



Coordinadora Latinoamericana y
del Caribe de Pequeños Productores
de Comercio Justo

CLAC Press Release

A Fair Climate Agreement for Fair Trade Producers

San Salvador, 28 October 2011 – The countdown has begun in Latin America and the Caribbean, as fair trade producers get ready to participate in the 17th Climate Change Summit (COP 17).

Despite the devastating impacts from climate change facing small producers, their voices are not being heard in the climate change negotiations—and this will lead to drastic effects for the entire developing world. In response the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Small Fair Trade Producers (*Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños Productores de Comercio Justo*—CLAC) has, together with its counterparts in Africa and Asia, taken a leadership role in the Fair Trade movement’s participation in the process of defining climate change policies.

Fair Trade producers are clearly feeling the effects from climate change. Alex Flores, the manager of APRAINORES, an organization of cashew producers in El Salvador, comments that, “the water level has never risen like it did a couple of weeks ago; after ten days of intense rains in El Salvador, the water rose to a meter above the floor level of our installations, and we lost approximately 60 tons of raw material in process and in storage. There were also damages to our infrastructure, plus APRAINORES producers suffered damages to their basic grain crops in the fields, and also lost livestock. Elsewhere, the rising sea level ruined at least four hectares of cashews.”

This is only one example of the many negative impacts that producers must confront. During the last month alone, producers in southern Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and Colombia have been affected tremendously. The rhythm and magnitude of the changes observed in the climate are also adversely affecting the productivity levels for some crops. Because of the greater frequency, duration or magnitude of events such as droughts, heat waves, rising temperatures, changes in rainfall and flooding, there is a considerably increase in damages and losses in harvests. As a consequence of these disasters, yields from crops will continue to diminish and many people in small communities will be left without work and without food.

The international Fair Trade movement is well known in its work to protect and support small producers and workers in the South. Its mission is to connect disadvantaged producers with



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consumers, promote more fair commercial conditions and educate producers on fighting poverty. **CLAC** represents over 250,000 small, democratically-organized producers participating in Fair Trade in Latin America and Caribbean.

Fair Trade works toward a fair playing field in the area of commerce for small producers in developing countries. However, climate change threatens to erode the benefits attained from their efforts, creating an even more unfair playing field, given the lack of “access to knowledge and to the financial mechanisms that would allow them to respond to climate changes, plus the lack of support for overcoming vulnerability.”

Although Fair Trade offers some assistance, much more is needed to help producers adapt to these challenges. For this reason CLAC, together with other allies, are currently in the process of building a Climate Change Strategy that will assist producers in overcoming these effects.

CLAC will also be participating in the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 17), and will work to raise the voices of small Fair Trade producers.

CLAC urges governments and stakeholders linked to the agricultural sector to come together to achieve the population’s food and nutritional security and sovereignty, assuring means of survival in rural areas that are adaptable to changes and variations in the climate, and achieving the comprehensive sustainability of the agricultural sector.



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