Introduction

We’ve arrived at the end of the third quarter of this year’s work in CLAC. All of us—in national networks, product networks, support committees, members of the Board and our operations team—have been able to make progress in our annual work plan. During this quarter we’ve also joined efforts with Producers’ Networks in Africa and Asia, to continue to defend fair trade values, and especially to fight for greater representation in the Fairtrade International system.

In this third CLAC newsletter for 2011 you will find some news on the main events during these three months (July to September), including: a meeting held by CAN (the Alliance of three producers’ networks: CLAC, AFN and NAP), the Honduran Network’s Assembly, the first Latin American Gender Workshop, and other important activities.
**Virtual Service Desk for Coffee SPO’s**

The Coffee Network, together with FLO International and Twin, have established a virtual service desk for coffee SPOs, designed to provide advisory services and assistance in all aspects of commercial management for these organizations, from receiving to sending batches to respective buyers. To initiate the work at this virtual Desk, priority has been given to addressing problems of non-compliance with contracts, with the goal of finding solutions that can be negotiated with all involved parties. For this reason this new email address has been established: Coffeehelp@fairtrade.net. The aim is for SPOs to be able to do what buyers have been doing, specifically to express the difficulties they’re experiencing and their needs for assistance. Each case that comes up at the Desk will be addressed with diligence and the corresponding discretion. In addition the cla@se learning community has established a module on managing coffee risks and accessing this service desk. The Coordinating Committee for the Coffee Network is inviting SPOs to feel comfortable in expressing the difficulties they’re facing to the email address provided.

**Meeting of the Alliance of CAN Producers’ Networks**

A meeting between the Latin American Producers’ Networks (CLAC), Africa (Fairtrade Africa) and Asia (NAP) was held in Managua, Nicaragua on August 23-25, 2011. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss and propose a new governance model for the FLO system. Also participating at the event were members of the fair trade national initiatives from Canada (FAIRTRADE CANADA), the United States (FAIRTRADE USA), Switzerland, and France (Max Haveelar), plus executive staff and members of the Board of Directors of FLO International. During the event other topics of great importance within the FLO system were also discussed, such as Producers’ Diversity, and other topics involving coordination with fair trade initiatives and FLO staff.
**Assembly of the Honduran Network**

The Honduran Network of Small Fair Trade Producers (*Coordinadora Hondureña de Pequeños Productores de Comercio Justo*—CHPP) held its Ordinary General Assembly on August 27, with the aim of reporting to members the activities carried out during the year. Participating were 18 of the 22 member organizations, plus two special guests: Hugo Reyes representing CLAC, and Danilo Zalada, president of UNIOCOOP, one of the organizations that brings together many of the country’s cooperatives.

Some of the particularly important points on the agenda were:

- Presentation of Reports from the Board of Directors and a Financial Report
- Election of another member for the Board of directors: Member III and a Fiscal Board.

The event provided an opportunity for many representatives of organizations to learn about the goals of the Honduran Network and what can be achieved through an organization that represents small producers.

**Producers in the Coffee Shop at MISTURA**

(Peru’s National Gastronomic Fair)

Small producers’ coffee could not be absent at MISTURA, the gastronomic fair that all Peruvians wait for each year. In addition to tasting the most exquisite Peruvian dishes, fair-goers could end their walk through the fair with a delicious cup of coffee.

MISTURA took place on September 9-18 at the Exhibition Park in Lima.

In its fourth year the Coffee Shop was a major success, exhibiting this aromatic product that has won important international awards and is recognized as a high-quality product.
The cooperatives that set up their booths in the Coffee Shop included CAI Naranjillo, COCLA, CECOVASA, Café Perú and the National Coffee Board, the latter representing over 45,000 coffee-growers from the country’s 12 coffee-producing regions.

Participating organizations offered their best specialty, organic, high-quality coffees to the public—the same coffee exported to the most demanding markets in Europe and the US.

**Latin American Gender Workshop in Lima, Peru**

Peru hosted the First Latin American Gender Workshop that brought together representatives from small producers’ organizations in the Latin American region. The event was organized by CLAC, CNCJ-Perú and FLO International, with support from FLO Central America, Irish Aid, FOS Socialist Solidarity from Belgium, and the National Coffee Board. The workshop was held on September 22-23, with 45 participants from six different countries (Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru), of which 33% were men and 67% were women. Two of the most important objectives of the workshop were to promote successful exchanges between participating SPOs and to collect input for formulating a Regional Gender Strategy, with CLAC fulfilling a leadership role, and a global gender strategy, for which FLO will be responsible.
Those in attendance were very willing to participate, very sensitive to the topic of gender equality and very interested in learning about ways for women to be included in the productive, social, health and education spheres.

The exchanging of experiences between the different organizations and countries was very enriching, and resulted in **two successful practices:**

1) Development and implementation of gender policies, and
2) Some organizations have used part of the fair trade premium as the basis for implementing projects for the advancement of women, conducting training sessions on gender equality, and promoting meetings among women including not only members of the organization but also members’ wives.

**Limitations encountered:**

1) Budgetary limitations of SPOs
2) Cultural problems (machismo, self-marginalization by women, traditional roles
3) Women’s lack of access to productive resources and durable goods
4) Women’s low educational levels
5) Lack of awareness of the issue of rights.

A number of participants expressed the opinion that it is important for fair trade criteria to include the topic of gender, and emphasized the importance of designating part of the fair trade premium to benefit women more and for women to be included in organizations, but they suggested that this should be on a voluntary basis for each organization, and that regional strategies and internal policies should be created within each organization to achieve these objectives. These participants did not agree with FLO inserting specific criteria on this issue to be complied with, since it turns out to be something that is imposed.
CLAC’s Position on FT USA’s Departure from Fairtrade International

On September of this year, CLAC publicly declared its position on FT USA’s departure from the FLO system, which is presented below:

The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Small Fair Trade Producers (CLAC) is a founding member and co-owner of Fairtrade International, and is strongly committed to the future of Fair Trade for disadvantaged producers.

The CLAC represents democratically organized small farmers, and addresses the strengthening and development of grassroots organizations promoting their products and values; does advocacy within the framework of fair trade, being strongly committed to self-management and empowerment of Small Farmers' Organizations.

The CLAC is also committed to the mandate of its last Assembly on November 2010, where delegates from 70 organizations representing more than 119,761 farmers, reaffirmed their support to saying No to the Certification of Plantations and Contract Production of certified products in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Therefore, we as CLAC join the regret caused by the departure of FAIRTRADE USA and we express the fact that we cannot share its new vision of expansion, since it threatens the empowerment, development and self-management of small organized producers.

We also feel it is the right moment to propose a review of the current system requesting FLO to stop the certification of plantations (HL) in Latin America and the Caribbean, to commit itself by not certifying contract production (CP) of any product and to serve the healthy interests of small organized producers; thus CLAC will commit itself to actively continue assisting FLO in promoting and making Fair Trade grow in the world, fulfilling the mission of empowering disadvantaged producers and generating development through trade and self-management.

We propose to continue working together for a global fair trade that respects and promotes the original values and principles that brought us together,

CLAC Board
San Salvador, El Salvador, September 22nd, 2011

News from the Small Producers’ Symbol

CERTIMEX, 1st Certification Entity authorized

“**We have seen that the best way to move forward with the Small Producers’ Symbol is through direct agreements between Small Producers’ Organizations and their buyers. In this way, both a market and supply are guaranteed, and the Alliance between producers and the industry is strengthened.**”

Jerónimo Pruin
FUNDEPPO Executive Director
August 2011

On July 28, during the Eleventh Congress of CEPCO, the Oaxaca State Coffee Producers Network (Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca) in Mexico, FUNDEPPO presented CERTIMEX (Mexican Certification Agency for Ecological Products and Processes) with its authorization as a Certification Entity for the Small Producers’ Symbol. CERTIMEX, based in the city of Oaxaca, will now begin to participate in the Symbol’s Certification System.

CERTIMEX is the first Certification Entity authorized by FUNDEPPO. With this new development, it is hoped that the number of Mexican Small Producers’ Organizations certified under the Small Producers’ Symbol will soon increase. CERTIMEX has a long history of certifying Small Producers’ Organizations for ecological production and fair trade. It is hoped that other CEs, which have expressed strong interest, will also be authorized for the Symbol in the coming months.

New Products and Buyers

Twelve Small Producers’ Organizations (SPOs) are currently certified with the Symbol. They are from Honduras, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Ecuador and Mexico.

In addition eight other SPOs have sent in their formal application and are still going through the Certification process. We also have a long list of pre-applications that we hope will soon become formal applications, and in this way help to strengthen the Organized Small Producers’ movement that is working in favor of “more than fair trade” and more sustainable production and life for all.

As for buyers, two were recently registered: Just Us! Coffee from Canada and Ethiquable from France. Many others have expressed interest in beginning to participate.
Changes in the Symbol’s system

ˌWe have recently made some adjustments in the system of standards and certification for the Small Producers’ Symbol. The improvements are the result of workshops we have held with both producer organizations and buyers in a number of countries.

ˌ The improvements are helpful for all of us, to make the Symbol’s system stronger, more resistant to abuses by companies not committed to the project, and more clear and precise for everyone.

ˌ Some of the documents in which changes have been made are:
   1. General Standard
   2. Certification and Registration Procedures
   3. Symbol Handbook

If you need more information, do not hesitate to contact the FUNDEPPO staff at this email: info@tusimbolo.org or by phone: +52-55-52647205 (Mexico).

Did you know?

“The graphic image of the Small Producers’ Symbol represents a house that has been built solidly and is open to everyone, as well as balance and unity between producers and consumers, between men and women, between nature and dignified living. Its colors represent the vitality of the land, of crops, new life and the heart.”

General Introduction to FUNDEPPO, July 2011.