the small producer organisation, as well as of the capacity of the partnership itself. Strong partnerships allow producer organisations to become reliable suppliers, while serving as a flexible ground for economic development, underpinned by market demand, sustainability and social development. Fairtrade ANZ's innovative agricultural programs are proving effective in developing partnerships that enhance the support provided to smallholder producers. Tailored support programs through partnerships have also proven to be effective way to pilot innovative agricultural approaches to demonstrate effectiveness and capacity for impact at scale of global commodity markets with multi-national corporate partners such as Unilever and Cadbury.



In Fairtrade ANZ's experience, despite the availability of several improved agricultural technologies generated over the last decade, adoption of these innovations by smallholder farmers has been very low. This has led to stagnation of agricultural productivity and low crop yields. Fairtrade ANZ works with in-country NGOs, governmental agricultural agencies and traders who have the knowledge and resources to provide targeted training in methods of production. For example, Fairtrade ANZ has a developed solid partnership with the Coffee Industry Corporation to support all actors along the value chain in PNG, especially farmers, farmers' cooperatives and input suppliers. These partnerships facilitate agricultural innovations and the diffusion of new technologies and practices at farm level, productivity growth and the market orientation of production. Since exporters have a vested interest in improving the quality and quantity of the product they purchase, it is most beneficial for both the producer organisations and the exporters that these services are delivered by them in coordination with Fairtrade ANZ and other local agricultural agencies.

Case Study: Fairtrade ANZ's Producer Development Fund

One way in which Fairtrade ANZ provides tailored support to producer organisations, is through its Producer Development Fund; a key component of Fairtrade ANZ's donor grant with MFAT. The Fund supports producer organisations to invest in the improvement of their organisations and businesses to meet market demand. This includes projects to improve productivity and quality of production, projects to diversify production, to strengthen internal systems and institutional structures (including governance issues), as well as training and development in business planning and financial management, supply chain management or environmental management. Fairtrade ANZ works with producer organisation to design and implement activities, as well as undertake monitoring and evaluation of the projects to ensure successful uptake and sustainability. Activities that have been supported through the Producer Business Development Fund include:

- The introduction of wet coffee micro mills (and associated trainings) to improve coffee quality in Papua New Guinea
- Training on soil fertility for coconut producers in Samoa
- The construction of a model curing facility (and associated trainings) to improve the quality of and add value to vanilla in Tonga
- Organic certification costs for coffee producers in PNG and vanilla producers in Tonga
- A training fund for cane sugar producers in Fiji
- The construction of nurseries and rehabilitation of fermentries to improve volumes and quality for cocoa producers in Papua New Guinea

Recommendation 4: Support and encourage development partnerships which adopt a flexible approach to ensure targeted support for producers in the Indo-Pacific, based on assessment of the support producers require. In particular, producers should be supported to identify the interventions that best meet their needs.



Actions and approaches to agricultural development that would promote gender equity and women's economic empowerment

On average, women, comprise 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, but in comparison to their male counterparts, own far less land and livestock, have less access to agricultural credit and are rarely targeted for extension services.⁸ The most recent Fairtrade International data shows that women's membership in Fairtrade small producer organisations around the world is currently 22 percent.⁹ Research has shown mixed results for women within Fairtrade producer organisations, but there is a general tendency for females to benefit less from Fairtrade due to a range of gender inequities underlying the production and trade of agricultural products.¹⁰ There is therefore a need to address structural barriers to women's membership and participation as well as ensuring the activities of the producer organisation are more inclusive and the benefits are more equitably shared.

What do the Fairtrade Standards say about Gender Equality?

The Fairtrade Standards for small producer organisations stipulates that producer organisations and their members must not discriminate on the basis of gender in relation to membership, recruitment, promotion, access to training, remuneration, allocation of work, termination of employment, retirement or other activities.

Within three years of certification small producer organisations are required to identify disadvantaged or minority groups within their organisations, and within six years should develop programs to improve the social and economic position of these groups. In doing so, they are encouraged to give special consideration to the participation of female members.

Research recently conducted by the Fairtrade Foundation in the United Kingdom, explored potential barriers to women's involvement within six Fairtrade small producer organisations in the Dominican Republic (bananas), India (cotton) and Kenya (tea).¹¹ This research identified the following three main barriers to women's active participation:

- **Producer organisation rules, structures and practices:** Membership which is linked to ownership or registration of land or crops creates a bias in favour of men. This is perpetuated at the leadership level, as leaders are drawn from the membership. In addition, a lack of gender awareness in small producer organisations means women's needs and interests, and constraints on their participation, are not sufficiently taken into consideration in planning and policymaking or in recruitment.
- **Sociocultural norms and practices:** Local norms, attitudes and customs related to the role of men and women in society often create barriers to women's participation in small producer organisations. This includes time constraints resulting from expectations that women should perform the majority of unpaid care work, which often limits their availability for active participation. Attitudes regarding women's suitability for leadership and technical roles are also common barriers.
- **Women's individual circumstances and choices:** Women's age, marital status, education, wealth, degree of support from relatives and experience in other organisations can all affect their freedom to participate in small producer organisations, and their decision-making around whether to do so. If they see sufficient benefits associated with participation, they are more likely to accept any trade-offs involved (such as an increased workload or disapproval from members of their households or communities).

There are many connections and interdependencies between the different barriers and they are in turn linked to the wider context in which women and small producer organisations are situated. This context



includes national laws and government policy and local institutions such as the justice system, religious bodies and sociocultural circumstances, as well as international standards, conventions and market dynamics.

Removing barriers to women's participation in agriculture and agribusiness and promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment requires partnership and collaboration at all levels. At the local level, small producer organisations will benefit from partnering with organisations already working on gender, including local women's organisations and networks. Nationally, collaboration between small producer organisations, women's organisations, government bodies and development agencies (among others) will be more effective for addressing barriers linked to the wider contextual environment, such as reforming legislation covering cooperatives or ensuring government support reaches women farmers. At a sector level, many forums for collaboration between businesses already exist and can greatly enhance their collective influence – ensuring gender issues in smallholder production are on the agenda of these initiatives should be a priority. Fairtrade and other standards systems could also work collaboratively with NGOs, donors and intergovernmental agencies (such as UN Women and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) which have strong commitments on gender, to influence policymakers and businesses to take action, as well as to implement their own programmes in support of women farmers and workers.

Using the Fairtrade Premium to Support Women

There are many examples of the Fairtrade Premium being used in ways which benefit women (and girls) For example, small producer organisations have used the Premium to help women develop new income earning activities, as well as provide indirect benefits such as improved access to water, healthcare, childcare facilities and transport, and communal food processing equipment (eg. mills for grinding corn, maize and other staples) and household domestic goods (eg. stoves, water storage and refrigerators) which can all reduce the time women spend on unpaid care work, and enables more time to focus on other activities such as paid work, education and training.

If women see the Fairtrade Premium being used in ways such as these, it will incentivise them to participate more actively in producer organisations, particularly if they understand that they will be able to participate and vote in the decision-making around the use of the Fairtrade Premium.

Fairtrade ANZ's current work on gender equality

Currently, Fairtrade ANZ is implementing a gender equality pilot project Equal with producer stakeholders from PNG. This pilot aims to (a) raise awareness on the positive impact that gender equality can have on income generation at the household and organisational level, and (b) invest in business initiatives that are community inclusive, where women have the opportunity to take on leadership roles.

Inevitably, implementation of gender action plans requires substantial resources to be invested – by small producer organisations and businesses in their supply chains, by standards systems, and development agencies. For this investment to be forthcoming, the business case for taking action needs to be articulated. Some businesses are unlikely to act unless there is considerable consumer demand and/or high risks from not doing so, including risks to sustainability of supply or reputation. Other, values-driven businesses may be convinced by the moral and ethical grounds for action, but struggle to prioritise

gender among many competing corporate responsibility and sustainability-related issues. The same is true for standards systems. There is therefore a need to develop and communicate the business case for action on gender, including how it relates to sustainability. There is also a need for engagement with businesses and standards systems to develop their understanding of the issues, alongside campaigns to create pressure on different actors to respond. The incorporation of appropriate gender indicators



into sustainability reporting would also help drive action. Finally, it is imperative that all initiatives to enhance the participation of women take into account women's perspectives and choices. They should be focused on creating opportunities for women to fulfil their potential and live their lives as they wish to, and avoid the assumption that active participation in producer organisations is always the best way to do that.

As a result, there is a need to develop and fund coordinated programs involving multiple strategies to address the barriers to women's participation in agriculture and agribusiness. Programs should be based on thorough, contextualised gender analysis which identifies the most effective ways to address different types of barriers in a systematic way.

Recommendation 5 Invest in gender analysis of supply chains in the Indo-Pacific to firstly establish where women are in their value chains and secondly, where barriers to women's participation exist and the business case for addressing them. This analysis could be done collaboratively with development partners to reduce costs and duplication.

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Current and potential role of the private sector in driving inclusive and sustainable development in Indo-Pacific region

Fairtrade ANZ identified in its submission to the inquiry on *the role of the private sector in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty in the Indo-Pacific region*, that private sector participation is critical to poverty reduction and development, as long as it enables ownership, whereby people and communities can take responsibility for their own development and building their leadership and business capacity. However, market-oriented agriculture alone does not empower small-scale farmers to compete in regional and/or international value and supply chains. Enhancing the competitiveness of small-scale producers and their organisations through Fairtrade certification is key to increasing benefits for the producers and workers in agricultural value chains.

The Fairtrade system works on the premise that its private sector partners have a vested interest in, and can be key contributors to, the sustainable development of the farmers at the beginning of the supply chain. Fairtrade leverages and supports the private sector, both directly and indirectly, including:

- providing upstream assistance in the development of strong market ready producer organisations able to absorb investment and trade;
- establishing and upholding social, economic and environmental standards to ensure a sustainable development outcomes are reached through the supply chain;
- identifying and facilitating market linkages; and

raising consumer awareness of the impact for producer of the Fairtrade system. The private sector's involvement in inclusive and sustainable agriculture must occur in a manner that upholds human rights,



mitigates risk, promotes inclusion of vulnerable people and reduces inequalities. Fairtrade's standards serve as an effective platform to build commitment to human rights principles and promote greater empowerment and inclusion of groups like children, women and waged workers. At the same time, more professional and better governed producer organisations are able to both develop their businesses and deliver socially relevant services to their members.

Recommendation 9: Ensure private sector partnerships are underpinned by strong and independent standards, which focus on inclusive and sustainable development for producers in the Indo-Pacific.

Identify common goals and work together – enhancing the contribution of all

In order to ensure that development partnerships in agriculture and agribusiness promote prosperity, reduce poverty and enhance sustainability, it is important that common goals and objectives are clearly articulated and there is regular monitoring and evaluation of the partnerships to ensure that the intended progress is being made. In this regard, Fairtrade ANZ considers that the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) and their associated indicators provide a clear set of 'goal posts' for development partnerships to work towards, and should be the framework with which all actors in the development space ultimately align themselves.

More than any other sector, agriculture is the common thread which holds the 17 SDGs together. Investing smartly in the agricultural sector can address not only hunger and malnutrition but also other challenges including poverty; water and energy use; climate change; and unsustainable production and consumption. Reaching the SDG targets simply will not be possible without a strong and sustainable agricultural sector. That is why the Australian NGO and private sectors must work alongside DFAT and smallholder farmers and workers themselves to mobilise the scientific, technological and social resources to achieve these targets together.

Recommendation 10: Use the Sustainable Development Goals and indicators as 'goal posts' for development partnerships to work towards, and as the basis for regular monitoring and evaluation.



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