



*Second Conference of the World Banana Forum
Guayaquil, Ecuador
February 28-29, 2012*

E-DISCUSSION SUMMARY OF THE SC MEMBER AND WG COORDINATORS

Dates: March 8th-10th, 2012

Address: <http://dgroups.org/fao/worldbananaforum>

Number of participants invited: 86

Number of Contributors: 14

Number of messages posted: 50

Summary of contributions per subject area

1 – Conference venue: hotel chosen, meeting rooms and other facilities

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- *What is your overall opinion of the Hotel selected by the WBF Secretariat and its facilities?*
- *Did you like the meeting rooms? What did you like/dislike?*

Contributions

a) Hotel

What they liked:

- Most contributors expressed satisfaction with the Hotel;
- Contributors liked the venue and facilities;
- Contributors liked the location and size of the venue;
- Contributors liked the friendliness of staff and their supportive attitude;
- One contributor expressed satisfaction with rates.

What they disliked:

- One contributor mentioned that the Hotel prices were too high;
- Overall opinion that staff was not responsive to booking inquiries before the Conference.

b) Meeting Rooms

What they liked:

- Contributors expressed overall satisfaction with the meeting rooms;

What they disliked:

- The meeting rooms did not have windows;
- Meeting rooms were too cold.

2 – Services: audio, interpretation, and catering

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- What are your overall impressions of the audio, interpretation, and catering services?

Contributions

a) Audio

- General comment that audio was good.

b) Interpretation

- All contributors stressed that it would have been very helpful to have interpreters in the group sessions;
- One contributor commented that one French interpreter was good, and the other had poor French and interpretation skills, to a point that some French speakers listened to interpretation in English.

c) Catering

- General agreement that overall catering services were good;
- Suggestion to add vegetarian meals in future Conferences.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *The absence of interpreters in the group sessions was due to budget restrictions.*
- *Proper feedback has been sent to the company providing interpretation services.*

3 – Conference program in general including field visits

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- Did you like the WBF Conference program and field visits? Was the duration suitable? What did you like/dislike?

Contributions

a) Conference Program

- Some contributors suggested that the Conference should last three days instead of two;
- Most agreed that additional time is needed for group sessions;
- One contributor suggested to hold Conference every year budget permitting;
- Suggestion to have a social event after the Conference.

b) Field Visits

- Most agreed that it was an excellent idea to offer field visits;
- Field visit organizers were not responsive to inquiries nor did they send out information (especially when the visits were rescheduled);
- Many suggested that they would have liked to visit fair-trade banana plantations, and small producers. Overall lack of variation within visits;
- Contributors suggested to add more days in between visits and Conference;
- Many suggested that fieldtrips should not have overlapped with women's meeting;
- Interpreters could not be heard and it was hard to follow explanations.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *Extending the Conference to three days is feasible if funds are available. We will propose this option in the future.*

- *There are not sufficient resources (financial/human resources) to organize such a big event as the WBF every year. Should the situation change dramatically, we would consider changing the frequency of our Conferences.*
- *Proper feedback has been sent to the organization which prepared the field visits.*

4 – Discussion groups

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

*- Did you like the discussion group sessions? What did you like/dislike about them? Did the facilitators of the groups (i.e. the coordinators) do a good job? Did they promote the participation of everyone?
- Do you think that the time allocated was enough (i.e. 2.5 hours on day one; 2 hours on day two)? If not, which alternative use of time would you propose?*

Contributions

a) Group Sessions

What they liked

- Overall, contributors liked the discussion in group sessions.

What they disliked

- Most suggested more time needed for group sessions;
- Every contributor mentioned that interpretation services were needed;
- Some suggested narrowing down topics in order to achieve tangible objectives.

b) Facilitators

- Most comments expressed satisfaction with WG facilitators;
- One contributor was dissatisfied because one of the WG facilitators left after discussion day 1.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *Professional/external facilitation was not considered due to the lack of financial resources and the need to have a deep knowledge of the particularities affecting the development of each of the WGs of the Forum. The facilitators of the group sessions were regular participants of the WBF so thank you to all of them for their good work and dedication.*

5 – Presentations in Plenary (Day 2 at Salon Ramada)

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

-Did you like the presentations at the Plenary Hall? If you liked/disliked a presentation in particular please share your comments and explain why.

Contributions

c) Presentations

- Overall comment that there were too many presentations but that they were nicely presented;
- Suggestion to add more discussion sessions instead of presentations;
- Most commented that Compagnie Frutiere's presentation was too long and too detailed.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *We will seek more discussion sessions or interactive presentations in the future.*
- *The organizing committee of the next Conference will be responsible for a pre-screening of the presentations to be made.*

6 – What did you like best and least of the Conference?

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- *We would like to receive your thoughts and overall opinion of the Conference.*
- *What did you like most and why?*
- *What did you like least or frankly dislike?*

Contributions

a) General opinion of Conference

What they liked:

- Most commented that it was a good event;
- Participants were very enthusiastic and committed with the topics;
- Proactive discussions
- Most expressed that it was a great idea to hold a separate women's meeting;
- One contributor expressed satisfaction that the event was held in a producer country.

What they disliked:

- Contributor suggested that a badge was very much needed to identify people;
- Most contributors suggested that preliminary participants list did not reflect actual participants;
- It would have been good to update list after first day of the Conference, and also to announce overall characteristics of participants during second day of the Conference (region, role within the sector, etc...);
- One person said that participants did not receive enough information regarding the Conference before the event;
- One contributor mentioned that a presentation in the field visit was repeated at the Conference.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *Participants' badges will be prepared for the next Conference.*
- *The organizing committee asked all the participants to fill in the registration list; however some participants preferred to skip this procedure (probably less than a 10%).*

7 – What would you have done differently had you organized the Conference?

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- *Please share any thoughts and recommendations you have that we could apply in the future. This space is open to share your opinion as to what you would do differently and how you would carry it out.*

Contributions

a) Recommendations and opinion

- One contributor suggested that it would have been better to allocate money for badges instead of notepads;
- It would have been useful that Secretariat present a summary report of participants who actually attended the event;
- Contributor suggested developing specific guidelines to ensure consistency of presentations. Suggested to create a working framework for group sessions;

- Suggested to provide information on how to apply for sponsorship to Conference;
- One contributor suggested that Secretariat should have set a \$50 USD conference fee to cover catering services. In response, someone suggested a sliding scale to determine the fee.
- One contributor suggested to have a representative from producer sector present on the Forum's work and future challenges;
- Suggestion to identify networking mechanisms, and WG discussion themes at the beginning of the Conference;
- Overall suggestion that more days are needed for the group sessions and overall Conference activities.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *A list of all the participants who registered their participation is available (available from the Secretariat upon request).*
- *Guidelines for the presentations and for sponsored participants will be prepared in future events.*

8 – Lessons learned and Recommendations

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- We make this space available to receive any additional comments in regards to your experience at the Conference.

Contributions

- a) Recommendations and opinion
 - One contributor suggests producing a 'package' of well summarised and attractive material (with advice from Tesco, Asda, Bama) to send to other major retail companies to raise interest;
 - Suggestion to prepare a letter with advice from the governments of Ecuador and France to other governments: with the aim of getting producer country governments involved in the Working Groups;
 - Suggestion to promote the participation of agrochemical companies and shipping companies so that the entire value chain participates;
 - Important for people to present themselves before each group session discussion.

9 – Suggestions on the way forward for the Forum

Secretariat of the WBF's initial message

- The Second Conference of the WBF has now concluded and we have to define how to move forward. Do you have any suggestions and/or recommendations in regards to the future work of the WBF?

At the Forum it was agreed that we must make more efforts to enhance the participation of some categories of players. Which ones do you view as the priority and how can we achieve that? Please give concrete suggestions.

Do you have recommendations on the priorities for the activities of the Working Groups?

Do you have suggestions on how to deliver concrete benefits to the banana sector more rapidly?

Is the calendar of Global Conferences (once every two years) appropriate?

Contributions

- a) Suggestions

- Contributor commented that the way forward should be for each WG to systematize good practices already in place or under implementation to circulate among stakeholders;
- Suggestion to work on WG01's Virtual Library as it is promising;
- Holding WBF Conferences once a year;
- To prepare an attractive package to promote the WBF and raise the needed funds.

Comments by the Secretariat

- *The Secretariat is presently concentrating its efforts in fundraising activities and in broadening the number of WBF participants. Your contributions, involvement and quick response are very much appreciated!*

Follow up Actions:

1. Budget and Fundraising

It is urgent to set a fundraising action plan. During the Steering Committee meeting this was the most important topic. The WBF has reactivated the Task Force on Fundraising (TF01) in order to determine fundraising plan of action.

2. Third Conference of the WBF

The Secretariat will take into account all relevant comments to help prepare the next Conference, tentatively scheduled for early 2014.

3. About the Working Groups

The Secretariat has proposed a part-time facilitator for those WGs that might need it. The Secretariat will also publicize the outputs of activities and sort fundraising needs. Additionally the Secretariat will update the WG's members list, as well as the content of website.