

Memorandum of Understanding about Fair Trade Nations and Regions

Scottish Fair Trade Forum, Fairtrade Towns Netherlands, Fair Trade Wales, Fairtrade Sweden, Fair Trade Towns Campaign Poland, Fairtrade Canada, Secretariat of Northern Ireland All Party Group on Fair Trade, all agreed about a Memorandum of Understanding that can be used in further discussions about the concepts Fair Trade Nations and Regions.

Introduction

In September 2016 a group of representatives of Fair Trade organisations met in Glasgow to discuss their interest in the concept of Fair Trade Nations and Regions. This Memorandum of Understanding sets out the shared view of those who attended the meeting and have signed this document. It sets out shared understanding of what has been done and what might be developed to promote the principles set out in 'A Charter of Fair Trade Principles' through pursuing Fair Trade Nations and Regions campaigns.

Key points of shared understanding

1. Fair Trade Nation and Region campaigns need to be organic, inclusive and grassroots led. Where such campaigns have emerged, it has been led by campaigner demand to take action to the 'next' level.
2. There needs to be an added value in having a Fair Trade Nation or Region campaign.
3. A Fair Trade Nation or Region campaign has to be a dynamic process, an opportunity for further change, a pioneering journey, a platform to campaign for further action.
4. It has a leadership and co-ordinating role offering a space to bring together campaigners, civil society and policy-makers.
5. While there is a desire to have a shared understanding of the concept and value of Fair Trade Nations and Regions, it is essential to any Fair Trade Nation or Region that it is relevant and sensitive to its own cultural, social and political setting. 'Basic' guidelines might be developed representing areas where it might be expected Fair Trade Nations and Region would be active. However, the detail of guidelines would need to be relevant and specific to the particular nation or region.
6. While there is a desire to move forward together in cooperation in developing the concept of Fair Trade Nations and Regions, there is a recognition that as a grassroots movement, the nature and character of individual campaigns cannot be determined by any external actors.

Areas to be explored for 'basic' guidelines

Any Fair Trade Nation or Region campaigns could usefully explore certain core criteria and seek to use them in a way which is relevant to them. Areas to be considered could be: community engagement and awareness including the relationship between Fair Trade Towns campaigns and Fair Trade Nations and Regions campaigns; political engagement and support; availability and purchasing of Fair Trade; general awareness of Fair Trade; activities supporting Fair Trade across different sectors of society. There also needs to be a further work on how Fair Trade Nation and Region status is assessed. Again, there is a desire to move forward together on this while also reflecting diversity and innovation in approaches.

Next steps

Two of the great strengths of the Fair Trade movement have been cooperation and diversity. We believe that the concept of Fair Trade Nations and Regions can be developed further based on these strengths. We commit to co-operate on further work to develop the concept. We also commit to recognise the diversity of our campaigns and to draw strength from that.