



The World Banana Forum (WBF)

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade

Report of the Twenty-Second Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC22)

Attended by the Steering Committee members and Working Group coordinators

7-8 June 2022

Online sessions

Tuesday, 7 June 2022

1. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat

Mr Pascal Liu, FAO Team Leader on Responsible Global Value Chains, began the session by welcoming all participants to the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC22). He informed attendees that the WBF was in its 12th year and commented positively on the increased participation of members in the SC meetings. He then provided a brief overview of the current context and challenges faced by the banana sector, highlighting the decline in banana exports and increase in energy, input and transportation costs, which have resulted in greater pressure on actors in the sector. He then commented on the continued COVID-19 pandemic and the war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, which has exacerbated pressures and led to several supply chain disruptions. Mr Liu also highlighted the decline in banana exports to the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which has resulted in falling banana prices in some exporting countries. He then briefly mentioned additional challenges faced by the industry, such as the continued spread of TR4 and the adoption of a proposal for a directive on due diligence by the European Union, which offers both challenges and opportunities for suppliers. He stressed the need to assist actors in the banana industry in adapting to this potential forthcoming mandatory legislation.


Mr Liu then mentioned the possibility of collaborating with The Global Coalition of Fresh Produce to analyse and create possible solutions to the disruptions threatening fresh produce global supply chains. He concluded by informing members about a proposal (still under review) submitted to FAO's Flexible Multi-Partner Mechanism (FMM) focused on providing technical assistance and capacity building on responsible business conduct and risk-based due diligence in fruit value chains, with governments and producers as the main beneficiaries. Mr Victor Prada (FAO) then introduced presenters and facilitated the sessions.

2. Welcome, objectives and expected outcomes of the SC22 meeting by the Advisory Board co-chair

Ms Christelle Lasmé (Compagnie Fruitière), co-chair of the WBF SC and Advisory Board (AB), began her intervention by highlighting the progress that has been made with the ongoing projects of the WBF and its members, despite the current challenging situation. She then presented the expected outputs and objectives of the first day of the meeting.

3. World Banana Forum newcomers

Mr Prada informed members of the growing interest expressed by industry stakeholders to join the WBF, highlighting the important increase in members in recent years. He then extended a warm welcome to all new members of the WBF in this past year, including: ABAVAR (Brazil), AFRUIBANA (pan-African association), APBOSMAM (Peru), Banana Producers Association in Guatemala (APIB), Del Monte (United States of America), EMBRAPA (Brazil), Grupo Acon (Costa Rica), Kaufland (Germany), Quinta Pasadena (Dominican Republic), Tropical Fruit Export S.A. (Ecuador) and UNIVALE (Brazil).



Mr Prada then introduced Mr Julio Merida, representative of the Banana Producers Association in Guatemala (APIB) and newcomer to the WBF. Mr Merida explained APIB's role in the Guatemalan banana sector, as well as its history and vision for the future, which includes adherence to best practices and regulatory standards on labour and environmental issues. He commented positively on APIB's association with the WBF and the efforts to make the banana industry more sustainable. He concluded by underscoring the commitment of independent producers in Guatemala to be active and constructive members of the WBF.

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

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

- **Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF) project**

Mr Matheus Lima (FAO) provided a brief overview of the improvements made to the CWF tool, including new features and functions, better automatization, and an English language version. Refer to Section 6 for more details.

- **TR4-related activities**

Mr Lima briefly mentioned the collaborative efforts of the WBF Secretariat and members of the TR4 Global Network (TR4GN) in organising two webinars this year regarding TR4-resistant and/or tolerant banana varieties. Refer to Section 11 for more details.

- **Agroecology and plastics in the banana industry**

Mr Lima briefly presented an overview of the discussions held with FAO's team on Agricultural Plastics, which has identified bananas as one of the key crops to be addressed in activities related to plastics in the agricultural sector. Discussions have also taken place with the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) on agroecology and the adaptation of relevant tools for the banana industry.

Mr Lima then provided an overview of planned and upcoming webinars concerning: Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) and gene editing; the Green Deal; the Farm to Fork Strategy; plastics; and carbon and water footprint.

Working Group 02 (WG02) on Distribution of Value

- **Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production and Distribution of Value (OCSP)**


Mr Prada provided a brief overview of the activities of the OCSP, which commenced at the start of 2021 through a Letter of Agreement (LoA) signed between FAO and CIRAD/BASIC. He detailed the current limitations of the model and discussed the subsequent decision not to proceed with the next phases of the Observatory at this stage. However, Mr Prada stated that the WBF Secretariat would continue leading the activities of the Observatory by ensuring that the debate on costs of production remains open; ensuring regular updates and meetings to exchange information on the Observatory; facilitating the exchange of information on costs and margins; informing WBF members on due diligence legislations; and facilitating institutional debate to enable better purchasing practices. He concluded by stressing the importance of the Observatory with regards to the new due diligence legislations and its effects on issues of transparency, living wages and distribution of value.

- **Declaration on Living Wages**

Mr Prada briefly discussed the WBF Declaration on Living Wages, which began taking shape in 2019 and was approved in the SC21. He highlighted that this declaration was created based on a consensus and continued ethos of the WBF towards living wages in the banana industry. It was decided in the Thematic Session of the WG02 that the WBF would begin disseminating information on the topic and focus activities on living wages through events like Fruit Attraction.

- **Gender pay gap**

Mr Prada then briefly presented the aims of the gender pay gap study in Colombia being coordinated by the Task Force on Gender Equity (GE-TF) of the WBF under an LoA between FAO and Fairtrade Germany, namely to



provide a better understanding of the extent, causes of, and possible solutions to the gender pay gap in the banana sector.

Working Group 03 (WG03) on Labour Rights

Ms Camila Reinhardt Hurtado (FAO) briefly commented on updates and developments regarding activities conducted under the three priority areas of the WG03, namely gender equity, occupational health and safety, and social dialogue and collective bargaining. These include: 1) gender-related transfer of learning activities in Ghana and Colombia; 2) a gender stocktaking questionnaire; 3) the BOHESI guidelines for the healthy and safe employment of women workers in Latin America; 4) a potential forthcoming multi-stakeholder consultation process in Cameroon for the revision and approval of the newly revised health and safety manual for the banana industry; 5) a workplace health and safety risk assessment training conducted in Ghana; and 6) potential forthcoming health and safety activities in Ecuador. All topics were discussed in detail on day 2 of the Steering Committee (refer to Sections 12 and 13).

- **Child labour and decent youth employment in the banana industry**

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado concluded by informing members that a possible new focus on child labour and decent youth employment in the banana industry is currently being discussed, to be addressed under the WG03, which has come about based on discussions with FAO country offices, governments, and industry stakeholders in recent months. She highlighted the importance of this topic given the upcoming due diligence legislations, which have a strong focus on forced and child labour.

5. The German Action Alliance for Sustainable Bananas (ABNB) and the WBF


Ms Andrea Bruestle (ABNB/GIZ) provided an overview of the activities of ABNB on climate change adaptation. ABNB is currently working on three complementary workstreams: 1) a commitment to the sector to work together towards climate change adaptation and mitigation in banana supply chains; 2) a climate add-on focused on enhancing current criteria on climate change adaptation and mitigation through the development of a set of climate relevant measures that can complement existing voluntary sustainability standards; and 3) the development of a manual which supports producers in implementing the climate relevant measures defined in the climate add-on and which clearly outlines activities and investments required.

She informed the audience that the commitment to the sector is open to all stakeholders and is completely voluntary, relying on an adherence to core principles and international agreements on issues such as pesticide use and on the implementation of a set of sustainability measures. [A simulation study](#) carried out by the Institute of Crop Science and Resource Conservation of the University of Bonn has identified 1) composting; 2) cover crops; 3) mulching; 4) Integrated Pest Management (IPM); 5) buffer zones; 6) plastic recycling; and 7) plastic reduction as the most impactful measures for climate adaptation in export-oriented banana producing regions in Latin America.

In addition, Ms Bruestle mentioned that a manual is currently being developed as part of the project [From Farm to Fork](#), which aims to support organizations in the implementation of the seven climate relevant measures and provides best practices from four Latin American countries. It is being implemented by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), in collaboration with the Global Nature Fund and other organizations. It will be publicly available by the end of this year.

Ms Bruestle then highlighted that assistance is given to committed producers through standard schemes, the manual, and financially through other signatories of the commitment. In addition, she mentioned that retailers will finance the relevant amounts necessary to support these efforts and commit themselves to only buying bananas which are cultivated according to those seven measures. She informed participants that the ABNB commitment has already received eight signatories.

Ms Bruestle concluded by informing participants on a proposal made by ABNB to create a new subgroup within the WBF on climate adaptation, mitigation, and biodiversity protection, which would allow ABNB workstreams to be directly integrated into the WBF and provide ABNB members with an additional platform to expand their



work on sustainability. Mr Prada informed participants that the new subgroup is now operative and further information will be shared with the goal of attracting additional members.

Decisions:

- Disseminate information on the new subgroup to WBF members.
- Launch the activities of the newly created WBF subgroup on climate adaptation, mitigation, and biodiversity protection

6. Special Session on Climate Change

- **Third phase of the project on Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF)**

Mr Lima began the special session by providing a summary of the three phases carried out under the CWF project initiated in 2017 by the WBF in collaboration with GIZ.

Mr Miguel Vallejo (Gestarse) then presented the timeline for the activities proposed under phase three of the project. Efforts are now focused on carrying out online training sessions – on the use of the new version of the tool – for banana producers in Belize, the Caribbean Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala and Panama. This will be followed by the online technical accompaniment of selected groups within these countries (September to December 2022). The training sessions will last approximately seven weeks with 2.5-hour sessions twice a week and will include approximately 20 participants per country.

Mr Vallejo then detailed the improvements and updates made to the tool, emphasising the development of new modules on animal traction, land use changes and carbon stock on soils, the ability to include two-stroke/four-stroke engine machinery, the addition of new and custom formulations for nitrogen-based fertilizers, the inclusion of registered pesticides for use in the banana sector, the translation of the tool into English, the ability of the tool to estimate uncertainties, and new graphics and options for the visualisation and downloading of results. The tool will be accompanied by three capacity-building videos (two of which are already completed) and an updated version of the users' manual.

Mr Alfonso Calera (University of Castilla La Mancha) then presented in detail the new graphics and customized tables of results and stated that the implemented changes will allow a better visualization of the different components of the carbon and water footprint, which will in turn support the decision-making process of banana producing companies.


- **Webinar on Due Diligence and Climate Change/CWF Tool**

Mr Prada invited all SC members and observers to participate in the forthcoming webinar, *Access to the European Market – Due Diligence and Climate Change*, which is expected to take place on 4 July. The topics to be discussed in the webinar are: 1) the European Union's proposal for a directive on corporate sustainability and due diligence; 2) WBF tools to measure carbon and water footprint; and 3) digital innovations for climate change mitigation.

- **Update on FAO's Multidisciplinary Fund project**

Mr Prada presented an update on FAO's Multidisciplinary Fund project, which aims to give continuity to the CWF activities described by Mr Lima, Mr Vallejo, and Mr Calera, as well as to provide traceability and transparency regarding the climate sustainability of global banana supply chains. He explained that the CWF tool is in communication with a private blockchain facilitating a flow of information which can then be provided to actors in the banana supply chain.

Mr Prada then briefly mentioned some of the input elements that the system can support, including the measurement of carbon and water footprints of maritime transportation, ripening stations, storage and



distribution facilities. The implementation of the pilot is expected to take place in August/September of this year.

He then highlighted FAO's commitment to play a key role as a neutral facilitator to ensure the success of the project. He concluded by opening the floor to questions, clarifying that all participants are welcome to take part in this pilot project in the future and urging them to send a formal expression of interest to request their participation in both the Carbon and Water Footprint and the Multidisciplinary fund projects.

- **Plastics in the banana industry**

Ms Giulia Carcasci (FAO) provided an overview of the report, [Assessment of agricultural plastics and their sustainability: a call for action](#), published in December 2021, and detailed its findings in relation to the banana industry.

Mr Luud Clercx (Agrofair) then displayed images of contaminated areas with plastic residues derived from banana plantations in Peru and highlighted the problem faced by natural habitats and rivers near banana plantations. He then stressed that these residues occasionally end up in the ocean contributing to marine plastic pollution.

He then presented the operational steps needed to transform banana bunch bag residues into plastic corner boards (used to stabilize banana boxes in pallets), and proceeded to inform participants on a project developed jointly by Agrofair, Solidaridad and banana producing associations such as APPBOSA, AVACH, APOQ, Rio y Valle, the Banana Cluster, and Tulipán Naranja, for the creation of plastic recycling plants in Peru (called ECOBAN) to transform plastic residues into plastic corner boards. The project is being funded by PROINNOVATE, Netherlands Enterprise Agency and Cactus (Luxembourg retailer). The ECOBAN shareholder company was created based on a joint participation model encompassing different supply chain actors (importers, exporters and producers).

Mr Clercx then presented the main points of the resolution, [End plastic pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument](#), which was adopted during the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in March 2022. Negotiations are expected to begin this summer and a proposal for a global treaty is expected to be ready by the end of 2024. The treaty is expected to cover marine and terrestrial ecosystems and consider the full lifecycle of plastics. It will also promote national action plans with the participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector.

Mr Clercx concluded by presenting FAO's proposal for the development of a voluntary code of conduct on agricultural plastics, to be discussed at the Twenty-Eighth Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture in July 2022.

Mr Richard Thompson (FAO) stated that FAO's assessment report proposes a two-pronged approach considering the development of a legally-binding agreement and soft law instruments. The proposal to develop a voluntary code of conduct on agricultural plastics is one of the soft law instruments. Mr Thompson then invited WBF member companies that would like to contribute to the development of the voluntary code of conduct to contact FAO's team on Agricultural Plastics. He then concluded by informing participants about a forthcoming FAO event focused on sensitizing ambassadors on plastics issue in the agricultural sector. The event is expected to take place in Rome on 27 June.

Mr Clercx proposed that a code of conduct focused on plastics in the banana industry should initially be focused on bunch bags and packaging plastics. He further highlighted the importance of having contributions from different stakeholders to be able to effectively address the plastics issue in production, packaging, distribution centres and retail.

Mr Liu supported the idea to develop a group of interest to work on plastics within WG01 and underscored the importance of the banana industry voice in broader discussions on agricultural plastics.

Decisions:

- Establish a group of interest within the Working Group 01 to work on plastics in the banana industry.

- **Possible creation of a collaboration platform for reducing GHG emissions in agricultural supply chains**

Mr Liu presented an overview of a proposal for the creation of a global multi-stakeholder collaboration platform focused on measuring and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions along agricultural supply chains. This proposal stems from the positive feedback received during the last SC21 meeting where the idea was briefly presented. He discussed the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and the urgent need for GHG emission reductions in all sectors, noting that agri-food systems account for one-third of all GHG emissions. As the current nationally determined contributions (NDCs) put forward by governments are not sufficient to limit global warming to around 1.5°C by the end of the century, complementary initiatives are urgently needed. Mr Liu suggested that better cooperation with the private sector is needed and that, alongside more ambitious NDCs, initiatives must be formed by coalitions of willing actors who strive to go beyond the current resolutions.

He then presented an overview of positive changes in the agricultural sector contributing to reductions in GHGs, but also the negative aspects of the agricultural supply chains and GHG emissions. He also highlighted that while there are many initiatives aimed at tackling the issue of GHG emissions, they often lack the coordination needed to be effective.

As such, a possible solution to tackle these challenges is the establishment of a global multi-stakeholder platform which could facilitate collaboration between willing actors in measuring, reducing, and offsetting emissions. The platform could also coordinate efforts to: create synergies and maximize efficiency of private sector initiatives; contribute to better governance of GHG quantification, reduction, and offsetting processes; and support small producers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries. Mr Liu then presented the possible roles of the platform in detail, namely: 1) to facilitate access for supply chain operators to helpful resources; and 2) to facilitate collaboration between all actors in the agricultural sector.

He then proposed two phases for the project. The first would focus on GHG identification and quantification, ensuring consistency with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and IPCC processes and discussing definitions of carbon neutrality with selected industries. The second phase would consist in expanding the scope of GHG reduction and offsetting activities. Mr Liu then briefly summarised possible activities to be undertaken by the platform, including the sharing of practical experience and knowledge, the building of a consensus on appropriate strategies, and the mobilisation of resources to channel them into activities where their efficiency will be maximised.


Mr Liu further presented several possible beneficiaries which include companies along agri-food supply chains, trade associations, farmers' organizations, government agencies and research institutions. He highlighted that the platform would focus on existing work and synergies already present in the sector and briefly presented a list of possible partners.

Mr Liu then discussed the possible institutional set up of the platform which would include a multi-stakeholder steering committee, an advisory group, thematic working groups, and a multi-donor trust fund. He concluded by emphasising that this proposal was still in discussion at FAO and encouraged participants to provide feedback.

7. Activities on costs of sustainable production in the banana industry

- **Creation of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Regional Commission for sustainable bananas**

Mr Prada presented a proposal for the creation of a Regional Commission of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Producers, which aims to be a platform for the discussion and coordination of activities related to priority topics and issues in the region. These include social, economic, and environmental challenges, forthcoming due diligence legislations, Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4, the war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, living wages and other relevant issues. The Association of Banana Exporters of Ecuador (AEBE), Augura (Colombia), and National Banana Corporation of Costa Rica (CORBANA) volunteered to start the coordination of the work plan and activities of the Commission. Other regional institutions will be incorporated as coordinators at a later stage.



It is important to note that, while the Regional Commission of Producers in LAC will focus on priority issues for regional stakeholders and coordinated by them, the participation will be open to all members of the WBF. The commission will also be in communication contact with European groups who have similar objectives on issues such as living wages, decent work or climate change, with the aim of creating an international platform which facilitates discussions and provides transparency along the banana value chain.

Members interested to be part of the commission then discussed key topics to be addressed at the WBF sessions in Fruit Attraction in October 2022, citing shared responsibility, decent wages, and due diligence as priority topics. A potential meeting of the Commission in Fruit Attraction was also discussed.

Decisions:

- Confirm the agenda for the first meeting of the Commission, to be held prior to Fruit Attraction.
- Establish dates for further meetings of the Commission to discuss priority topics and thematic areas.
- Explore the possibility to organise WBF sessions at Fruit Attraction.

8. Conclusions of Day 1

Mr Liu concluded the session by delivering the closing remarks, thanking all of those involved in the session, including the attendees, interpreters, presenters and WBF Secretariat staff, and invited participants to actively participate during the subsequent sessions on Day 2 of the SC22.

Wednesday, 8 June 2022

9. Welcome by WBF Secretariat

Mr Pascal Liu (FAO) began the session by welcoming all participants to the second day of the SC22.

10. Welcome, objectives and expected outcomes of the SC22 meeting by the Advisory Board co-chair


Mr Andrew Biles (Chiquita), SC and AB co-chair also welcomed members to the session. He then presented an overview of the current global situation in the banana industry, highlighting the difficulties faced and the challenges ahead. He commented on the effects of the war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation; recessions, inflation, and rising costs of living; and how supply chain costs are increasing across the board. Mr Biles commented positively on the resilience of the banana industry despite these challenges and urged members to press on with the work of the WBF. He concluded by presenting the updates and topics to be discussed during the session.

11. Session on Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4

• Updates on the TR4 Global Network activities

Mr Matheus Lima (FAO) provided an update on the activities carried out by the WBF and its TR4 Global Network (TR4GN) since the SC21. He briefly provided a summary of the three-day webinar conducted in mid-2021, [FAO Conference – Capacity Building and Awareness Raising in Response to the Threat of Fusarium Wilt of Banana Tropical Race 4](#), which was jointly organized by FAO's Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), the WBF, and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Another webinar conducted in mid-2021 – coordinated by the WBF and FAO's Subregional Office for Mesoamerica – was focused on, [Addressing the Global Knowledge Gap on Diagnostics Tools, Protocols and their Applications for Fusarium Wilt of Musa Tropical Race 4](#).

Mr Lima then provided an overview of the webinars held this year in collaboration with FAO Mesoamerica. The first was a two-day event focused on [TR4-Resistant Banana Varieties – From Selection to Market Demand](#). Mr Lima and Mr Prada commented positively on the active participation of over 1000 participants and highlighted that over 500 certificates of attendance were prepared and shared with participants. The second webinar, [TR4-](#)



[Resistant Banana Varieties – Introduction, Development and Evaluation](#), was held on 17 May and provided additional information on banana cultivars and varieties with tolerance or resistance to TR4, discussing the steps needed for the development, safe introduction and field evaluation of those varieties. Mr Lima then invited participants to access the [TR4 Global Network website](#) where they can find all relevant materials regarding TR4. The website will be available in Chinese in the coming months.

Mr Lima then informed members on the participation, together Victor Prada, of the WBF Secretariat in three global events on TR4 with the aim of promoting the activities of the TR4GN and inviting key organizations to join the network. These were: 1) the *Symposium: Global Research in the Management of Banana Fusarium Wilt TR4* in March 2022 the [IPPC Workshop Series: Fusarium TR4: Diagnostic, Surveillance, Inspection and Simulation Exercises](#) in May 2022; and 3) the [International Conference on Banana Fusarium Wilt Disease in Africa](#) in May 2022.

The WBF Secretariat further continued the collaboration with FAO relevant units, providing inputs and comments to publications, such as the IPPC Secretariat *Guidelines on prevention, preparedness and response to Fusarium TR4* as well as an awareness raising video focused on the management of nematodes and banana weevils by smallholders in Uganda.


- **Updates on TR4 in the LAC Region and FAO's Regional Action Plan**

Mr Jaime Cardenas (FAO) presented an overview of FAO TR4-related activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) with a focus on the strategy and action plans developed in response to the outbreak and spread of TR4. He highlighted the need to focus on biosecurity and to monitor the outbreak and spread of quarantine diseases in the region such as Fusarium wilt TR4.

He informed participants of a meeting held on 25 May – coordinated by FAO, the Executive Secretary of the Central American Agricultural Council (SE-CAC), and the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA) – to discuss the ongoing development of activities in monitoring TR4, the analysis of digital tools used in this process and the data generated by them, with the aim of identifying the most effective responses to the outbreak. The session counted on the participation of over 300 representatives from plant health services in the LAC region. Mr Cardenas highlighted that the work carried out would reduce the vulnerability of Latin America and the Caribbean in fighting outbreaks of diseases, which would diminish the losses already incurred by climate change.

Mr Cardenas then presented a roadmap of the next steps to be carried out with the goal of continuing and developing new activities related to the mitigation (in the context of Colombia and Peru) and the prevention (in the context of Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia) of TR4 in the Andean region. To do so, experts from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are currently being recruited to revise existing activities within each country. The experts will also work towards the establishment of new economic funds which are needed to realize the full potential of the *Regional action to strengthen the prevention and control of Fusarium wilt of Musaceae, tropical race 4, in member countries of the Andean Community* project. Budgets will be coordinated and drafted by the General Secretariat of the Andean Community (CAN) and national consultants, which will be implemented first at a national level and subsequently at the CAN level. He then highlighted the importance of this project in addressing food security in the Andean agricultural sector given the countless small producers who rely on it for their livelihoods. The roadmap is currently in development and will be presented to the Andean Technical Committee on Agricultural and Livestock Health (COTASA) when finalised.

Mr Cardenas then provided a summary of the activities under the framework of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme 3803, which include a guide for simulated exercises (currently under review), the development of a document for the reduction and management of risk (with a focus on TR4), an analysis of at-risk regions and prevention procedures for TR4 in Nicaragua, and the formulation of a project to introduce resources that support the work on phytosanitary and zoosanitary risks in Central America. Mr Cardenas also highlighted the participation of FAO in the Banana Forum held in Colombia, focused on the response by public and private management to TR4 outbreaks in Colombia and Peru. Visits were made by FAO to revise biosecurity measures in banana plantations.



Mr Cardenas concluded by presenting information about the creation of a course on the spread and effects of TR4. The course is being coordinated by the Bolivian Ministry of Rural Development and Lands, the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Service (SENASAG) of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and FAO, with the goal of implementing it as official training for the country's plant health authorities and technicians. The course will be open to technicians and professionals from other countries and will begin on 14 June.

- **Next Steps**

Mr Prada presented an overview of the activities of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture on plant breeding and genetics, as well as the discussions that are being carried out to strengthen collaboration among FAO relevant units and the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre.

The aim of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre is to develop improved and climate change adapted crop varieties with a focus on food and nutrition security using nuclear and related biotechnologies. These varieties are created through induced genetic variation, genomics, precision phenotyping, speed-breeding technologies as well as seed systems to provide access to new varieties.

Mr Prada then mentioned two TR4-related projects currently being undertaken by the centre. The first project focuses on, *Strengthening Member State Capacities to Combat Banana Fusarium Wilt (TR4) through Early Detection, New Resistant Varieties, and Integrated Management*, and will be implemented from 2022 to 2026. The second project will be launched in 2023 and will focus on, *Technology development for disease management in banana and coffee using induced genetic variation (2023-2027)*.

Some banana varieties developed by the Joint Centre, such as Z14, have shown good results in terms of tolerance towards Fusarium wilt TR4. Mr Prada stated that the Joint Centre continues to work towards finding new resistant varieties. He concluded by stressing the importance of establishing further cooperation with other organizations in regard to TR4.

Decisions:


- Strengthen collaboration with the IAEA on work related to TR4 tolerant/partially resistant banana varieties and the support provided to member states to combat Banana Fusarium wilt (TR4).
- Discuss and establish cooperation with other organizations regarding TR4-related issues.

12. Activities on labour rights and social dialogue in the banana industry

- **Occupational health and safety**

Ms Camila Reinhardt Hurtado (FAO) presented a brief summary of the activities regarding occupational health and safety (OHS) in Cameroon and Ecuador. With regards to OHS activities in Cameroon, following the decisions taken in the SC21, the WBF Secretariat prepared an official letter to be sent to the Permanent Representation of Cameroon to FAO to explore the possibility of organizing a multi-stakeholder consultation process for the review and approval of the revised BOHESI manual. The letter is still undergoing internal clearances, which have been delayed as a result of the need for FAO to give maximum priority to the impacts of the war between Ukraine and the Russian Federation in the agriculture sector. With regards to Ecuador, she informed participants that there are ongoing discussions with the Ecuadorian government for the potential revision and updating of the BOHESI health and safety manual for the banana industry. WBF members will be kept informed of the developments in both countries.

Mr Peter Hurst (ex-ILO health and safety specialist) then provided an overview of the three-day OHS workplace risk assessment trainings conducted in Ghana in April 2022 with the three main banana producing companies – Golden Exotics Ltd. (GEL), Volta River Estates Ltd. (VREL), and Musahamat Farms Ltd. - and their worker representatives. These trainings were aimed at enabling an improved understanding of workplace OHS risk assessments, including the five steps for conducting a risk assessment as well as the hierarchy of risk controls to eliminate or mitigate risks identified at the worksites. The overall objective was to bring banana companies, their workforce and trade unions up to speed on best international practices for risk assessment and management.



Mr Hurst and Ms Adwoa Sakyi (IUF) commented positively on the outcome of this training, highlighting the positive and educational impact it had on participants.

Mr Hurst then presented a proposal for potential next steps associated with OHS, emphasizing the need to encourage companies to carry out routine and regular OHS workplace risk assessments, with the active participation of the workforce, as opposed to generic risk assessments. In the case of Ghana, this would assist banana companies in complying with a new health and safety bill which would require employers to carry out routine OHS workplace risk assessments. Mr Hurst concluded by highlighting the importance of extending these trainings to other banana producing countries to enable sustainable, safer, and healthier banana production worldwide. Ms Reinhardt Hurtado then reiterated that WBF Secretariat continues to actively seek opportunities to replicate OHS activities in other banana producing countries.

Decisions:

- Continue exploring opportunities to extend and replicate OHS activities in other banana producing countries, focusing on workplace rather than generic risk assessments.
- **Child labour and decent youth employment**

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided a brief overview of the discussions held by the WBF Secretariat with stakeholders on the consideration of this new topic, especially regarding new due diligence laws, as highlighted, for instance, in the [Proposal for a European Directive on Corporate Sustainability on Due Diligence](#) and the *Dutch Child Labour Due Diligence Law*.

These discussions have resulted in the development of a concept note by the WBF Secretariat together with FAO's team on Child Labour and Agriculture, following a formal request from the government of a banana exporting country in September 2021. The concept note outlines the objectives of FAO's support to that government, namely: 1) to strengthen and enable a well-developed mandate and capacity to effectively address child labour in agriculture; 2) to design and implement a public policy programme and inter-ministerial coordination to address child labour in agriculture; and 3) to produce a dedicated training manual on decent youth employment and child labour eradication in the banana industry. These outcomes would provide additional tools to the government to solve potential problems regarding child labour in the banana sector and agriculture at large. Ms Reinhardt Hurtado stressed the importance of the topic for the WBF given that approximately 70 percent of child labour is found in the agricultural sector, as well as due to the importance of the banana industry in the specific country where discussions are taking place, which has countless small producers who could be at risk of facing potential child labour issues.


The concept note has already been presented and discussed with government representatives in the Ministry of Labour and will soon be presented in further detail to the Ministry of Agriculture, who have both expressed interest in the proposed activities. There is an ongoing process to formalize this request and interest with said government.

13. Activities on gender in the banana industry

- **Transfer of learning activities in Ghana and Colombia**

Ms Bettina von Reden (Fairtrade Germany) presented an overview of the transfer of learning activities implemented in Ghana and Colombia under the amendment to the Letter of Agreement (LoA) between FAO and Fairtrade Germany.

She first provided a detailed summary of activities conducted in Ghana thus far, which have been supported locally by Fairtrade Africa, with the objective to enhance women's leadership skills and strengthen company management, union members and workers' capacities on the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (C190) and the ILO Maternity Protection Convention (C183). The specific activities include: a revision of the *Guidelines on healthy and safe employment of women workers in Latin America* (hereafter referred to as the BOHESI gender guidelines); trainings on fire safety and the roll out of the BOHESI manual; trainings on maternal health and family planning; and awareness raising activities on violence and harassment. The latter has included the



production of posters and billboards, the creation of a master song, and live radio discussions on sexual harassment and gender-based violence. An activity on training women workers on leadership skills, literacy and income diversification is still ongoing. Photos were then shown to highlight the implementation of these activities and the active engagement of participants.

Ms von Reden then presented updates on the gender pay gap study being carried out on two Fairtrade-certified plantations in Colombia, in collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC). The study aims to deepen understanding of the extent, causes and possible solutions to the issue in the banana sector. To-date, the data collection on the two plantations has been finalized and interviews with stakeholders and other relevant actors and experts have been conducted. The reports have been shared with each plantation to validate the findings and feedback is currently being collected and analysed. In addition, a meeting to present the results and continue discussions with local stakeholders is expected to take place in Colombia in early July. A draft report with aggregated findings will then be shared with FAO and Fairtrade by the end of July or early August. Ms von Reden concluded by commenting positively on the work carried out despite the long disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado briefly commented on the stakeholder meeting in Colombia, stating that there is a possibility that online access to the session may be made available so that interested members of the WBF can also participate. A dedicated session on the main results of the gender pay gap study and outcomes will also be presented to the WBF in September or October of this year.

Decisions:

- Evaluate whether the stakeholder meeting in Colombia can be structured as a hybrid event, to enable remote participation of interested WBF members.
- **Presentation of the BOHESI gender guidelines for Latin America**


Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided a brief update on the status of the publication of the BOHESI gender guidelines for Latin America, stating that the publication was adapted from the original document produced in Ghana to the Latin American context. Activities to adapt the document have included: 1) consultations with women leaders of COLSIBA to understand OHS challenges faced by women workers; and 2) desk research on legal frameworks that address health and safety for women workers in the four main banana exporting countries in the region. Despite delays incurred by technical revisions, the design of the document has now been finalized and is undergoing internal approvals for publication. Ms Reinhardt Hurtado then briefly showcased several chapters of the publication with accompanying photos. The next steps include the publication of the guidelines online and the piloting of the training materials in Ecuador.

- **GE-TF webinar(s) in 2022**

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado reported that, during the last call of the GE-TF in early March, the WBF Secretariat informed members of the possibility to hold additional webinars of the TF in 2022. Two topic proposals were presented: 1) a launch of the BOHESI gender guidelines in a webinar training format; and 2) linking gender issues with WG01 topics on sustainable production systems, climate change and agroecology. The WBF Secretariat then proposed to proceed with option one, as it would provide the opportunity to enable the task force to use the forthcoming BOHESI gender guidelines publication to gain a deeper insight into how members and organizations can collaborate and integrate a gender perspective in their OHS risk assessments. Ultimately, option one would likely lead to more concrete actions. Ms Reinhardt Hurtado concluded by opening the floor to participants for any comments.

Decisions:

- Proceed with Option 1 as a webinar topic for this year.
- **Gender stocktaking exercise in the banana industry**



Ms Nozomi Ide (FAO) provided a detailed overview of the gender stocktaking questionnaire, an initiative of the GE-TF, which was developed based on existing gender assessment tools, sector specific standards, and recommendations from literature and assessment reports of standard setting bodies. She then presented the objectives, namely the identification of good practices as well as the dissemination of the study results and subsequent recommendations for the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in the industry.

The questionnaire consists of two main sections: 1) information on company profile; and 2) a set of questions tailored for international and national companies. The survey developed for international companies consists of 40 questions and is divided into four areas. The questionnaire for national companies consists of 30 questions covering numerous gender-related issues. The questions will be closed ended with the option of answering yes, partially yes, no, or not sure. This is to facilitate a response and increase the response rate of participants. Follow-up questions will be included to allow companies to provide further details with the aim of identifying good practices and areas for improvement.

The questionnaire will be distributed to WBF member companies to assess the extent of gender integration in their workplaces and to national companies and organizations in Costa Rica, the country selected by GE-TF members for the pilot study. WBF member organizations who are directly engaged in banana production and exportation at the country level are encouraged to share the questionnaire with their national partners in Costa Rica. WBF members representing other stakeholder groups, such as trade unions, will also be invited to participate in online interviews to cross-check the validity of the online questionnaire survey results.

Ms Ide concluded by presenting an overview of the timeline for the data collection and analysis of the questionnaire survey results. National companies to be contacted are currently being identified. The questionnaire will then be disseminated to all WBF member companies and national organizations in early September and they will have until the end of October to complete it. An analysis of the survey responses will then be conducted in November, which will be followed by stakeholder interviews in February 2023 to validate the findings. The draft report will be finalized and shared with WBF members in March 2023.

14. Global Conference of the WBF and WBF Thematic Webinars

Mr Liu provided a brief summary of the developments concerning the 4th WBF Global Conference, namely that the potential host partner, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), is still cautious in resuming large in-person meetings and for the moment there is no possibility to organize the conference in person. Mr Liu stated that it would be best to postpone the conference until 2023 but discussions with BMZ on the organizational aspects of the conference can still go ahead. Further developments and updates will be discussed at the next Steering Committee.


The floor was then opened for discussion. Several suggestions were made regarding potential dates for the conference, considering also the dates of Fruit Attraction and Fruit Logistica. It was highlighted that mid-September or early October of 2023 would be best as this would avoid clashes with other events held in October.

Mr Liu concluded by suggesting that an analysis be conducted of all elements related to the logistical set up of the global conference to identify the best dates for all participant members. He reassured participants that potential clashes with similar events will be considered and a calendar of all events and national holidays in key countries will be sent to WBF members.

Decisions:

- Continue monitoring the Covid-19 situation and conduct an analysis of all relevant elements related to the organisation of the WBF 4th Global Conference.
- Provide WBF members with a calendar of events related to the banana industry.
- **WBF Thematic Webinars**

Mr Prada presented an overview of suggested topics for thematic webinars that could take place in the absence of the global conference this year, including webinars concerning climate change; carbon and water footprint;



due diligence; the European Commission's Green Deal; issues of plastic disposal in the banana industry; OHS risk assessment and management; child labour and fostering decent youth employment in the banana industry; and violence and harassment in the workplace. Mr Prada then opened the floor for comments and suggestions.

Mr Wilbert Flinterman (Fairtrade International) suggested adding a topic on improving the quality of social dialogue through tri-partite discussions. Mr Alistair Smith (Banana Link) then commented on the importance of shared responsibility which Mr Prada suggested can be linked with due diligence. Mr Flinterman then suggested intertwining topics of social dialogue with shared responsibility highlighting the lessons we can learn from other industries in involving companies in the supply chain within social dialogue processes. Mr Prada supported the idea.

Decisions:

- Analyse which topics are a priority for WBF members and create a proposal for the thematic webinars.

15. Administrative matters

Mr Giuseppe Bonavita (FAO) was unable to attend the meeting but provided a pre-recorded video presenting the results of the fee collection campaign for 2022. He highlighted internal administrative delays within FAO in producing invoices for payments and assured WBF members that procedures have been put in place to prevent this from happening again.

Mr Prada commented positively on the addition of new members to the WBF which will increase the funds received by the WBF.

15. Next meeting of the Steering Committee in 2022 (SC23)

Mr Liu opened the floor for a discussion regarding in-person Steering Committee meetings in the coming months, given the improving situation related to Covid-19.

Members suggested that in-person meetings facilitate interactions and discussions while virtual meetings allow the participation of members who would otherwise be unable to travel. A hybrid format was then suggested, which could allow participants to join in person or online. Another suggestion was to hold one in-person and one virtual SC meeting every year, which could facilitate approvals to travel and reduce overall costs. Mr Alistair Smith (Banana Link) then suggested Panama City for the in-person SC meeting.

Mr Liu concluded by informing members that the Secretariat will conduct a survey on the suggestions given and will propose dates and venues for the SC23 in November.

Decisions:

- Analyse the possibility of holding one virtual and one in-person SC meeting every year.
- Analyse the option to hold an in-person SC23 in November 2022.
- Send out a survey to WBF members for their inputs and feedback on the SC23 and potential dates and locations.

16. Conclusions of Day 2

Mr Pascal Liu concluded the meeting by providing an overview of the discussions held and thanking all of those involved in the session, including the speakers, participants, interpreters, technicians and the WBF Secretariat staff.

Annex 1. List of Participants

Twenty-Second Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC22)

7-8 June 2022

List of participants and observers of SC22

#	Organization / Organización / Organisation	Name / Nombre / Nom	Surname / Apellido / Nom	Participation/ Participación / Participation
1	ABAVAR	Rafael	Peniche	Observer
2	AEBE	Augustin	Delgado	SC member
3	AEBE	Jose Antonio	Hidalgo	SC member
4	AFRUIBANA	Jean-Francois	Billot	Observer
5	Agrofair	Luud	Clercx	SC member
6	Aldi Nord	Molla	Meher Nwroz	SC member
7	Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT	Nicolas	Roux	SC member
8	APIB	Cindy	Estrada	Observer
9	APIB	Julio	Merida	Observer
10	Asbama	Dayana Andrea	Barajas	SC member
11	Augura	Emerson	Aguirre	Observer
12	Augura	Marco	Calvo	Observer
13	Augura	Isabel	Yoshioka	Observer
14	Augura	Sebastian	Zapata	Observer
15	Bama	Magne	Svartbekk	Observer
16	Banafair	Helge	Fischer	Observer
17	Banana Link	Anna	Cooper	SC member
18	Banana Link	Alistair	Smith	SC member
19	Banelino	Gustavo	Gandini	SC member
20	Chiquita Brands International Inc.	Andrew	Biles	SC member
21	Chiquita Brands International Inc.	Carlos	Crespo	SC member
22	CIRAD	Carolina	Dawson	Observer
23	CLAC Comercio Justo	Willy	Paredes	Observer

24	COLEACP	Morag	Webb	SC member
25	Colombian Ministry of Agriculture	Carlos	Berben	Observer
26	Compagnie Fruitiere	Christelle	Lasme	SC member
27	Compagnie Fruitiere	Lilian Yvonne	Karikari	SC member
28	CORBANA	Omar	Sanchez	SC member
29	Del Monte Fresh Produce Inc.	Hans	Sauter	Observer
30	Dole	Xavier	Roussel	SC member
31	Dominica	Nelson	Laville	Observer
32	Dominican Republic	Patricia	Rodriguez	SC member
33	Embrapa	Edson	Amorim	Observer
34	Equifruit	Jennie	Coleman	Observer
35	Fairtrade Germany	Bettina	Von Reden	Observer
36	Fairtrade International	Silvia	Campos	SC member
37	Fairtrade International	Wilbert	Flinterman	SC member
38	FHIA	Alfonso	Martinez	Observer
39	Fyffes	Jon	Tugwell	SC member
40	Fyffes	Stella	Davis	SC member
41	Fyffes	Freddy	Salguero	SC member
42	Fyffes	Eimear	Lynch	SC member
43	Fyffes	Hugo	Hays	SC member
44	Fyffes	Julie	Cournoyer	SC member
45	Fyffes	Michaela	Schneider	SC member
46	Gestarse	Miguel	Vallejo	Observer
47	GIZ / ABNB	Andrea	Bruestle	SC member
48	GIZ / ABNB	Charlotte	Von Essen	SC member
49	GIZ Colombia	Sabine	Triemer	Observer
50	GIZ Colombia	Vivian	Rangel	Observer
51	Global GAP	Nolan	Quiros	SC member
52	Global GAP	Leonardo	Ferrer	SC member
53	Global Nature Fund	Laura	Velasquez	Observer

54	Global Nature Fund	George	Jaksch	Observer
55	Golden Exotics	Lilian Yvonne	Karikari	SC member
56	Hofer	Stephan	Jermendy	SC member
57	Hofer	Felix	Strauss	SC member
58	ILO	Elvis	Beytullayev	Observer
59	IUF	Adwoa	Sakyi	Observer
60	IUF	Bert	Schouwenburg	Observer
61	IUF	Peter	Hurst	Observer
62	Rainforest Alliance	Christian	Hohlfeld	SC member
63	Rainforest Alliance	Marco	Keijzer	SC member
64	Rainforest Alliance	Leonie	Haakshorst	SC member
65	Rewe Group	Florian	Schaefer	SC member
66	Reybanpac	Paulo	Mello	SC member
67	Solidaridad	Jeroen	Kroezen	SC member
68	Tesco	Tania	Moodley	SC member
69	University Castilla la Mancha	Alfonso	Calera	Observer
70	FAOCO	Alan Jorge	Bojanic	FAO
71	FAO/SLM	Jaime	Cardenas	FAO
72	FAO/NSP	Maged	Elkahky	FAO
73	FAO/ESP	Nozomi	Ide	FAO
74	FAO/ESP	Adriano	Bolchini	FAO
75	FAO/OCB	Giulia	Carcasci	FAO
76	FAO/OCB	Richard	Thompson	FAO
77	FAO/EST	Pascal	Liu	FAO
78	FAO/EST	Victor	Prada	FAO
79	FAO/EST	Matheus	Lima	FAO
80	FAO/EST	Camila	Reinhardt	FAO
81	FAO/EST	Mattia	Serrano	FAO
82	FAO/EST	William	Butler	FAO



83	FAO/EST	Marlo	Rankin	FAO
84	FAO/EST	Michael	Riggs	FAO