



## **WORLD BANANA FORUM**

*working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

### **Third meeting of the Steering Committee**

13-14 October 2011

ETI office, London

### **Final report**

#### **Introduction**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) held an international forum on sustainable banana production and trade ("*World Banana Forum*") from 7 to 8 December 2009 at its headquarters in Rome, Italy. As a result of this meeting, it was decided to establish the World Banana Forum (WBF) as a permanent platform for all the stakeholders of the banana sector to express their views and work together for global change towards a more sustainable banana sector.

The Steering Committee of the WBF was formed then and has held two in-person meetings and e-conferences since then. The third meeting, as the previous one, included the participation of the coordinators of the WBF's Working Groups. Some observers also attended.

The key objectives of this meeting were the following:

- Review the financial situation and plan a budget for the next year.
- Review the composition and modalities of the participants to the Forum.
- Review the draft charter of the WBF and discuss its approval process.
- Start preparing the Second Conference of the WBF.

This meeting was preceded by an e-conference, held from 14 to 20 July 2011.

A total of 26 participants attended the meeting, including representatives from banana farmer organizations, trade associations, private companies (including major banana marketing companies and retailers), trade unions and other civil society organizations. Participants came from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe and North America. The list of participants can be found in annex 2.

## **Summary of the first day (13 October 2011)**

### **1. Welcome to participants and new members**

Mr. Martin Cooke welcomed the participants on behalf of the host organization, the Ethical Trading Initiative. Mr Pascal Liu opened the meeting on behalf of FAO and welcomed the new participants who recently joined the Steering Committee: Ms. Anne Heurtaux (Ministry of Agriculture of France), Mr. Jorge A. Sauma (CORBANA, Costa Rica) and Mr. Eduardo Ledesma (AEBE). The agenda was then reviewed and approved while chairpersons for the different sessions were appointed.

### **2. Activities of the Secretariat since the last SC meeting**

Mr. Víctor López, from the Secretariat of the WBF, explained the different activities that the Secretariat has carried out for the last year. He reviewed the different items of the Report of the Secretariat's activities. More precisely, he explained the process followed for the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund at FAO, which is the formal structure for ensuring the continuity of support from FAO to the WBF project. This trust fund was officially opened on 30 May 2011. The work to establish this fund took several months, as long internal procedures had to be followed to obtain the necessary approvals due to the atypical and innovative nature of the fund. The project is currently formulated as open until 30 May 2013 at least.

Víctor explained that the Working Groups (WGs) of the WBF developed well, although at a different pace during 2011. The Secretariat provided support in communications through DGroups and participated in several teleconferences. It facilitated the work of the Steering Committee, which experienced a growth of three new members, as explained above. Víctor López attended also several events in 2011 on behalf of the Secretariat; namely: International Banana Forum (Guayaquil, April – invited by AEBE), Working Group on Bananas (Brussels, June – invited by Freshfel) and INREF expert meeting (Rotterdam, June – invited by Wageningen University). He continued explaining some other actions to enlarge the membership of the WBF.

A major issue during 2011 was to identify potential sources of income for the Forum and to collect the participation fees from the WBF participants as agreed at the previous meeting of the Steering Committee. This required a considerable amount of time. Participating organizations were not always ready to provide quick replies to the requests of the Secretariat, which caused unfortunate delays in some cases. Finally, it is important to recall that strong savings had to be done during the year and the Secretariat could not afford to have additional support in human resources. The Trade and Markets Division of FAO enabled the Secretariat to continue its work by providing ad-hoc financial support, in particular the payment of several months of wage for the Secretariat consultant and the organization of this meeting. Without this support, the work of the Secretariat during 2011 would have been interrupted.

#### **Decisions:**

- The participants appreciated the work accomplished by the Secretariat and the additional support provided by FAO. They agreed that the continuity of the Secretariat is essential to the development of the Forum itself. There was a general agreement from the participants on facilitating as much as possible the work of the Secretariat.

### **3. Activities of the Working Groups in 2011**

Several coordinators were present, at least one for each of the three Working Groups. The coordinators explained to the participants the developments in the WGs' activities. There was a general appreciation of the work done and prospected work in progress. The Secretariat prepared some reports, which are available upon request (see annex). In this section, a short brief on the outcomes and activities of each WG is offered:

**WG01.** Good planning of activities during the first semester followed by a slow development afterwards, due partially to the lack of a stable facilitator. The WG01 is composed of two sub-committees. The first sub-committee specifically focuses on agro-chemical use, and in particular on their environmental impact while the second sub-committee concentrates on the development of a “virtual library” presenting best practices related to sustainable banana production. Present focus of work is in the compilation of the best practices library, which should lead to the identification of gaps that will be tackled on a second stage. The WG01 will benefit from the financial support from France (on sustainable production methods) and Sweden (on the prevention and mitigation of climate change). There is a possible collaboration with CIRAD on a pilot project dealing with life cycle assessment in the banana marketing chain. Regarding work on pesticides, it is expected that Rainforest Alliance and/or Fairtrade International provide some support in the medium term.

**WG02.** The WG02 has a clear definition of expected outputs and benefits from a solid coordination team. During the last year, it has agreed on a typology of the different supply chains in the global industry and has developed a practical methodology for approximating "living" or "decent" wages at plantation/farm level (see <http://bit.ly/r60K59>). Expected outputs for 2012 include the establishment of a salary scale at a country level, to evaluate the efficiency of collective bargaining and propose suitable mechanisms for its promotion and to understand the impact of retail prices through the value chain. The meeting agreed on three socio-economic studies on banana value chains (banana trade flow focus: Ecuador>Europe, Colombia>North America and The Caribbean>UK) and a global study on salary indicators in 14 exporting countries to be led by Banana Link in collaboration with WG02. These activities will benefit from support by the Trade and Markets Division of FAO. There was general consensus on the need to involve shipping companies into this matter.

**WG03.** A number of activities have been in progress during the year 2011. This WG has worked across the following areas: gender equity; freedom of association and collective bargaining; and occupational health and safety (this last one is considered a cross-cutting issue where collaboration is required with WG01 and WG02). The WG03 was reactivated in 2011 after some uncertainties in 2010. A diagnosis on the labour rights situation in 25 priority banana producing is due to be finalized soon. After a couple of meetings it was decided that future activities will also include the sharing of good practices and development of pilot projects - to tackle issues of freedom of association and collective bargaining, gender discrimination in the workplace and hiring and occupational health and safety. The Second Conference of the WBF will be preceded by a meeting organized by WG03 titled Global Meeting of Women Banana Workers (24-26 February 2012, Guayaquil). The purpose of this meeting is to share ideas and develop joint strategies and potential multi-stakeholder initiatives on the issue of gender discrimination. The WG03 acknowledged BAMA and TESCO for their collaboration and financial support to the activities of this group. It stressed the importance of starting incorporating more indicators and analysis on health issues.

#### **4. Financial issues**

Pascal presented the final accounts of the previous *Multi-stakeholder forum for the promotion of sustainable banana production and trade* (MSF) project that covered the period February 2009-December 2010. The Committee approved the accounts. Pascal then presented the forecast spending and incomes of the new multi-donor trust fund. The annual contributions received from participating organizations were reviewed. There was concern that not enough funds would be available to fund the core activities of the Secretariat from the second quarter of 2011, let alone the 2012 meeting of the WBF, as some organizations had not paid their annual contributions yet.

The Secretariat explained that more resources were needed to reinforce the basic structure of the Secretariat and the forum itself. As for the WGs, they benefited during 2011 from several contributions from the private sector and/or the French government (for WG01) that made possible some activities. Alistair Smith explained that the WG02 had a budget for 2011 composed by an approximately 80% of funds coming from the private sector and 20% from CSO. Will Stephens reckoned that the requested fee of USD 10,000 for large companies was too low compared to similar roundtables and mentioned the example

of the World Cocoa Foundation, where the membership fee is USD 200,000 per year for big industry players. He suggested raising the WBF fee to at least USD 25,000 for large companies (including retailers) as a means of ensuring the sustainability of the WBF. Pascal mentioned that a large share of the Secretariat's time was dedicated to following-up with participating organizations to remind them to pay the fee, which is not an efficient use of the WBF's resources.

It was suggested that our difficulties to identify public funds to support this initiative –apart from the world economic crisis- could be due to the fact that, so far, the WBF does not intend to produce harmonized standards, although the influence of this factor is difficult to determine. Other participants suggested that additional efforts should be aiming towards foundations (such as: *Bill & Melinda Gates*, *Clinton Foundation*, etc.). The Secretariat agreed and explained that an intern would join soon to focus on fundraising opportunities.

There was a discussion on the European Union's policy to support the banana sector in developing countries. It was suggested that the European Commission might be interested in financially supporting an initiative such as the WBF. Euroban had some conversations with EU policy makers in this regard ("tariffs recycling" from customs to sustainability). The Secretariat informed that it had been invited to participate in a banana seminar organized by the EC in Ghana (date to be determined); it might be a good opportunity for WBF participants to promote the Forum and establish some stronger network with the EU.

#### Decisions:

- The Committee approved the final accounts of the previous *Multi-stakeholder forum for the promotion of sustainable banana production and trade* (MSF) project and the forecast expense figures corresponding to the year 2012. The extra effort by the Secretariat to minimize costs and FAO's exceptional contributions were appreciated.
- There was a general concern on the need to secure the functioning of the Secretariat. It was decided that, in order to improve the cash flow to the WBF multidonor trust fund, the fee paying period would be changed. The new fee period will be January to December instead of June to June. Participants will consider that the fee paid in 2011 covers the period January to December 2011 (instead of June 2011 to June 2012, as initially formulated). Participants of the WBF will be invited early in 2012 to proceed with the payment of their membership dues for the period January to December 2012.
- There was consensus on the need to attract more participants for the WBF from the private sector; in particular, retailers and shippers will be contacted more systematically.
- The Task Force on Fundraising will see a bigger involvement of some participants, i.e., Will Stephens (for UK based organizations including DFID) and George Jaksch (help liaising with GiZ). Alistair will ask Oxfam for help in fundraising. The above persons will ask the GSCP and Consumer Goods Forum for help in persuading retailers to pay the fee.
- The presence of Asian participants needs to be reinforced. Koronado Apuzen will help with this.
- More efforts on improving our external communication need to be done. In particular, pilot project ideas need to be well disseminated so that potential sponsors/collaborators might feel attracted (e.g. Oxfam or 3F).
- Considerations were made on the eventual admission of chemical companies to the Forum. An agreement was reached that they are welcome as contributors and as providers of information if presented by a WBF member; however, they might need to wait until the Forum can approve their joining as regular members.

- There was general agreement on the need to plan a self-funding Second Conference of the WBF; the idea of requesting a conference fee for the participants in the event (amount to be decided) was endorsed.

### **Summary of the second day (Wednesday 24 November 2010)**

#### **5. Rules and membership of the Steering Committee**

This session consisted of two separate meetings: the SC in one room and the WG coordinators in a separate space. The latter discussed how to improve the communication amongst groups and how to make sure that no overlaps or gaps will occur.

The SC participants agreed on maintaining a ‘principle of simplification’: decisions had been taken by consensus so far and that should be the default rule. Whenever consensus is not possible, then alternatives which are fair and proportional to all should be studied.

#### **Decisions:**

- When possible, messages should be addressed to organizations, and not to those participating in their personal capacity. The ‘unit’ of representation in the WBF should be the organization and not the individual.
- There is some concern over the scarce number of African and Asia/Pacific participants. Their numbers need to grow.
- One-to-one communications should be sent to the representatives of the organizations which have showed less participation during the last months. Belonging to the SC requires dedicating some effective time to it.

#### **6. Discussion of the draft charter for the WBF**

There was general agreement on the need for being flexible regarding the maximum duration of the SC members at the board. While renewing members is important, their representativity within the sector is at least as important. It was suggested that a 3+3 years (3 years with a 3 more years automatic renewal) system could be adopted. It was also suggested that the initiators of the WBF could remain at the SC as long as they wish. These were not adopted as final decisions.

The charter was read and commented by everyone. Participants acknowledged the good work of the Secretariat in preparing the first draft. The Secretariat took notes of the requested changes and informed that a new revised version would be circulated before the end of the year.

#### **Working Groups’ meeting (held in parallel)**

The WGs coordinators discussed the outputs that they will be able to present at the next Forum meeting in 2012. There was a debate on the capacity of the SC to evaluate –and possibly block- WGs’ pilot projects. There seemed to be a general agreement on the need to always present WG’s prospected projects to the SC. The SC will then express its views. If no strong opposition occurs, then the projects will go ahead. If funding is needed and funds are available from the WBF trust fund, then these must be redistributed equitably among the WGs.

## Decisions:

- An extra effort should be done by WGs to have deliverables ready for the next global meeting of the World Banana Forum (WBF-II).
- In the future, the term “best practices” should be replaced by “good practices”.
- WBF-II should be a place for debate, not only for presentations.
- Ideally some WGs coordinators should be on board on the organizing committee of the WBF-II.
- The WG’s might present in Guayaquil ‘work in progress’ and not only completed outputs.
- The presentations in Guayaquil should not restrict to the outputs of the WGs; the outputs achieved during the last two years by the individual members of the WGs should be heard as well.

## **7. Promoting the WBF and increasing membership**

This topic was briefly presented by Victor López. As the need to promote the WBF was a transversal issue discussed during the two days of the meeting, the time dedicated to this section was short. The Secretariat stressed the need to revive the Task Force on Communications.

It was suggested that a new coordination group (informal structure) would organize teleconferences at a pace of one every 6 weeks approximately. The objective is to improve internal communication within the WBF and to keep a regular review of the agenda. The coordination group would be comprised of one coordinator for each of the working groups, one member of each of the task forces and one member of the Secretariat. There were some divergences about the usefulness and necessity of creating more groups, but it was generally admitted that it might be a path to follow if availability by all the involved persons would be confirmed. It was suggested that Will Stephens would be the leading coordinator for this new group.

Jetse Stoorvogel (Wageningen UR) explained the whereabouts of a INREF funded project to assess the risks of a widespread of Panama Disease (race IV). He explained how they obtained the funds for a multiple PhD programme and he also expressed interest in linking their work with the WBF network during the future years.

## **8. Preparing the Global Meeting of the WBF**

The session started with an agreement on the title of the next global meeting of the World Banana Forum (see first decision below).

It was advised that the meeting should:

- focus on tangible results so far, explaining the work in progress
- avoid dedicating too much time to presentations and leave sufficient time for discussion and learning opportunities
- prioritize the activities to maximize “good practices”

A preliminary list of topics of interest was produced after a brainstorming session as follows:

*Life Cycle Assessment / Biodiversity / Panama disease / Soil conservation / Virtual libraries / Marketing: the transport revolution / Direct sourcing trends / Good practices on gender policies / Small farmers and the banana industry / Ecuador / Dale Foundation(?) / Climate change mitigation / Impact of certifications / Retailers’ requirements for sustainability*

It was decided to set up an organizing committee of the Conference. It will include the following persons and organizations among others:

*Sylvain Cuperlier / Gilbert Umaña / Eric Crisman / Alistair Smith / Renwick Rose / Bernardo Roehrs / Marcelo Ortega / Carolina Valarezo / AEBE / FAO-Ecuador / Chiquita-Ecuador / Javier Villacis*

Other persons/organizations were suggested pending their confirmation:

*Alex Yeboah / GAWU / Fenacle / Sust. Agriculture Network / CAFOLIS / ILO-Ecuador / FLO*

The organizing committee should deal with practical issues such as:

- preparation of the agenda, content and timetable;
- invitation process;
- fundraising and budget;
- location and logistics;
- field visits;
- identification of suitable local partners;
- relationships with media;
- other communication aspects (i.e. website of the event).

#### Decisions:

- The next global meeting of the WBF will be denominated: **Second Conference of the World Banana Forum**. The dates of 28-29 February 2012 are confirmed.
- Guided visits to the banana farms should be offered as an option to the participants.
- Local support to field visits and the organization of the conference will be requested from local organizations including Fundación Grupo Apoyo/CAFOLIS and others
- A short theatre play explaining the social changes that happened in the banana sector in Colombia could be a good idea for a live performance during the Conference.
- An organizing committee for the Second conference of the WBF should be established as soon as possible (WBF-II OC); it should comprise members from locally based organizations and international members.
- A conference fee will be charged to participants

## **9. Wrap-up session and other issues**

The main decisions of this meeting have been listed at the end of the previous sections. In conclusion, the Third meeting of the Steering Committee reached consensus on the need to secure the future of the World Banana Forum. The financial support to the WBF by its participants was confirmed once again and new members have joined or will do soon. The SC reaffirmed the need to strengthen and increase the number of WBF members.

The main event ahead is the Second Conference of the World Banana Forum. The SC, the WG coordinators and all the participants of the WBF should dedicate an extra effort in order to guarantee a successful event.

**The next SC meeting will be held in early 2012. The Secretariat will propose venues and dates in the following months**





## **ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1. Agenda**

#### **Third meeting of the Steering Committee (SC) 13-14 October 2011**

**Hosted by the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), London**

#### **Thursday 13 October**

*[all sessions with SC members and WG coordinators]*

- 9.00 Registration of participants
- 9.30 **Welcome to participants by Peter McAllister, Director, ETI**
- 9.35 **Welcoming new members and presentation of the agenda**
- 9.40 **Adoption of the agenda and election of chairpersons for the meeting**
- 9.45 **Report by the Secretariat: activities in 2011**
  - Activities and outputs
  - Defining priorities
- 10.15 **Reports by the Working Groups (WGs): activities in 2011**  
*by the WG coordinators*
  - Outputs
  - Planned activities and expected outputs
- 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.20 **Activities of the Working Groups (continued)**
  - Needed resources
  - Synergies between WGs
- 13.00 Lunch break
- 14.30 **Financial issues**
  - Final accounts of MSF project (2009-2010)
  - Financial report for 2011
  - Fundraising – Review of fee payment by members – Efficiency
  - Allocation of resources and budget scenarios for 2012-2013
- 16.00 Coffee break
- 16.20 **Financial issues (cont'd)**
- 17.30 End of first day





**Friday 14 October**

**9.30 Rules and membership of the Steering Committee**

*[For Steering Committee members only. The WG coordinators will have a parallel meeting at the ETI HQ until 12.00]*

- Membership: review of current situation. Rotation of members?
- Rules for SC members

**10.15 Discussion of the draft charter for the World Banana Forum**

11.00 Coffee break

**11.20 Discussion of the draft charter (cont'd)**

**12.00 Promoting the WBF and increasing membership**

- Communication strategy
- Setting priorities

13.00 Lunch break

**14.00 Preparing the Global Meeting of the WBF**

- Dates and venue
- Agenda
- Organization and logistics
- Partners and sponsors
- Invitation and communication
- Work plan to February 2012

**16.00 Wrap-up session**

- Summary of main decisions
- Adoption of work plan for the preparation of the WBF global meeting
- Work plan for 2012

16.30 Meeting closes



## **Annex 2**

### **Final list of participants**

#### **Steering Committee members**

Koronado Apuzen (Farmcoop)	Pascal Liu (FAO)
Eric Crisman (Bonita)	Sue Longley (IUF)
Stephen Coats (US Leap)	Víctor López Saavedra (FAO)
Iain Farquhar (Banana Link)	Iris Munguia (Colsiba)
Anne Heurtaux (Ministry of Agriculture, France)	Bernardo Roehrs (Agroamerica)
John Hopkins (Fyffes)	Alistair Smith (Euroban)
George Jaksch (Chiquita)	Will Stephens (Tesco)
Matt Leeman - Drew Kirk (International Produce Limited)	Roberto Vega (Dole)
	Sébastien Zanoletti (UGPBAN)

#### **Working Groups coordinators**

##### **WG01**

Sylvain Cuperlier (Dole)  
Iain Farquhar (Banana Link)  
George Jaksch (Chiquita)

##### **WG02**

Alistair Smith (Euroban)  
Denis Loeillet (CIRAD)

##### **WG03**

Martin Cooke (ETI)  
Anna Cooper (Banana Link)  
Lisa Tortell (ILO)

#### **Observers**

Luisa Melle (UATRE, Argentina, observer)  
Jetse Stoorvogel (University of Wageningen, INREF project, observer)  
Mercedes Tallo (Rainforest Alliance, observer)

#### **Language facilitators**

Luke Stobart  
Maria Roel

#### **Apologies for absence**

Gilbert Bermudez (Colsiba)  
Robert Sabiiti (Permanent Representation of Uganda)  
Vanessa Gautier (Peuples Solidaires)



### Annex 3

#### Third meeting of the Steering Committee (SC)

13-14 October 2011

#### List of documents

Document title	Document code
1. List of documents	WBF-SC3-2011-01e
2. Agenda	WBF-SC3-2011-02e
3. List of participants	WBF-SC3-2011-03e
4. Report of Secretariat's activities	WBF-SC3-2011-04e
5. Member lists of SC, WGs & Task Force	WBF-SC3-2011-05efs
6. Report of Working Groups' activities	WBF-SC3-2011-06e
7. Final financial report of MSF project	WBF-SC3-2011-07efs
8. Financial report 2011 (prelim.)	WBF-SC3-2011-08efs
9. Budget scenarios for 2012-2013	WBF-SC3-2011-09efs
10. Proposed charter for the WBF	WBF-SC3-2011-10e
11. Electronic conference report	WBF-SC3-2011-11e

**All the documents delivered during the meeting are available upon request. Please send an email to the Secretariat of the World Banana Forum [[wbf@fao.org](mailto:wbf@fao.org)] indicating the code of the documents that you would like to receive.**