

AFRICAN FAIR TRADE SYMPOSIUM

Cotonou, April 6th -9th 2006

DECLARATION

The first African Fair Trade Symposium which was held in Cotonou, Benin from April 6th to 9th 2006, and which gathered about sixty participants from 16 countries, from West, Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa, from Europe, and Canada

Reiterates

- the major role played by producers and workers in fair trade chains as to their competence, inventiveness, diversity, and initiative represent indispensable leverage points in building a fair trade process
- the commitment of civil society organisations and support organisms to strive for more justice and equality in South-South and North-South trade relations

Comments on

- the dynamism and the commitment of professional organisations and bodies that have chosen the process of fair trade
- the diversity of their sectors of activities including agriculture, handicraft, processing, or service delivery

Recognizes

- the unfair nature of international trade in its structure, regulations and philosophy towards African countries
- the lack or the inexistence of involvement of public stakeholders and regional integration institutions in taking ownership of and promoting fair trade for the latter to be integrated into public policies
- the absence of several organisations and international institutions in integrating a vision of fair trade adapted to the African context and shared by the Africans
- the isolation and weakness involvement of fair trade organisations in the current world economy
- the low level of fair trade ownership by African consumers

Considers

- human-centred fair trade as an alternative to profit-centred development
- fair trade as a tool for development which respects equality for all in rights and not as a charity or a marketing slogan
- fair trade at the service of African stakeholders as a priority

Supports

- the "Stop the EPAs" campaign
- the building of integrating regional economic spaces according to a rhythm adapted to the level of development reached by the countries and regions
- ongoing initiatives and campaigns geared towards promoting fair trade

Requests

- the governments and regional integration organisations to take their responsibilities
 - o in defending the interests of Africans
 - o in creating an economic and legal environment favourable to fair trade, and
 - o in creating regional, national, and local fair trade markets
- the modification of North-South relations and the respect of the Africans' interests in regional and international negotiations, especially:
 - o stopping the negotiation process of the ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement under their current format
 - o a moratorium of the current negotiation process of World Trade Organisation agreements in order to have a public debate.

Done in Cotonou, this 9th April 2006

Participating networks and organisations : ACDIC, AFPEF, African Governance Network, Agro Espace, ANOPACI, APEFL, ARMFD Niger, ARFA, Arôme d'Afrique, ARPA, Association Wouol, CEAS-Burkina, COFTA (Cameroun, Kenya, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzanie), CRADONG, CSFT, DEDRAS, Doubani, ECHOPPE, ETRAPA, Fasocoton, FOSCAO, FNNDP, Geres, Glegbenu Network,, GRAPAD, HELVETAS (Burkina, Bénin and Mali), ICCO, ICTSD, IFAT, IRA, Max Havelaar France, MINGA, Oxfam International, Oxfam Belgique, Oxfam Fair Trade, Oxfam Québec, Prescraft, RIPPES, ROPPA, SAILD, UGPAT, SOFITEX, SOLIDARMONDE, Tech-Dev, UNPCB, VECO (Bénin, Belgium and Ouganda), WSSE / Fair Trade workshop.