Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC)
MESSAGE FROM CLAC’S CHAIR

Since its creation, the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers, CLAC, has been committed to the economic, social and environmental development of rural families and their communities. Following the multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approach that characterizes Fair Trade, CLAC establishes relationships and strategic alliances to build, from the communities themselves, a more sustainable and inclusive development. Furthermore, it is a key continental ally for designing, implementing and evaluating effective policies and programs that contribute to ending poverty and reducing inequality in the rural areas of our continent.

We have arrived at a crucial moment in time, to define sustainable strategies within all countries of the world. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) require great commitment and partnership between governments, public and private sectors, as well as the civil society, in order to address the needs of individual countries and marginalized populations. These goals aim to build a more equitable, inclusive and resilient society, and to generate development from the human, cultural, social and environmental diversity of our region.

Building a more sustainable world requires action, and must be regarded as an obligation to our children and future generations. Faced with the challenges of sustainable development, the Fair Trade movement has proposed, over several decades, concrete actions that guarantee small farmers and workers greater economic, social and environmental sustainability. The achievements of Fair Trade are based on the quality of agricultural and environmental practices, respect for individual and human rights, as well as fair long-term trading relations. Fair Trade’s approach...
to development is multi-dimensional (from economic to cultural), multi-level (from local to global) and multi-stakeholder (from the farmer to the consumer). A more transparent and sustainable trade is the basis for enabling the weakest productive rings to pave the way for development.

Fair Trade allows for a better economic and social environment by providing access to markets under fairer conditions. Fair Trade promotes empowerment and community leadership, demonstrating that both small farmers and rural workers, through their unions, organizations and associations, can lead processes of local and national development; thus becoming key players for the implementation of public policies and land development plans.

CLAC is a network of small producers and workers and co-owns the Fairtrade International System. In CLAC we consistently work on empowering, supporting and assisting organizations of Fair Trade small farmers and rural workers in Latin America and the Caribbean; as well as representing them at the continental and international levels. Through our work we contribute to make their needs visible (adaptation to climate change, market access and financing, income and wages, including women and youth, child protection, advocacy and awareness, among other key issues) and connect them with global challenges. We build strategic alliances at the continental level as well as internationally; we advocate in public and private entities, within an economic system that still generates too many inequalities, much exclusion and deep crises (environmental, food, financial, etc.). Moreover, we work every day for the most disadvantaged, the same that feed us every day, cool down the planet and continue to give us free environmental services.

By recognizing these efforts and improving the lives of farmers and workers, CLAC, is dedicated to such work with passion and professionalism, knowing that others believe in us and are walking by our side in this long road.

Marike de Peña
Chair of CLAC’s Board
CLAC’s work is based on providing support for capacity building of Fair Trade organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. The operational work of CLAC is guided by the Strategic Guidelines that are reviewed by delegates representing the different countries and products of the region in the General Assembly of CLAC, which is held every three years.

The services we provide to organizations of small producers and workers include training in Organizational, Commercial and Financial Strengthening, certification and standards, as well as improving productivity and product quality. Furthermore, we provide support on cross-cutting issues related to Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability, Gender, Child Protection, Food Sovereignty, Youth Inclusion and Workers’ Rights. Likewise, CLAC’s Strategic Guidelines are also implemented through projects, most of which are developed in cooperative partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

To facilitate our services we have a staff of 50 individuals working from different countries of the region, with expertise in the various issues we address in our daily work. We also have an administrative staff located at our headquarters in El Salvador, which has optimal administrative procedures that allow us to centralize financial, legal and organizational operations, in order to exercise an integrated and holistic control over the organization, and to make effective use of the resources needed to fulfill the mission of the organization.

CLAC currently has more than a decade of experience in project implementation and in providing technical services to our members. Moreover, CLAC operates in a highly complex global context, which entails constant challenges. Nevertheless, our practices have been strengthened from the diversity of the challenges we face on a daily basis. We have also been able to adapt to changes imposed by society, the market and the international environment; and thus, we have been able to contribute with the growth and development of grassroots organizations and to influence social, political and economic institutions in the region.

Xiomara Paredes
CLAC’s CEO
WHAT IS FAIR TRADE?

Fair Trade is a global social movement that promotes responsible and sustainable production-trade patterns and development opportunities for small farmers, workers and artisans in economic and social disadvantage compared to the dominant players in the market. It is a business model that centers human life, in addition to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of societies; dignifying work, respecting the environment and promoting responsible and sustainable management of natural resources.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE FAIR TRADE MOVEMENT?

Fair Trade ensures that organized small farmers have direct market access on fair and equitable terms; creating sustainable and transparent supply chains, as direct as possible between producers and consumers. It recognizes the work of producers and their organizations, as well as their commitment to the development of their communities. Moreover, it ensures that agricultural workers and artisans have decent working conditions, and promotes cooperativism and empowerment.

The most important elements of the movement are: a) the overall sustainability in all its dimensions (social, economic and environmental), with a focus on shared responsibility among all actors involved in commercial supply chains; b) a deep work with those who have always been deprived of direct market access, promoting associativity to become leading actors of local development, and build justice and solidarity, as well as transparent and long term trade relations. Thus, dignifying the work of human beings, respecting the cultural, ethnic and gender diversity, and promoting environmental and intergenerational sustainability; c) the promotion and respect of human and labor rights, promoting a fair recognition of the work of agricultural workers and artisans.

Another key objective of Fair Trade is fostering a culture of responsible consumption, because consuming means choosing what kind of development we want.
WHAT IS THE FAIRTRADE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM?

The *Fairtrade* International system is an international umbrella organization, which is made up of Producer Networks (in Latin America, Africa and Asia) and National *Fairtrade* Organizations (which are dedicated to promoting sales of the products from certified organizations, awareness among consumers and advocacy with decision makers). Currently, this system is the most important Fair Trade stakeholder at the global level, and promotes certified products under the “*Fairtrade*” brand. Its creation in 1997 was due to the convergence between the first two Fair Trade certifications: Max Havelaar (the result of cooperation between UCIRI, the Union of Indigenous Communities of the Isthmus Region in Mexico, and the Dutch NGO Solidaridad) and TransFair. While *Fairtrade* International defines the standards for “*Fairtrade*” products, FLO-Cert is the auditing body that certifies and monitors producer organizations, traders, importers and processors using the “*Fairtrade*” brand for their products.

WHAT IS CLAC?

The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers, CLAC, is co-owner of the *Fairtrade* International system. CLAC is the network that represents all “*Fairtrade*” certified organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as other Fair Trade organizations; its mission is to represent and promote the interests, empowerment and development of its associate members and their communities. Created in 2004, with legal status since 2005; its roots are found in CLA (the Latin American Coordinator, which grouped Fair Trade small coffee farmers) and PAUAL (Small Beekeepers States of Latin America), two continental networks of small producers, both created in 1996, a year before the creation of FLO. Currently, it has more than 700 member organizations in 24 countries of the continent. It consists of National Platforms (which bring together the producers of one country but of different products), Product Networks (which bring together producers of the same product but in different countries of the continent) and a Workers’ Network.
CLAC’S MISSION

We are a body representing organizations of small producers and democratically organized workers, contributing to the strengthening and development of grassroots organizations. We facilitate assistance to producers and workers, promote their products and values, and work to influence in social, political and economic instances.

VISION

CLAC is an organization with operational capacity to provide assistance and training to base-level organizations. CLAC is organizationally strengthened through the effective participation of its diverse actors; working to impact the entities that generate development and trade policies, and to position our organization at local and international levels; achieving differentiation and promoting the products of our small producers.
The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers, CLAC, is one of the three Producer Networks that co-owns the Fairtrade International system. It was created in 2004, to cover all agricultural Fair Trade products, through the cooperation between two existing continental networks that existed since 1996: CLA (the Latin American Coordinator, which grouped Fair Trade small coffee farmers) and PAUAL (Small Beekeepers States of Latin America).
The highest authority of CLAC is its General Assembly (GA). The GA is constituted by 175 delegates from Fair Trade Small Producer Organizations and Workers’ associations of the different countries and products in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Grassroots organizations of different countries democratically choose the people who will represent the different products in the General Assembly of CLAC; then, the delegates elect the Board of Directors, the Oversight Committee, as well as give their approval to CLAC’s three-year Strategic Plan and make other important decisions for the development of the organization.

The Board of Directors is responsible for implementing the mandate of the Assembly. In the Board there are 15 members, representing all regions and all products of the continent, as well as workers from plantations that are certified under the Fairtrade Standard for Hired Labor. The Board, likewise, appoints an Operative Committee, whose purpose is to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan and other agreements.
The National Platforms are very important entities within CLAC, as they play a key role in all processes of dialogue, analysis, discussion and consultation. Furthermore, they support and follow up services to producers and workers, which CLAC provides to its members. The National Fair Trade Platforms are created by the small producers’ organizations, regardless of the product. It is important to note that the National Platforms have their own legal structures and internal decision-making processes.

Producer organizations are also articulated in Product Networks, through which producers of the same product but from different countries meet and work together. These instances allow them to exchange experiences, build strategies and develop work plans work at the continental level. Currently, CLAC has already established several Networks that have spent several years working on Fair Trade, these are: the Coffee Network, the Honey Network, the Banana Network, the Cocoa Network and the Sugar Network. Likewise, other Networks are advancing in their first steps, such as the Quinoa Network and the Fresh Fruit and Juices Network.

CLAC also has a Network for organized Workers from private certified Fairtrade plantations under the Standard for Hired Labor. The Workers’ Network is an instance for convergence and dialogue through which rural workers in private plantations are able to participate more actively in the Fairtrade International global system.
1. Organizational and operational strengthening of CLAC.
2. Promotion of Fair Trade values and principles.
3. Strengthening and development of our member organizations.
4. Growth and linkage with new and existing markets.
5. Advocacy.
Since its creation CLAC has been supported by various international partners and donors. Some of the most important partners in recent years at the international level are: a) the *Fairtrade* International system, as the most important actor within Fair Trade; b) international cooperation in the UK, represented by the “Department for International Development (DFID)”\(^1\); c) development cooperation of the Government of Finland, through *Fairtrade* Finland; d) Belgian Cooperation, through the Belgian Development Agency (BTC); e) UNDP, in the Dominican Republic.; f) IFAD and Agexport in Central America; g) the Belgian NGO TRIAS; h) the Progress Foundation of the Netherlands; i) the NGO TWIN UK; l) and other NGOs such as OXFAM, CORDAID, AGRITERRA, and SHARED INTEREST. Internationally, CLAC is co-owner of the *Fairtrade* system, working as a continental network of producers and rural workers.

In addition, CLAC is a member of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) and FAST, the Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade. It is noteworthy that at the national and local levels, both the National Platforms as well as the member organizations of CLAC, work to develop strategic relationships with other partners and donors.
CLAC IS A MEMBER OF:

![Logo Images]

CURRENTLY, CLAC’S MAIN PARTNERS ARE:

![Logo Images]
DIFFERENT COORDINATION AREAS

• CEO

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the technical, administrative and operational management of CLAC, contributing to the sustainability of the organization in accordance with the Statutes and strategies adopted by the General Assembly and in conjunction with the Board of Directors. Its responsibilities also include maintaining a close relationship with both the governance bodies within CLAC (e.g. the Board of Directors and the Oversight Committee), as well as with the National Platforms, the Product Networks and the Workers’ Network.

CEO: Xiomara Paredes
(xiomarap@claconline.com)

• Administration

Since 2010, CLAC develops its annual Working Plans, in order to deliver the best results according to the mission of the organization. It also aims to demonstrate transparency, efficiency and accountability in the management of resources. From the administrative area of CLAC, we have strengthened the internal, administrative and financial controls, creating the necessary tools for positively overcoming all external audits in a timely manner and implementing resulting recommendations and advice. Every year we are evaluated with better results, both by the cooperating agencies and at the institutional level.

Administrator: Sabrina Henríquez
(sabrina.h@claconline.com)

• Organizational Strengthening and Capacity Building Coordination

Since May of 2013, CLAC has started to develop this area of work, the largest within the operational structure of CLAC. Currently, it has 35 people at the continental level, including the Regional Coordinators (Mesoamerica, Caribbean, Andean Region and Southern Cone) and the Strengthening and Development facilitators working in the field around the 24 countries of the region.

The Product Coordinators and the Advisors on the Crosscutting Themes (Gender, Generational Inclusion, Social Compliance and Labor Rights) are also part of this team.

CLAC’s Strengthening and Development Strategy is based on 6 pillars:
1) Organizational Strengthening;
2) Financial Strengthening;
3) Productive Strengthening;
4) Commercial Strengthening;
5) Standards Compliance; and
6) Cross-cutting themes: Gender, Generational Inclusion, Social Compliance, Labor Rights, Climate Change, Food Sovereignty, Environmental Sustainability and Advocacy.

Coordinator: Anneke Theunissen
(anneke.t@claconline.com)
• Communication and ITC

Since 2013, CLAC has a Communication and Media Strategy, which aims to strengthen the institutional work through effective communication. The strategy’s goals are also focused on generating greater representation, legitimacy, visibility and participation of Small Producer Organizations and Worker Associations. The new strategy, 2015-2017, promotes the use of Information Technology and Communication (ITC), with a focus on knowledge management, and its ultimate goal is to spread knowledge among different places and people, in order to share it and use it with the members in each country and with the civil society at large.

Coordinator: Evelyn Araniva  
(comunicacion@claconline.com)

Within the ICT area, we give specialized IT support to CLAC members, on the use of different hardware and software tools, promoting efficient and safe use of information. Moreover, we develop customized solutions for field data collection applications, facilitating monitoring and evaluation of the activities carried out by the technical staff on the field.

ITC Manager: Rodolfo Carmona  
(rodolfo.c@claconline.com)

• Advocacy and Fundraising

Since December 2013, CLAC has an Advocacy and Fundraising Coordinator. It has since been able to build and work on the first Advocacy Strategy for CLAC, which proposes regional priorities, such as:
1) Differentiated public policies;
2) Citizen Awareness;
3) Commitments and profound responsibility related to climate change;
4) Poverty and inequality reduction;
5) Strengthening of member organizations and National Platforms.

Regarding Resource Management, we are working on developing calls on all organizational levels (grassroots organizations, National Platforms, Product Networks and CLAC). Additionally, this area works on building new strategic partnerships, at the continental and international levels, to develop programs and projects that benefit our members, their families and the rural communities to which they belong.

Coordinator: Marco Coscione  
(marco.c@claconline.com)
• MEL - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

In mid-2015, CLAC created the MEL Area, with the aim of monitoring, evaluating and systematizing learning within CLAC. The MEL area is also part of the MEL Global Team of the Fairtrade International System, together with the Producer Networks and other organizations, ensuring coherence and synergy between the activities of MEL globally and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Coordinator: René Moreno
(rene.moreno@clac-comerciojusto.org)

• Programs and Projects

The Programs and Projects Coordinator is responsible for the supervising the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects within CLAC. The Coordinator is also responsible for maintaining close links with other agencies that provide strengthening to CLAC’s member organizations, as well as with different actors and institutions, which are part of the development of the different programs and projects.

Coordinator: Susy Alejandra Pinos
(susy.p@clac-comerciojusto.org)