

The World Banana Forum (WBF)

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade

Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC19)

Attended by the Steering Committee members and Working Group coordinators

18-19 November 2020

Online sessions

Wednesday, 18 November 2020

1. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat

Mr Victor Prada, Secretary of the World Banana Forum, began the session by welcoming all participants on behalf of the WBF Secretariat to the Nineteenth Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC19) and informing attendees that due to the evolution of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it was not possible to hold the SC19 in person.

He highlighted the importance of the 10th anniversary of the WBF, expressing enthusiasm with the achievements of the Forum and the work that has been carried out by the Steering Committee (SC), Advisory Board (AB) and the different working groups. Mr Prada emphasized the importance of the critical mass of stakeholders represented in the WBF and their capacity to enable institutional impact in the banana sector.

He acknowledged the engagement of WBF members in the recent sessions, discussions and webinars and informed that this session of the SC would be co-chaired by the AB and SC chairpersons: Ms Christelle Lasmé (Compagnie Fruitière) and Mr Andrew Biles (Chiquita).

2. Welcome by the SC/AB co-chair and presentation of expected outputs and objectives

Ms Lasmé greeted all the participants on behalf of the Advisory Board and welcomed all contributions aiming to support the improvement of the banana industry.

She commended all the efforts carried out by WBF members during the pandemic and stressed the need to reflect on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on members' operations.

Ms Lasmé presented the objectives and expected outcomes of the first day of the SC19 session and informed that the contents and discussions of this section will form the basis of the WBF 2021 Action Plan. She then opened the meeting by thanking all the participants for their accomplishments in 2020 and wishing a fruitful session.

3. Overview of recent activities of the WBF's Working Groups and Overview of Thematic Sessions

Working Group 03 (WG03) on Labour Rights and Other Workplace Issues

- **Occupational health and safety (OHS)**

Ms Camila Reinhardt Hurtado (FAO) presented an overview of recent OHS activities, including the production of a series of audio-visual materials and animations produced under the WBF's Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI), as well as a new user-friendly health and safety manual for workers in the Costa Rican banana industry. She then provided updates regarding the guidelines on the healthy and safe employment of women workers in Ghana, Cameroon and Latin America, amongst other activities.

IUF recommendations and proposals on OHS

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado informed participants of a recent communication received by the WBF Secretariat on behalf of IUF (October 2020), which shared IUF's review and feedback regarding the health and safety manual produced in Cameroon. Ms Svetlana Boincean (IUF) then presented the main concerns and recommendations raised, which includes a comprehensive list of amendments based on international conventions and the Cameroon Labour Code.

These include, *inter alia*, information regarding: employer duties; health and safety problems identified by workers and trade unions; legal requirements on staff representatives and labour inspections; importance of collective means of protection; pesticide use, as per the list of pesticides registered for use in the Cameroonian banana industry; and



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information on the FAO/WHO International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management. Ms Boincean then concluded by providing recommendations for the Ghanaian version of the manual, namely, the incorporation of legal requirements on workers' rights and duties, as per the Ghana Labour Act.

Decisions:

- Review and revise the OHS manuals produced in Cameroon and Ghana, following recommendations provided by IUF.
- Produce a regional manual on OHS in banana production for Africa, which will include relevant information and legislation for all banana exporting industries in the region, including Cote D'Ivoire.
- Explore opportunities to replicate BOHESI activities in other Latin American countries.

- **Overview of Task Force on Gender Equity (GE-TF) activities**

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided an overview of the activities carried out by the GE-TF, highlighting the FAO Letter of Agreement (LoA) with Banana Link, which includes activities related to the adaptation of the *Guidelines on the healthy and safe employment of women in the Ghanaian banana industry* to the Latin American context. Ms Reinhardt Hurtado informed participants that the first draft of the adapted guidelines is under review, and that a tripartite meeting will be conducted with local stakeholders in order to present its main contents and receive feedback.

- **Trade union freedom, social dialogue and collective bargaining**

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided an update on the discussions that took place during the thematic session on trade union freedom, social dialogue and collective bargaining, which highlighted the need to foster an integrated thinking and a collective position of the WBF on these issues. She informed participants on the proposals made during the session, namely, to work on the elaboration of a joint document that highlights the WG's position on trade union/worker representation, social dialogue and collective bargaining, as well as the development of a roadmap outlining possible pathways to promote these activities in the banana industry.

Mr Wilbert Flinterman (Fairtrade International) stated that social dialogue and collective bargaining are strategic priorities to achieve decent work and living wages, and are therefore crucial to ensuring a sustainable value chain. He provided an overview of the Global Deal initiative, of which Fairtrade International is a member, and suggested that the WBF liaise with the Global Deal to explore approaches on how to avoid polarized debates and achieve a common understanding on these topics.

Mr Gilbert Bermudez (COLSIBA) expressed his support for this goal and highlighted the cultural issue faced in Latin America with regards to freedom of association and trade union representation.

Decisions:

- Contact the Global Deal initiative to explore collaboration opportunities on the issues of social dialogue and collective bargaining.
- Produce a collective statement on behalf of the WG03 that outlines the position of WBF members on social dialogue, collective bargaining and trade union/worker representation.
- Develop a roadmap outlining potential pathways to achieving decent work in the banana industry.
- Explore collaboration opportunities with the ILO to work on national sector-wide collective bargaining initiatives in banana producing countries.
- Study the impacts of COVID-19 on worker/labour rights and opportunities to build back better, ensuring decent work can be guaranteed for agricultural workers.

Working Group 02 (WG02) on Distribution of Value

- **Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production and Distribution of Value**

Mr Prada briefly presented the topics to be discussed and then gave the floor to Ms Carolina Dawson (CIRAD) to provide an overview of the history, objectives and methodology of the *Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production and Distribution of Value in the Export Banana Industry*. The project aims to provide objective data and information on the distribution of value, costs, taxes and margins at different stages of the banana export value chains in order to foster



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greater transparency and enable dialogue and cooperation amongst diverse stakeholders, so as to ultimately achieve a fair distribution of value and improve the sustainability of the global banana industry.

Ms Feige-Muller (BASIC) provided an overview of the project and its various stages and activities. She then presented some of the results of the methodology developed for the cocoa value chain as an example of how the distribution of value can be visualized.

Mr Mariano Jimenez (CORBANA) pointed out to the presenters the issue of monitoring prices, given that this information is often privately agreed upon through long-term confidential contracts with international traders, retail supermarkets or other intermediaries along banana supply chains.

In this regard, Ms Dawson responded that CIRAD has a large database in which banana prices are monitored along the value chain. Mr Christophe Alliot (BASIC) further mentioned that BASIC will develop a model based on publicly available information, which will be further validated by the various actors of the value chain.

Mr Prada informed SC members that financial contributions were obtained from the French Ministry of Agriculture and FAO to support this project, which will fund the first two stages of the project in 2021.

- **SG-CCSP process since its inception in Montreal 2018**

Mr Xavier Roussel, co-coordinator of the WG02, provided an overview of the work carried out by the WG's Subgroup on Covering Costs of Sustainable Production (SG-CCSP) since its inception in 2018. He highlighted the living wage benchmarking efforts conducted in Ecuador, Colombia, Ghana, Costa Rica and Dominican Republic as well as the importance of the dialogue taking place around these studies. He then mentioned that several European retailers made a commitment to reduce the living wage gaps in their supply chains (by 75% over a period of five years) in 2019, and similar pledges were assumed by the German retail sector during International Green Week in 2020. Mr Roussel pointed out some of the different perspectives shared by the various actors present in the discussions and affirmed that their viewpoints will provide guidance for the process going forward. He then mentioned that the discussions regarding fair wages have been extended to address gender equity issues, with special attention to single breadwinning households.

- **WBF commitment to fair wages**

Mr Alistair Smith (EUROBAN) presented the final version of the document "*World Banana Forum Commitment to Living Wages for Men and Women Working in the Banana Industry*" and reported on the main discussions that took place during its preparation, highlighting the issues raised around the different terminologies used for key concepts in English and Spanish. This was addressed by proposing the use of the following terms: *living wage* and *salario justo*. Mr Smith then emphasized the incorporation of gender gap issues in the document and further recognized the strict relationship between distribution of value and labour rights, stressing the importance of strengthening collaboration between WG02 and WG03. Ultimately, he announced that discussions are ongoing to explore the possibility of conducting a benchmark study for the Guatemalan banana industry during the first half of 2021.

Ms Leonie Haakshorst (Rainforest Alliance) stressed the need for further discussions amongst WG02 members before the document is submitted for approval by the SC. She pointed out that the final version of the document that has been presented has changed in relation to the one previously approved by the WG02. For instance, she highlighted the lack of information on fair wage mechanisms and private standards in the final text.

Mr Jimenez recognized the difficulties to reach consensus on the document and stressed that CORBANA had suggested some amendments to the previous version of the text. He then recommended the addition of the text, "*trade unions and other forms of organization*," into the final version in order to address the particularities of Costa Rica and concluded by expressing his concerns regarding the Anker methodology.

Mr Prada suggested a brainstorming session with the WG02 coordinators prior to the next session of the SC19, in order to discuss the points raised and reach a consensus on the final version of the document before the end of the SC19.

WG02 Decisions:

- Explore possibility of conducting a living wage benchmark study for the Guatemalan banana industry.

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- Set up the Observatory Committee (December 2020).¹
- Launch the first stage of the Observatory project (January 2021).²

Working Group 01 (WG01) on Sustainable Production Systems and Environmental Impact

Mr Paul Lievens, coordinator of the Agroecological Practices and Water Management Subgroup, stated that the COVID-19 crisis has impacted the agroecology activities of the WG01, thereby making the subgroup relatively inactive in the last months. He thus invited members of the WBF to contribute to the reactivation of the group.

For information on the Carbon and Water Footprint (CaWF) project, refer to Section 10.

4. Session on Fusarium wilt TR4

WBF members and partners presented an overview of the actions and projects undertaken in response to the TR4 outbreak.

4.1 FAO – Plant Protection Division

Mr Maged Elkahky provided updates on the work carried out by the Plant Protection Division of FAO in regard to Fusarium wilt TR4, highlighting the Regional Project for Latin America and Caribbean on TR4. He provided updates on the FAO training sessions on TR4 in Africa being carried out by the FAO Sub-regional Office in cooperation with Stellenbosch University. He further announced the approval and launch of a new project to tackle TR4 in Turkey as well as the development of a technical project for TR4 in Lebanon.

4.2 Bioversity International - CIAT

Mr Nicolas Roux provided an overview of the efforts carried out by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, highlighting the integration of the regional banana networks MUSALAC, MUSAFRICA and BAPNET into the MUSANET. He then provided updates on the regional activities of the alliance, including the surveys on Fusarium wilt carried out in Lao's PDR, Vietnam and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the participation of the alliance in FAO's regional conferences and seminars in Latin America and Caribbean and the TR4 training sessions of FAO/Stellenbosch in Africa.

He announced the organization of a virtual masterclass and mini symposium on Fusarium wilt, to be carried out in November and December, respectively. He then concluded by informing participants about the preparation of forthcoming technical guidelines that will focus on the detection of TR4 at early stages.

4.3 CIRAD

Mr Thierry Lescot informed SC members on the TR4 research activities conducted by CIRAD, presenting an overview of a series of projects and initiatives. These include a breeding project focused on the development of hybrids resistant to TR4 and Black Sigatoka, and the development of a technological equipment that is able to detect TR4 at field level.

Mr Lescot briefed participants on the research related to TR4 genetic and genomic diversity, as well as the on studies on ecological practices against TR4 developed by the center. He then presented an overview of the work of carried out by the World Musa Alliance initiative and concluded by highlighting CIRAD's participation in the TR4 prevention networks of the Caribbean region.

4.4 COLEACP - Global Alliance Against TR4

Ms Morag Webb, on behalf of COLEACP, provided a brief overview on the history of the Global Alliance Against TR4 and its activities. Ms Morag stated that the Global Alliance Against TR4 was put in place in order to serve as a platform to mobilize funds for specific work streams. These include: 1) prevention and training; 2) breeding and genetics; and 3) methods of control. Ms Webb discussed one of these initiatives in further detail, focusing on TR4 training and prevention activities in Africa, where COLEACP is working in partnership with IICA.

Mr Prada mentioned that many WBF members are part of the Global Alliance Against TR4 and acknowledged that FAO

¹ The timeline for this activity is dependent on the start date of the Letter of Agreement between FAO and CIRAD.

² See above.

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is exploring the possibility of becoming a partner, in order to build a common understanding on how to tackle the disease and avoid duplicated efforts.

4.5 FAO Project – TCP 3724

Mr Prada, on behalf of Ms Raixa Llauger and Ms Esther Peralta from FAO's Subregional Office for Mesoamerica, presented an overview of the FAO technical cooperation project being implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean: *Strengthening regional capacities for surveillance, prevention and management against eventual spread of Fusarium wilt (FW-TR4)*. The project focuses on strengthening regional and inter-institutional coordination among several institutions and phytosanitary agencies in the region —providing support to the development of regional agreements— as well as on the development of regional capacities on contingency planning and on the generation of training resources to prevent the spread of the disease.

4.6 TR4GN

Mr Prada provided a brief overview on the work carried out with respect to the TR4 Global Network, highlighting its importance as a permanent and inclusive platform for knowledge exchange and stakeholder collaboration. The TR4GN aims to be the reference point for initiatives related to awareness-raising and capacity development for prevention and control of TR4.

The TR4GN aims to continue the mandate of the WBF by coordinating and facilitating the creation of partnerships at local and regional levels. In this regard, Mr Prada informed participants that the WBF Secretariat is in contact with several initiatives in order to build partnerships with the TR4GN. He then provided an overview on the awareness-raising and guidance materials developed by the initiative, and concluded by inviting the WBF members to join the network and announcing the development of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) — with a strong focus on TR4 activities— to be signed between FAO and the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS).

5. Conclusions of Day 1

Mr Pascal Liu, Team Leader, Responsible Global Value Chains, and Coordinator of the WBF (FAO) concluded the session, outlining the main discussions and decisions that were made. He then delivered the closing remarks, thanking all of those involved in the session, including the attendees, interpreters and WBF Secretariat staff and invited the participants to attend the next session.

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6. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat

Mr Pascal Liu (FAO) began the session by welcoming all participants to the second day of the SC19 discussions and reflecting on the hardship caused by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented crisis is leading to devastating economic and social impacts, especially for the poor and most vulnerable. FAO forecasts that the COVID-19 pandemic could tip over 130 million people into chronic hunger by the end of 2020 and this must be avoided.

The banana sector is being impacted on different levels depending on the country. Nevertheless, banana trade is showing signs of resilience to the crisis. According to a [special feature of Food Outlook](#) — recently published by FAO — banana exports showed a slight overall increase during the first half of the year. In this regard, this session of the SC will continue the discussions on the impacts of the crisis and actions to be conducted at working group level, in order to overcome and mitigate the negative impacts on the banana sector and WBF activities.

Mr Liu then concluded by presenting the rules of the meeting and giving the floor to the Mr Andrew Biles (Chiquita), SC and AB co-chair.

7. Welcome by the SC / AB co-chairs and presentation of expected outputs and objectives

Mr Biles welcomed all the participants and observers to the second session of the SC19 by highlighting the 10th anniversary of the WBF and the importance of the banana industry for millions of people worldwide. This harsh period presents challenges but also opportunities, especially for the food sector. Mr Biles presented some of the main



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challenges faced by the transnational banana industry such as the compliance with different national and regional regulations, and recent TR4 outbreaks in Mozambique and the Black Sigatoka incidence in the Philippines and Indonesia. Mr Biles then highlighted the impact of climate change on the extension and strength of the hurricane season in the Caribbean and the devastation caused on Chiquita farms and healthcare facilities in Honduras.

He identified key opportunities for the banana industry, such as the adoption of security and safety measures and the development of new resistant varieties. He then stated “the progress is a journey and not a destination” expecting that the WBF members could find a compromise in order to achieve common understanding on the ongoing discussions.

Mr Biles concluded his intervention by presenting the agenda, objectives and expected outcomes of the second day of the SC19 and gave the floor to Ms Camila Reinhardt Hurtado (FAO).

8. Special session on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on activities of the WBF Working Groups

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided an overview of the activities conducted by the WBF Secretariat to support members during the pandemic, emphasizing the creation of a [digital repository](#) for knowledge exchange on actions and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the open space facilitated by the forum to share experiences, proposals on activities to ensure workers health and income during the crisis, and actions to prevent discrimination of workers that have contracted the virus, amongst others.

1. Impact on Gender, Occupational Health and Safety and Freedom of Association

As was mentioned during the Thematic Session of the WG03 and the first session of the SC19, the WBF has developed two videos for workers and one for employers in the banana industry to ensure health and safety measures during the pandemic. These videos are available on [FAO's YouTube channel](#) and on the [WBF website](#). In addition, the GE-TF has held several conference calls to discuss the main impacts, challenges and positive examples relevant to women workers and gender-related issues during the pandemic. The main challenges identified were: 1) unpaid care work and 2) domestic and gender-based-violence (GBV) issues. A series of positive examples for addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on women workers in the banana industry will be shared during the final webinar of the GE-TF series.

Mr Alistair Smith (EUROBAN) informed participants about a series of COVID-19 related call to action video clips and radio messages developed by EUROBAN in partnership with a French NGO and supported by three UK retailers. The materials were widely used across nine countries of Latin America and the Dominican Republic, reaching an impressive audience.

2. Impact on the Distribution of Value

Ms Carolina Dawson (CIRAD) presented some of the findings of the market analysis conducted by CIRAD and the interesting effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the European banana market. The results show a rise of banana imports in March and April, with an increase of 12% and 3%, respectively. The key factors identified were: 1) the positive perception of consumers towards the fruit, and 2) the structure of distribution concentrated in the supermarkets where the bananas are featured prominently. The second wave of COVID-19 and its eventual lockdown may not have the same positive effect due to different distribution channels put in place. Ms Dawson concluded her intervention by noting that the rise in demand did not impact import prices and that, amid concerns about supply shortages, the observed effect was the opposite, with an oversupply of food products in the European market due to the remarkable and uninterrupted operation of the supply chains.

Mr Mariano Jimenez (CORBANA) complemented the statement of Ms Dawson stressing that the increase of exports did not have a positive effect on prices, and that the two main challenges impacting the industry – COVID-19 and Fusarium wilt – have caused a rise in production costs. This is due to the implementation of prevention measures and the adjustments made in facilities in order to comply with the new health and safety protocols. The producers bear all the risks of production and the effects of climate change; retailers, on the other hand, have the power to decide the prices, which often do not reflect the costs of sustainable production. He concluded by highlighting the recent news about a German retailer that has indicated a drop in prices for the next year, which will have significant impacts on the sustainability of the value chain, particularly in producing countries. Mr Luud Clercx (Agrofair) supported the comments



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provided by Mr Jimenez and provided an example of solidarity carried out by banana producer cooperatives in Ecuador and Peru, who donated their Fairtrade premium to clinics in order to support their efforts against the pandemic.

3. Impact on the activities of WBF members and responses implemented

Mr Paul Lievens (Banana Link) informed participants about the work being conducted by Banana Link and COSILBA to support workers in Latin America during COVID-19. He then highlighted the efforts made by SINTRAINAGRO in Colombia to ensure the implementation of COVID-19 protocols for the banana industry. Ultimately, he presented an initiative carried out in partnership with the trade union SINUTRABE in Ecuador that provided relief packages to banana producing communities during the crisis.

9. Fourth Global Conference of the WBF

Mr Liu informed participants about the uncertainties around holding the Fourth Global Conference next year due to the different projections regarding the evolution of the pandemic. Considering this situation, he then invited participants to reflect on the best format for the event: virtual versus in-person, or a hybrid solution comprising both. He further provided an overview of possible scenarios, including the drawbacks of having a virtual global conference.

SC members agreed that it will likely not be possible to hold an in-person event in 2021 and that it should therefore be postponed to 2022. They then provided their views and proposals to conduct series of virtual WBF events next year, to go hand-in-hand with the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. Some concerns were raised with regards to different time zones and the timing of virtual sessions, so suggestions were then made to organize and facilitate regional events. These proposals will be considered for discussions among the WBF's Advisory Board (AB) and Organizing Committee (OC). In case of positive changes regarding the pandemic, the possibility of in-person meeting in 2021, to be held towards the end of the year, could be revisited.

- **WBF4C - Objectives and expected outcomes**

Mr Liu presented the main objectives and expected outcomes of the global conference and stressed its vital importance to strengthening the collaboration among stakeholders thriving for a more sustainable banana value chain. New challenges were posed for the banana sector, including the COVID-19 pandemic and Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 outbreak, as well as the increased costs of production due to new compliance requirements with respect to safety measures and regulations. Efforts are needed in order to adapt and mitigate the negative effects of both crises and climate change, and to address important topics such as gender-related issues, health and safety, collective bargaining, freedom of association and distribution of value along the banana supply chain.

- **WBF4C - Strategy, topics and outputs to be presented**

Mr Liu briefly presented the communication strategy of the WBF4C, to be carried out in alignment with the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (2021). He highlighted some of the topics to be presented such as the TR4 outbreak, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable development in all its dimensions, responsible business conduct, gender equity, occupational health and safety, agroecological practices, distribution of value and the role of the banana sector for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. He then opened the floor to participants for suggestions on possible topics to be presented.

Ms Jennie Coleman (Equifruit) suggested a session to discuss how to communicate to consumers the impacts of low prices on the sustainability of the value chain. Mr Luud Clercx (Agrofair) supported the proposal and emphasized the worsening situation for farmers in Costa Rica and Nicaragua due to the simultaneous effects of climate change and reduction in prices, leading many farmers to stop their activities permanently.

Decisions:

- Organize and hold virtual sessions on WBF priority issues and activities during 2021, which will be open to WBF members, industry stakeholders, and the wider public.
- Revisit the feasibility of holding the in-person WBF4C in 2021 depending on the evolution of the pandemic.



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10. Climate change and the WBF

Mr Miguel Vallejo (Gestarse) provided an overview and update on the Carbon and Water Footprint project, including its objectives and achievements. The first stage of the project counted on the development of a methodology for the measurement of carbon and water footprints in the banana industry. This process received technical support and funding from FAO and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and resulted in the publication of a methodological guide in English and Spanish in 2018.

The project is currently in its second stage, which is being funded by FAO and contributions from WBF members. This stage consists of the creation of an automatized online tool based on the above-mentioned methodology (completed in April 2020), as well as capacity building activities and validation sessions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person capacity building and validation sessions originally planned for producer associations in Costa Rica and Guatemala were shifted to virtual sessions, and additional countries were also included in these activities, namely Colombia, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. The sessions are due to begin during the second half of November 2020.

The capacity building activities are divided as follows: two weeks of conceptual training and manual calculations, followed by three weeks of practical exercises using the automated tool. The participants will experience the benefits of the tool in facilitating data acquisition, storage and analysis and ultimately the decision-making process. Mr Vallejo informed the audience about the extension of the project by four additional months to carry out analysis in real conditions using the data of four farms in each of the countries that participated in the training sessions. He then concluded his intervention thanking the WBF, CORBANA, AgroAmerica, Gestarse, Agrofair, Rainforest Alliance, Dole, Fairtrade International and Fyffes for the collaboration and support.

Mr Prada presented an overview of the administrative process carried out by FAO in order to assure the confidentiality of information and data protection of the users of the automated platform. He highlighted the assessments carried out on legal and technical aspects, contracts and risks, among others. Ultimately, he announced a potential additional capacity building session for the members of the WBF.

Mr Clercx suggested organizing a special session for WG01, focused on analysing the potential of the tool, not only for companies but for also for the WBF and its members. This could strengthen the collective efforts of the forum against climate change. The next year is an important year for climate change, as the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) will take place in Glasgow, which will provide an opportunity for the WBF to develop pathways to reduce carbon emissions along the chain.

Mr Liu announced that FAO is collaborating with the OECD in order to explore the potential for a joint initiative that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by companies operating in the agricultural sector. Brainstorming sessions and discussions are being organized to develop proposals within the framework of the FAO-OECD collaboration promoting responsible business conduct in agricultural value chains.

Decision:

- Organize capacity building sessions for the members of the WBF on the Carbon and Water Footprint tool (CaWF).

11. Next Steering Committee meeting in 2021 (SC20)

As was decided in previous sessions of the SC, SC meetings should take place twice each year, during the second half of May and the second half of November. As such, Mr Liu proposed two possible dates for the next meeting of the SC (SC20), either during: the (1) week of 17 May, or (2) week of 24 May 2021. SC members present in the meeting supported the second option due to the change in dates of Fruit Logistica 2021.

Decision:

- Confirm the SC20 for the week of 24 May 2021. The Secretariat will share possible dates via Doodle.

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12. Activities on gender equity in the banana industry

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided an overview of the activities and priority areas of the GE-TF. She then presented an overview of the GE-TF webinar series, highlighting the panellist presentations and discussions that took place. The webinar series comprised four webinars, namely on: (1) [the healthy and safe employment of women workers in the banana industry](#); (2) [sexual harassment \(SH\) and gender-based violence \(GBV\) in the banana industry](#); (3) [understanding the gender pay gap \(GPG\) in the banana industry](#); and 4) [addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on women workers in the banana industry](#). For more information on the webinar series, refer to the next steps below.

She further informed participants that the International Meeting on Gender Equity is most likely to be held virtually (2021) and announced the interest of Fyffes in providing coordination support to the GE-TF activities. No objections were made regarding the proposal to nominate a Fyffes representative as co-coordinator of the GE-TF.

Decisions and next steps:

- Nominate Fyffes as co-coordinator of the GE-TF.

Occupational health and safety:

- Finalize the document, *Guidelines on the healthy and safe employment of women in the Latin American banana industry*.
- Hold tripartite meeting with Latin American partners to discuss the aforementioned guidelines.
- Explore opportunities for holding (online) workshops/trainings on gender-responsive OHS in Latin America, using the newly developed guidelines.

Sexual harassment and gender-based violence:

- Assess progress on sexual harassment (SH) and gender-based violence (GBV) priorities since the Third Global Conference of the WBF.
- Strengthen collaboration with the ILO to address GBV with pathfinding initiatives aligned to the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (C190).
- Explore the possibility of developing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and accompanying guidelines for companies to monitor impacts and advances on SH and GBV.

Gender pay gap:

- Collaborate with WG02 to integrate gender pay gap (GPG) tools/methodologies into living wage activities.
- Support WBF members interested in integrating GPG activities in their work.
- Explore opportunities to pilot the Anker gender module in the banana sector.

13. Activities on cost of sustainable production in the banana industry

Mr Smith (EUROBAN), co-coordinator of WG02, presented the new version of the document “*World Banana Forum Commitment to Living Wages for Men and Women Working in the Banana Industry*,” which was jointly amended by WG02 coordinators following the discussions that took place during the first session of the SC19. Mr Prada acknowledged the collective effort in developing the document.

Mr Smith acknowledged the contributions provided by CORBANA, Rainforest Alliance and Tesco, and discussed point by point the amendments made since the previous session. Amongst the changes presented, it was decided to maintain the sentence of promoting living wage as per the role of the WBF, as well as to keep the commitment on fair prices. One sentence acknowledging the role of standard setting organizations was included.

Mr Smith then proposed the unanimous approval of the document, emphasizing that it should be considered a working document that requires periodic review and updates. These updates should build on the existing content and add more specific information on the ongoing activities on living wages, thereby integrating a more comprehensive language and more tangible commitments.

He also proposed the development of a specific work stream focused on living income for small-scale family farmers.



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Mr Jimenez expressed his appreciation for all the efforts carried out by the WG02 members in aiming to reach consensus and making progress in this regard. He then raised concerns regarding the final document, highlighting his recommendations to include the text “*trade unions and other forms of workers’ organizations*”, as well as the removal of the text referencing the acceptance of only one specific living wage methodology. CORBANA’s approval and endorsement of the document is conditioned on these changes. Ultimately, he suggested a reduction of the text and size of the document.

Mr José Antonio Hidalgo (AEBE) shared the concerns raised by CORBANA and pointed out the lack of a clear commitment on living wages, based on shared responsibility of all actors along the chain. He then stressed the contradictions seen throughout the value chains, where producers are experiencing more requirements and increased costs, while retailers continue reducing the prices paid. Finally, he asked whether a shared responsibility mechanism is being discussed within the WG02.

Ms Leonie Haakshorst also expressed her appreciation for the work carried by the co-coordinators and responded that Rainforest Alliance is working with the rest of the value chain to discuss details on how to implement the shared responsibility outlined in the new standard.

Ms Svetlana Boincean acknowledged the progress on the living wage discussions and stated that trade unions are the only form legal form of worker representation, despite of the existence of different bodies that may be created by the employers or certification schemes. She then presented different perspectives on the employers’ negotiations on living wage.

Mr Smith responded to the objections to the Anker methodology, stating that this methodology is the most complete methodology that takes into consideration concrete geographic location, living costs and production conditions.

Mr Hidalgo raised further concerns on the document, claiming that the document as it is appears to place the responsibility on the producer, despite it providing an overview on the roles of each actor for enabling and achieving sustainable living wages across the banana sector.

Mr Edgar Monge (Tesco) supported the recognition of other forms of worker representation in the final document, but also recognized the importance of highlighting the Anker methodology — as it is the most complete and trusted methodology available, despite some of its imperfections. He then urged members to jointly approve the document, with a commitment to build on the text periodically, in order to add more concrete measures, goals and commitments for the different actors. This is something that could be addressed again during the SC20.

Mr El'vis Beytullayev (ILO) thanked the efforts put in place for the development of the document and stated that, at this stage, ILO would not be able to endorse it. Time would be needed to consult internally. Mr Beytullayev suggested to replace *good jobs* for *decent jobs* and to recognize the tripartite constituency of ILO into the document.

Mr Xavier Roussel (Dole), co-coordinator of the WG02 invited the participants to look at the bigger picture, recognizing the importance of the economic sustainability. He also encouraged the approval of the document, with the aim of adding concrete and tangible activities in the coming months.

Mr Liu acknowledged the need for further discussions on the topic since important key members and the ILO demonstrated reservations on the current version of the document. He then suggested to agree that the document is a good basis for continuing the discussions on the topic; further adjustments to the document will be made, with the objective to reach consensus in the coming months before the next session of the SC.

Mr Till Ludwig (GIZ) suggested to make a commitment to agree on the general points and further create an annex to the document that details the next steps and definitions.

Mr Marco Calvo (Augura) proposed an internal meeting between Augura, AEBE and CORBANA in order to review the document in detail and present their concerns to the Forum collectively. Mr Hidalgo and Mr Jimenez supported Augura’s



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proposal and acknowledged that despite the few issues that have yet to be addressed, the document is close to reaching a unanimous approval.

Mr Liu acknowledged all the good work of members and coordinators of WG02 and recognized the importance of reaching consensus within the Forum. It is crucial to have the support of the producers' organizations. He then supported the idea to approve a more general principle document, to be agreed upon by all members, and to continue the discussions on fair wages, living wages and fair prices. Ultimately, he suggested a follow up meeting with producer organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to reach consensus on the topic.

Ms Lasmé (Compagnie Fruitière) agreed with the issues raised by the producers and requested time to consult internally in order to endorse the approval of the document.

Mr Stephan Jermendy (ALDI) expressed ALDI's support to the document and its objectives in supporting living wages in the industry. He further acknowledged the important role of each of the stakeholders in enabling this process.

Decisions:

- Develop activities focused on living income for small-scale family farmers.
- Promote discussions and commitments on shared responsibility in achieving living wages.
- Organize and facilitate a follow-up meeting with AEBE, Augura and CORBANA to reach consensus on the *World Banana Forum Commitment to Living Wages for Men and Women Working in the Banana Industry*.
- Present the revised Commitment document to WG02 for review.
- Submit the document approved by WG02 to the SC for final endorsement.

14. Update on the fee collection campaign 2020 and financial report

The WBF Secretariat provided a brief update on the progress of the fee collection campaign and the total amount expected in 2020. The financial report forecast for 2020 was then presented highlighting the contributions from the multi-donor trust fund and FAO. The 2021 budget will be revised and shared among the members due to the decision to postpone the in-person WBF4C to 2022.

Decisions:

- Revise the 2021 WBF budget accordingly with the new WBF4C modality agreed.

15. Conclusion of SC19

Mr Pascal Liu concluded the meeting, delivering the closing remarks and thanking all of those involved in the session, including the speakers, participants, interpreters, technicians and WBF Secretariat staff.



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Annex 1. List of Participants

Nineteenth meeting of the Steering Committee (SC19)

18-19 November 2020

List of participants and observers of SC19

#	Organization / Organización / Organisation	Name / Nombre / Nom	Surname / Apellido / Nom	Participation/ Participación / Participation
1	AEBE	José Antonio	Hidalgo	SC member
2	Agroamerica	Javier	Aguirre	SC member
3	AgroFair	Luud	Clercx	SC member
4	Aldi North	Christian	Heggen	Observer
5	Aldi South	Stephan	Jermendy	Observer
6	Aldi South	Felix	Strauss	Observer
7	Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT	Nicolas	Roux	SC member
8	Asbama	Andrea	Vasquez	SC member
9	Augura	Marco	Calvo	Observer
10	Banana Link	Paul	Lievens	SC member
11	Banana Link	Alistair	Smith	SC member
12	Banelino	Gustavo	Gandini	SC member
13	BASIC	Marion	Feige-Muller	Observer
14	BASIC	Christophe	Alliot	Observer
15	Chiquita Brands International Inc.	Andrew	Biles	SC member
16	CIRAD	Carolina	Dawson	Observer
17	CIRAD	Thierry	Lescot	Observer
18	COLEACP	Morag	Webb	SC member
19	COLSIBA	Gilbert	Bermúdez	SC member
20	Compagnie Fruitière	Christelle	Lasme	SC member
21	CORBANA	Mariano	Jimenez	SC member
22	CORBANA	Jorge	Sauma Aguilar	SC member
23	Dole	Xavier	Roussel	SC member
24	Dominican Republic	Maria	Laureano	SC member
25	Dominican Republic	Patricia	Rodriguez	SC member
26	Embassy of Egypt	Ramzy	Steno	Observer
27	Embassy of Indonesia	Ida	Ayu Ratih	Observer
28	Equifruit	Jennie	Coleman	Observer
29	EUROBAN	Alistair	Smith	SC member
30	European Union	Jörg	Roos	Observer



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31	EU Delegation to Rome	Brian	Creach	Observer
32	Fairtrade International	Nicolas	Léger	SC member
33	Fairtrade International	Wilbert	Flinterman	SC member
34	Fyffes	Jon	Tugwell	SC member
35	Fyffes	Stella	Davis	SC member
36	GIZ / ABNB	Johanna	Deckers	SC member
37	GIZ / ABNB	Till	Ludwig	SC member
38	IAARD	Nuning	Nugrahani	Observer
39	IDH	Annelotte	Crena de longh	Observer
40	IDH	Ronald	Sanabria	Observer
41	ITC	Benjamin	Morrison	SC member
42	ITFRI/IAARD	Ellina	Mansyah	Observer
43	ITFRI/IAARD	Augus	Sutanto	Observer
44	ITFRI/IAARD	Riska	Riska	Observer
45	IUF	Svetlana	Boincean	SC member
46	Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture	Sukartini	Kasmidjan	Observer
47	Malaysian Department of Agriculture	Christopher	John Biai	Observer
48	Malaysian Department of Agriculture	Norhayati	Madiha	Observer
49	Malaysian Department of Agriculture	Sabariah	Kamis	Observer
50	Malaysian Department of Agriculture	Wan	Aimi Shabuddin	Observer
51	Malaysian Department of Agriculture	Shuerni	Mohamad Razi	Observer
52	Embassy of Malawi	James	Woods	Observer
53	Permanent Representation of Cameroon to FAO	Médi	Moungui	SC member
54	Pilipino Banana Growers and Exporters Association, Inc.	Stephen	Antig	Observer
55	Rainforest Alliance	Stephanie	Gerteiser	SC member
56	Rainforest Alliance	Leonie	Haakshorst	SC member
57	Rainforest Alliance	Anny	Stoikova	SC member
58	Rewe Group	Florian	Schaefer	SC member
59	Solidaridad	Jeroen	Kroezen	SC member
60	Tesco	Tania	Moodley	SC member
61	Tesco	Edgar	Monge	SC member
62	Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Ayhan	Baran	Observer



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63	UGPBAN	Sébastien	Zanoletti	Observer
64	UNCTAD	Leonela	Santana Boada	SC member
65	FAO/AGP	Maged	Elkahky	FAO
66	FAO/ESP	Nozomi	Ide	FAO
67	FAO/EST	Giuseppe	Bonavita	FAO
68	FAO/EST	Pascal	Liu	FAO
69	FAO/EST	Victor	Prada	FAO
70	FAO/EST	Marlo	Rankin	FAO
71	FAO/EST	Camila	Reinhardt	FAO
72	FAO/EST	Michael	Riggs	FAO