



The World Banana Forum (WBF)

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade

Ninth Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC)

Attended by the SC members and the Working Group (WG) coordinators

19 – 20 February 2015

Lebanon Room, FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

FINAL REPORT

Thursday, 19 February 2015

Morning session (chaired by Mrs Annelot van Leeuwen)

1. Opening speeches by Mr. Boubaker BenBelhassen, Director of the FAO Trade and Markets Division and by the WBF Secretariat

Mr. BenBelhassen welcomed the participants and thanked them for their attendance. He stressed the importance of the World Banana Forum as a global platform for increasing the sustainability of banana production and trade.

Mr. Pascal Liu welcomed the participants and introduced the persons who had recently joined the WBF Secretariat, Ms. Farrah Adam, Consultant and Ms. Paola Cuce, Intern. Mr. Liu also summarized the objectives of the meeting and encouraged the participants to start the discussion from the decisions taken after the last meeting of the Steering Committee (SC). He explained the expected outputs of the meeting and invited participants to share their suggestions on the objectives.

2. Summary of WBF activities in 2014

Mr. Victor Prada presented the work of the Secretariat as supporter and facilitator of the SC, the Working Groups (WG) and the Executive Board (EB), as well as the Action Plan for the SC and WG. The complete document is available in the FTP folder of documents, code WBF-SC9-2015-04e.

3. Distribution of value in the banana supply chain

Mr. Alistair Smith from Banana Link provided an overview of the WG02 activities conducted in the second half of 2014. He pointed out that the work focused on the costs of sustainable production, costs of production, value chain analysis, living wage as compared to minimum wage and distribution of value, and mentioned the tangible outputs of the WG. The WG02 coordinators met in a face to face meeting in Medellin for two days. Twenty eight participants discussed the above mentioned topics in addition to creating a sub-committee on labour costs accounting, based on three elements: net wage; legally required benefits and supra-legal negotiated benefits. The WG02 coordinators also discussed potential ways to include the 'externalities' in WG02's current work.

Mr. Prada provided an overview of the potential agreement of the sub-committee on costs of production composed of Fairtrade International (FI), CIRAD and the WBF Secretariat, who met in Geneva in a meeting facilitated by Mr. Smith. The Sub-committee aims to: achieve a critical mass of information in the banana industry; develop improved production cost calculation sheets; facilitate



debate and negotiation on the current distribution of value and potentially set the basis for future studies on externalities.

Decisions:

- Identify a person or some persons to support Mr. Smith in the coordination of the WG.
- Link the work done by the WG02 with the WG03 for the work on living wages and collective bargaining, since they are closely related.
- Explore concrete collaboration between ILO and WG02 in relation to living wages in Dominican Republic (DR) and Panama, and follow up on those studies.
- Mobilize the public sector.

Follow up:

- The Secretariat will follow up on the agreement between FLO/CIRAD/FAO and discuss the possibility of meeting in March with the Labour Cost Accounting Group.
- Basic will prepare a discussion paper on externalities and its definitions in order to be discussed in 2 months.
- The Secretariat will review the reports on Value Chains in Colombia and Ecuador and share them with the relevant units of FAO.
- Mr. Smith will explore Ecuadorian's government request to develop a methodology to set banana prices throughout the year.
- The Secretariat will collaborate with ILO in Panama and in the Dominican Republic, where the ILO is now undertaking studies and surveys on living wages in the banana sector.
- Mr. Smith and Mr. Prada will prepare a dynamic presentation to show the scenario of how living wages relate with costs of production, sustainable production costs and externalities, in agreement with CIRAD/ Fair Trade International/FAO.

4. Sustainable production systems and environmental impact

WG01 Coordinators presented the activities carried out during the last period that focused on Fusarium TR4, Virtual Library, Red Rust Thrips and Carbon and Water Footprint. A special emphasis was made on TR4 due to recent outbreaks of the disease in Mozambique and fear of spreading in developing producing countries. Speakers on TR4 included FAO expert Mr. Fazil Dusunceli, Mr. Gert Kema from the Wageningen University & Research Center, and WBF TR4 Task Force Leader, Mr. Luud Clercx. Mr. Dusunceli highlighted that a global program on prevention of Fusarium wilt is currently in development, along with a Policy and Technical Guide which aim is to introduce the disease, explain its relevance, risks, and strategies to prevent it. Mr Clercx also highlighted how supermarkets still manage "zero tolerance" with bananas showing Thrips, although it is a purely cosmetic damage. George Jaksch gave an update to participants about the Virtual Library project, explaining the preference of the group to have the library hosted by Promusa. Mr. Prada also presented the status of the literature review on Carbon and Water Footprint report, and stressed the need to take decisions about hiring a new consultant to finalize the report.

Decisions:

- Extend the outreach of the WBF through the FAO Global program to fight TR4.



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- Approach the European Commission to explore funding possibilities and mobilize the public sector.
- Present the Virtual Library project with a user-friendly interface, even though in its first stage, during the WBF Global Conference.
- Provide information, whenever possible, about products for impregnating protective bags available that have a lower toxicity level, and information about soil biodiversity and its relation with carbon footprint.

Follow up:

Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF):

- The Secretariat will circulate the draft literature review report on CWF Footprint made by the consultant and the Terms of Reference (TOR) and request feedback from the SC members and WG01.
- The Secretariat will review the TOR of the CWF study and determine whether there is a need to refocus it on practical recommendations on how the industry can reduce its CWF footprint, and hire a suitable Consultant to restart the study including carbon storage in soils, among other relevant topics.
- Mr. Edgar Monge will explore opportunities of collaboration with the Earth Institute in Costa Rica in order to strengthen the CWF study, and the Secretariat will send him the TOR to evaluate possibilities of finding a suitable consultant.
- Mr. Monge will promote collaboration with shipping companies, according to Tesco's global agreement with leading transportation companies.

TR4:

- The WBF Task Force on TR4 will meet with the COLEACP Director in April 2015 in Brussels in order to explore the possibilities of jointly approaching the EU.
- Mr. Clercx and Ms. Adam will organize a workshop on TR4 and co-organize related side events in the Global Conference with FAO experts and WG01 Coordinators.
- Ms. Van der Bergh and Ms. Adam will evaluate the possibility of developing a smartphone application to disseminate best practices.
- Mr. Clercx will explore the technical viability of developing a smartphone application with COLEACP.
- The Secretariat, Mr. Clercx and Bioversity will develop, upload and share an information sheet in 3 languages (French, Spanish, English) providing recommendations for travellers on TR4 to avoid its spreading around the globe when visiting banana plantations, including links of related websites in the WBF website.
- The WBF Task Force on TR4 and Bernardo Roehrs will assist in the preparation of the seminar on TR4 in Guatemala in the summer 2015, identifying experts and speakers, among other tasks.
- Ms. Adam and Mr. Clercx will contact GlobalG.A.P., Fairtrade International and auditors of Organic Certification bodies, to look for their support in the dissemination and update of the recommendations for travellers on TR4.



Best Practices Portal:

- Ms. Inge Van den Bergh and Ms. Adam will approve and finalize the TORs for the first stage of the Virtual Library project, and identify a suitable consultant to develop factsheets (collection of information on best practices).
- Ms. Van den Bergh and Ms. Adam will evaluate the possibility of developing a smartphone application to disseminate best practices on a large scale, taking into account its technical viability, and discuss this idea with COLEACP.
- The Secretariat will hire a consultant to prepare summaries on best practices in the WBF website and link it according to Promusa's navigation menus.

Pesticide-reducing practices:

- Mr. Clercx and Mr. Koronado Apuzen will look for scientific information on soil health in organic and conventionally cultivated soils.
- Mr. Clercx will seek information from banana companies on alternative pesticides for impregnating the protecting bags with a lower toxicity level.
- Mr. Clercx will develop a guidance note on biological control of Thrips.

Afternoon session (chaired by Mr. Bernardo Roehrs)

5. Labour Rights, Gender and Occupational Health and Safety

The session led by the WG03 coordinators shared the latest developments and activities of WG03. Ms. Annelot van Leeuwen presented an update on the Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI). The inception meeting in Guayaquil (Ecuador) in early November was also presented, evidencing an active participation and representation from a variety of stakeholders including government officials. The coordination team will proceed similarly in Cameroon in March.

Mr. Smith provided an overview on the development of the publications on Labour Relations, 'Successful cases from the banana industry' and 'Women's employment and greater gender equity in the global industry' led by Ms. Anna Cooper of Banana Link. Ms. Sue Longley provided information regarding the Women's Global Meeting and the difficulties to coordinate the initiative. In this regard, WG03 currently faces a situation of having no coordination, despite Ms. Cooper's repeated attempts to encourage others to step forward and take responsibility for leadership of the WG. Mr. Gilbert Bermudez from Colsiba agreed to co-facilitate the group together with Ms. Irene Sandoval from Chiquita. However, she is no longer employed by Chiquita since the end of January and cannot therefore continue her responsibilities with WG03. Ms. Christelle Lasme from Compagnie Fruitière has volunteered to co-facilitate the WG with COLSIBA from 1st July 2015, and Mr. Bermudez will take the lead from now until the WBF Global Conference.

Decisions:

- Ms. Lasme and Mr. Bermudez will coordinate WG03 (from July on for Ms. Lasme).



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- Ms. Longley will replace Ms. Lasme and lead the organization of the Women's Meeting from now until June 2015.
- ILO and WG02 will explore concrete collaboration activities in the Dominican Republic and Panama surveys on working conditions for plantation workers.

Follow up:

Coordination of WG3:

- The Secretariat will support the work of WG03 Coordinators Ms. Lasme and Mr. Bermudez.

Labour relations:

- Banana Link will amend the report on Labour Relations and share it with SC and WG03 members (English and Spanish) for its review. Deadline for suggestions will be two weeks after.
- Banana Link will finalize the publication on Labour Relations and send it to the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat will review the publication on Labour Relations and share it with ILO for their review.

Gender:

- Ms. Longley will create a sub-group to organize the Women's Meeting for the Conference and draft a work plan.
- Mr. Renwick Rose will review the Caribbean Gender Report and organize meetings with women farmers in the 3 islands, subject to resource availability.
- Review the Gender Reports and share final versions with Banana Link and WG03 Coordinators.
- Once Ms. Cooper submits the final reports on gender, the Secretariat will share them with ILO and translate it in 3 languages.

6. Funding of the WBF

Decisions:

- Both the Financial Report of 2014 (code WBF-SC9-2015-07e) and the Financial Forecast of 2015 (code WBF-SC9-2015-08e) are approved.
- Tesco, Winfa and Colsiba will pay their fee for 2014 by March 2015 at the latest.
- The SC will help the Secretariat convince EDEKA, BANAFAIR, UROCAL, and AEBE to pay their 2014 and 2015 annual fees.
- The SC requests FAO to extend the WBF multi-donor trust fund (MTF/GLO/308/MUL) until 31/12/17.

7. Session for SC members only

Decisions:

- The current Executive Board (EB) will be extended until the WBF Global Conference.



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- Both the EB and SC will be re-elected at the Third WBF Conference.
- The SC will raise the participation of African banana worker unions, in particular when electing a new SC.
- The SC will try to increase the participation of the Costa Rican government.

Follow up:

- The WBF Secretariat will update and send the revised EB rules and structure, and the WBF Charter with tracked changes to SC members who will have one month to review them.
- The Secretariat will include Tesco's suggested admission criteria for all new members with a change in the first criterion ("Maintain active participation in the WBF activities") and adding the criterion "committing to the WBF Charter".
- Ms. Longley will send consolidated concerns (including Banana Link's and Colsiba's) about Syngenta's membership to Secretariat within 2 weeks, copied to SC members.
- The Secretariat will send a letter to Syngenta asking them to commit to the Charter and the admission criteria, highlighting the above concerns and asking for their comments.
- The Secretariat will circulate Syngenta's reply to the SC and will ask for comments within 2 weeks. If there are no strong objections from the SC members about Syngenta's membership, the company will become a member of the WBF. If any SC members have strong objections, the decision will be put to a vote according to the Charter.
- Mr. Smith will speak on behalf of the SC of the WBF when meeting Ecuadorian stakeholders to promote an increased participation in the WBF.

Friday 20 June 2015

Morning session (chaired by Luud Clercx)

Summary of Decisions from the SC meeting day 1

Key decisions taken by the SC have been included in the corresponding sections of the Working Groups and according to the agenda's main topics in the previous pages of this report.

8. Preparation of the WBF Global Conference

Decisions:

- The date and venue are initially scheduled for the 29th and 30th of June in the Dominican Republic. *[Note: On 23/02/15 FAO received a letter from the Ministry of Agriculture requesting the postponement of the IGG meeting and the WBF Conference, due to concerns over the possible spread of the Ebola disease, as participants in the events might come from affected countries. The DR does not yet have the safety protocols in place to prevent the possible introduction of the virus. New dates are still to be defined with the government].*
- The objectives of the Conference, expected outputs and achievements will be specified before moving to the logistical aspects.
- The SC stressed the importance of moving away from discussions and focusing on achieving concrete deliverables, not drafts, and present practical tools to make real changes in the



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- industry, with a clear vision of the WBF, next steps and actions. The inputs to the Conference will represent the work done so far by the WBF.
- Presentations will be prepared by WGs but they have to be short, focusing on key topics to increase progress in a short period of time.
 - Have follow-up activities and commitment by the WG to actively work within the Forum in order to avoid the lack of follow-up experienced after the second WBF Conference in Guayaquil.
 - Engage more governments in the WBF and invite IGG delegates to be part of the panel of the Global Conference.
 - Define clear outputs for the Conference and communicate them to the WGs (present the work and the engagement of the Forum's members).
 - Increase the representation of African trade unions in the WBF to promote collective bargaining practices and recognition of labour rights.
 - The Women's Meeting will take place two days prior to the Conference between June 25th-28th. *[According to the new developments, the meeting will have to be rescheduled].*
 - Field trips will be for 2-3 days prior to the meeting in small and medium large farms, including women representatives of several organizations.
 - Official presentations, possibly from the host government, will also be part of the Conference.
 - The idea that consumers may be ready to pay more for sustainable bananas may be also an interesting issue to raise in the Conference.
 - Promote inclusive approaches in terms of gender and local participation when organizing and planning Conference panels.

Follow up:

Pre-operational activities:

- Mr. Prada will share a checklist with the OC with items to take into account for the organization of the Conference, based on the experience of the previous Conference.
- The Secretariat will confirm and communicate the venue and date of the Conference.
- Ms. Adam will share a summary of the evaluation and lessons learnt of the second global Conference with the SC members.
- The OC will define the expected outputs and develop a work plan for the expected results with the coordinators of WGs.

Linkages with the IGG meeting:

- The Secretariat will request the IGG Agenda and share it with the SC.
- The Secretariat will discuss with the IGG Secretariat a date to integrate the IGG and WBF meetings.
- The Secretariat will invite IGG delegates to the Conference and enquire if WBF participants could attend IGG sessions as an observer.



Communications strategy:

- The OC will invite the official Dominican Republic focal point for the IGG meeting to join the OC, as well as an industry player who is well connected with the government (SAVID).
- The OC will select a central theme and a title for the Conference including the word 'collaboration', and work closely with the EB on the Conference program defining plenary sessions and practical working groups.
- The OC will draft and circulate the agenda for the Global Conference.
- Ms. Longley will prepare a list of the SC's suggestions on potential invitees and interested actors to invite to the Global conference and share it with the Secretariat.
- The OC will develop a Communications plan and strategy including potential invitees and targets.
- The OC will improve and create social media and communication tools to promote the event and publicize it through Twitter, Facebook event page, WBF website, or news.
- The OC will prepare a draft template for an invitation sample message that can be sent to all WBF members in order to be shared with the largest number of potential interested stakeholders.
- The OC and the Secretariat will send invitations to potential attendees including local and international participants from shipping companies, retailers from Africa, etc.
- The Secretariat will advertise the conference in the WBF website and announce the event to a large group of stakeholders through banners and a massive emailing list in order to mark the calendar.
- The OC will include in the list of advices to participants the suggestion to have a medical insurance during their stay in the hosting country.

Logistics:

- The OC will prepare a survey of the services provided by the Government and local companies and review the quotations.

Funding:

- The OC will create a strategy to attract new participants to the WBF and sponsors for the event.
- The OC will research on purchasing power in the host country and share findings with OC to use it as an input for developing a differential fee system.
- The OC will develop a scenario with different levels of participation (low, medium, high), and establish a differential fee system according to the participants' possibilities and purchasing power in the host country.

9. Activity planning

Decisions:

- Explore funding alternatives with potential institutional donors.
- Ms. Adam is appointed as Chair of the Organizing Committee (OC) of the event.
- Provide updated results of WGs and stakeholder groups through a Report that has to be done on a regular basis.



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- Improve the visibility of the WBF website.
- Regarding the SC reports, the EB had suggested to make them anonymous. The SC rejected this proposal but participants could still request not to be mentioned in the report.
- The next meeting of the SC was initially scheduled for Sunday 28th and/or the morning after the Conference to organize the follow-up. A conference call was also scheduled for June 22nd. *[According to the new events, the SC meeting will have to be rescheduled.]*
- The first OC conference call will be on the 4 March 2015 at 2pm CET.
- The priorities of the WBF Secretariat are the following (by decreasing order):
 1. Organization of the WBF Conference
 2. Collection of fees and fundraising
 3. Support to the EB (conference calls, minutes, etc.)
 4. Support the WGs in the implementation of BOHESI and the Best Practices Portal.

Follow up:

- The EB will initiate a discussion on fundraising targeting key industry players.
- The Secretariat will revise the WBF Charter to include the EB.
- Mr. Prada will update the SC Action Plan and circulate the new version to SC members.
- Mr. Monge and Mr. Smith will remind AEBE to pay the annual fee.
- Mr. Prada will send a letter to the WBF members who have been inactive from more than 2 years for the collection of fees in 2015.
- Ms. Adam will invite the WWF in order to support the process to convince Edeka to remain a member.
- Ms. Katie Knaggs and Mr. Smith will explore the possibilities of engaging Walmart in the WBF through Gavin Bayley and other relevant contacts.
- Ms. Annelot van Leeuwen will explore the possibilities of re-engaging Ahold in the WBF discussions.
- Mr. Smith will ask Carrefour to become a member of the WBF.
- SC members will inform Mr. Prada of their contacts with potential new WBF members.