



## **The World Banana Forum (WBF)**

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

### **Twelfth Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC)**

*Attended by the Steering Committee members and Working Group coordinators*

Virtual Meeting

**8-9 June 2017**

### **Final Report**

**Thursday, 9 June 2017**

#### **1. Opening speech by the Secretariat**

Mr. Pascal Liu welcomed the participants on behalf of the WBF Secretariat and wished for a successful meeting. He mentioned that the meeting was virtual due to the preference of SC members to limit the number of travels this year. Mr. Liu also presented the objectives and expected outputs of the meeting and invited participants to share their suggestions. The main objective was the planning of the Third Conference of the World Banana Forum in November 2017.

#### **2. Summary of WBF activities in 2016**

Mr. Victor Prada presented the work of the Secretariat as supporter and facilitator of the Steering Committee (SC), the Working Groups (WG) and the Executive Board (EB). He presented the activities of the Secretariat to promote the WBF and increase the number of its participants, including fundraising activities.

Mr. Liu presented the WBF's participation in the Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) workshop in Brussels and the presentations given to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Secretariat in early 2017. Ms. Farrah Adam summarized the WBF's participation in Fruit Logistica, in which an information and awareness-raising session on Tropical Race 4 (TR4) was jointly organized with GlobalGAP. The event, which had the participation of close to 50 participants, was targeted to main retailers, certifiers and banana producing organizations worldwide, promoting a discussion on the role of different stakeholders and how they could work collectively to prevent and manage the disease. Ms Adam also highlighted an event organized by the University of Exeter in Colombia, comprising the participation of the main five Latin American banana exporter associations to the UK including Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Belize and the Dominican Republic, experts from the University of Exeter, the Universidad de los Andes and the Ecuadorian Biotechnological Research Centre.

Mr. Prada presented the participation in the Global Living Wage Coalition (GLWC) manual launch event in New York City. The event brought together key experts to share best practices and knowledge in order to align strategies and create collaborative solutions to develop living wage benchmarks among the different stakeholders. The GLWC brings together six of the world's most influential sustainability standards to



## **The World Banana Forum (WBF)**

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

improve wage levels in certified supply chains. The WBF members participate in different initiatives in Costa Rica, Belize, Ecuador and Ghana.

Ms. Adam presented the website migration to a new template provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Mr. Prada summarized the current fee collection campaign and announced two new consultancy opportunities.

### **3. Preparation for the WBF Global Conference and the International Meeting of Women Working in the Banana Industry**

Mr. George Jaksch presented on behalf of the Organizing Committee (OC) the objectives of the Third World Banana Forum's Global Conference, which will take place on 8 and 9 November 2017 in Geneva at the International Conference Center (CICG). He explained that concerns about TR4 prevented the meeting from being held in a producing country. He presented the programme and added that the reason for having short opening speeches was to leave more time for discussions. The topics that will be discussed include the future of the WBF, the alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addressing diseases and the nomination of the new SC. He then went on to present the venues for both the Third Conference of the World Banana Forum and the Multi-Stakeholder Strategy Meeting on Gender Equity in the Banana Industry.

Ms. Anna Cooper presented the Multi-Stakeholder Strategy Meeting on Gender Equity in the Banana Industry. She added that discussions were held on whether the meeting should be a women-only meeting or opened to both genders and advised that it should be attended by both genders. She stated that until now the work on gender had been carried out mostly by civil society actors, so more needed to be done to increase participation of other stakeholder groups. Ms. Sue Longley reiterated that the Organizing Committee felt that the gender conference should have a proper session to report to the Conference and that gender should be mainstreamed into all sessions of the Conference.

#### **Decisions:**

- Ensure that the WBF's products and achievements are highlighted during the various Conference sessions.
- Ensure that Conference speakers include WBF participants.
- Ensure the participation of the ILO, if possible its Director-General or a senior manager.
- Include speakers from other regions, especially Africa and Asia, in the panels to ensure that their voices are heard.
- The women's meeting will be titled "Gender Equity in the Banana Industry".
- Examine the role and place of women not only in the field but also in decision-making and management structures in the industry in the women's meeting.
- Appoint Anna Cooper as a speaker in the Global Conference programme to report back on the women's meeting.
- Strengthen the linkages between the Organizing Committee (OC), the Secretariat and the Task Force on Gender Equity.

## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

### Follow-up:

3.0	Global Conference	Deadline	Leader	Support
3.1	Increase the time slots for “Looking ahead – priorities and key opportunities”.	31/07/2017	F. Adam	OC
3.2	Send suggestions on the programme to the OC.	31/07/2017	F. Adam	OC
3.3	Include Compagnie Fruitière as member of the panel in the WG02 session.	31/07/2017	F. Adam	OC
3.4	Change the name of the women’s meeting to “Gender Equity in the Banana Industry”.	31/07/2017	F. Adam	OC
3.5	Introduce Anna Cooper to FAO’s gender experts for advice on possible facilitators and donors for the women’s meeting.	31/07/2017	V. Prada	OC
3.6	Suggest potential speakers, panelists, topics and outputs to the OC.	15/07/17	WG Coordina tors	OC

## 4. Memberships and partnerships

Ms. Adam stressed the importance of partnerships for the WBF, as they are at the heart of the initiative and essential to ensure the sustainability of the interventions, collaboration and information sharing. She presented the WBF’s interactions with the German Action Alliance on Sustainable Bananas (ABNB) in early 2017 and its participation in Fruit Logistica, where interest was expressed by ABNB to collaborate with the WBF on certain projects. She mentioned that ABNB had acquired an observer status in the WBF and that potential membership was being discussed on behalf of the German Government. She then introduced Ms. Alexandra Kessler, the project coordinator from the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP).

Ms. Kessler gave a presentation introducing ABNB’s history and goals, which include uniting actors and building upon and complementing ongoing activities that promote sustainable consumption and production of bananas. When asked about possible competition for funding between ABNB and the WBF, Ms. Kessler clarified that the goal is to avoid overlapping and identify points of collaborations.

Ms. Adam then introduced Ms. Morag Webb, policy advisor at the Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP). Ms. Webb introduced COLEACP and its projects. COLEACP aims to support the development of a sustainable and competitive agriculture and agribusiness in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. She presented some of the projects COLEACP is currently working on such as Fit4Market.

Mr. Nelson Castro gave an overview of the Communications Survey sent to WBF Members in the last quarter of 2016. The survey was aimed at measuring the WBF’s communication strategy with its members. Mr. Castro presented the results which highlighted the desire for a newsletter and the need to increase member participation. The possibility of having a bi-monthly newsletter was discussed.

## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

Mr. Liu introduced the new members of the Forum including the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture, German retail chain Lidl, the French Ministry of Overseas and the Department of Agriculture of the Canary Islands (Spain). He mentioned the current discussion with some retailers who may join the WBF soon.

### Follow-up:

4.0	Memberships and partnerships	Deadline	Leader	Support
4.1	Conduct a strategic matching exercise between WBF and the ABNB to identify areas of mutual alignment that could benefit both initiatives, avoiding duplication of efforts and optimizing resources.	31/08/2017	F. Adam	A. Kessler
4.2	Inform the Secretariat on the topics or areas of interest in which the ABNB would like to collaborate with the WBF.	31/01/17	A. Kessler	
4.3	Assess the resource needs for producing a bi-monthly newsletter and discuss the cost estimate with the EB.	31/08/2017	WBF Secretariat	
4.4	Send an example of non-standard bulletins used by ETI as a quicker and efficient option for a newsletter.	31/06/2017	K. Knaggs	
4.5	Follow up on current conversations with different potential new members of the WBF.	31/12/17	WBF Secretariat	
4.6	Discuss with the University of Exeter the possibility of including trade unions and other CSOs in the activities of the project.	31/08/17	F. Adam	

## 5. Sustainable production systems and environmental impact

Ms. Adam gave a presentation on the Good Practices Portal. The development of the new WBF website under the new FAO template is completed. The Good Practices Portal is operational and will include the BOHESI materials once they are cleared by the Communications unit. The Portal includes close to 20 practices in English, Spanish and French, 15 practical downloadable PDF sheets, and 12 videos. Ms. Adam also introduced the Carbon and Water Footprint project, the WBF's value proposition and progress made, and Mr. Luis Garnier and Mr. Miguel Vallejo from the implementing organization Gestarse. Mr. Garnier gave a presentation on the project covering the duration, methodology and indicators. The goal is to develop a methodological guide to measure carbon and water footprints in banana plantations worldwide, with pilot farms in Costa Rica. Ms. Adam reiterated that the project aimed to have an institutional impact, building the foundations of the next Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) for bananas in implementing countries. The project has achieved this impact in Costa Rica, having won the endorsement of the Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) and the Ministry of Environment (MINAE).

Mr. Stewart Lindsay, team leader in the Banana Production System from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Queensland, Australia, gave a presentation on the experiences with the *Fusarium wilt* TR4 disease in Australia. Mr. Lindsay presented banana production in Australia and its history with TR4 where there was a strong emphasis on extension and communication to reach a common level of understanding of the disease.

## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

Mr. Fazil Dusunceli from the Plant Production and Protection Division at FAO proceeded to give a presentation on the FAO Global Programme on Banana *Fusarium wilt* Disease. He provided updates, which included continuing consultation with potential partners such as the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centers, Biodiversity International, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and various workshops. He focused on the prevention, preparedness, responses and management/rehabilitation approaches.

Mr. Luud Clercx, Coordinator of the Task Force on TR4 in the WBF, gave a presentation on its work plan for the second semester of 2017 and provided updates on its work. Some of the achievements include the collaboration with GlobalGAP to work on the TR4 add-on on protective measures against entry and spreading of TR4, the webinar with the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Fair Trade Small Producers and Workers (CLAC) and the participation in Fruit Logistica. There were contacts established with Corporación Bananera Nacional (CORBANA), the Sainsbury Laboratory and Exeter University to work together on the recommended disinfectants. The work plan for the second semester includes preparing for the WBF Conference, following up with the retail sector on the GlobalGAP. Add-on, securing funding for a TR4 application for smartphones, strengthening coordination with Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (OIRSA) and the regional prevention strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### Decisions:

- SC members will promote the WBF's good practice portal to their contacts in the banana sector.

### Follow-up:

5.0	Sustainable production systems and environmental impact	Deadline	Leader	Support
5.2	Send the revised version of the FAO Global Programme on TR4 to the SC.	24/07/2017	F. Dusunceli	
5.3	Share the results of the work done on screening sanitizers against TR1 & TR4 and their practical use, the use of urea for management of infected plants, the alternative host status work, biosecurity planning and extension work with SC members.	31/08/2017	S. Lindsay	
5.4	Assess the possibility of joining forces with the University of Exeter, CORBANA and the team of Agriculture & Fisheries in Queensland to develop the TR4 toolkit.	31/08/2017	S. Schmidt	

## 6. Distribution of value in the banana industry

Mr. Alistair Smith gave a brief overview of the activities of Working Group 02 on living wages in the banana industry. In the last few months, the working group has taken on a request from working group 03 and the Task Force on Gender to ensure that the work being done on wages include the issue of a gender pay gap, including the difference in pay category for the types of jobs women are more likely to be employed in.

Ms. Michelle Bhattacharyya from the GLWC presented the work that GLWC is doing on living wages in banana-producing areas. She gave a brief overview of the organization and its projects, which include



## **The World Banana Forum (WBF)**

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

work in Ecuador, Costa Rica, Belize, Cameroon and Ghana. She explained the Anker methodology, which is the methodology used by the GLWC to study the countries in question. She mentioned that the reports are in a draft version for now as they are being reviewed by their stakeholders.

Mr. Prada updated members on the Secretariat's new Living Wage Initiative (LIWIN) coordinated by the WBF Secretariat together with Fairtrade International. The core objectives of this project is to both gain an understanding of the cost of a living wage in Ecuador and Ghana, and provide support in closing any gap between the living wage and the net pay received. Furthermore, it involves raising awareness and increasing transparency on living wage benchmarks within both countries and along the value chain, to increase stakeholder commitment by engaging the public and private sector. Consequently, prevailing policy measures and implementing activities will be analyzed. Training sessions among the private sector and unions are planned, being crucial to the advocacy activities aimed at informing governments on project results for the potential future impact on minimum country wage settings.

Mr. Prada explained that there is a business case for precompetitive cooperation, referring to innovation. In order to achieve this, the common factor to create effective cooperation is the need for a neutral convener such as the WBF. This facilitates agreements between stakeholders, especially companies who are in real competition. If certification schemes in commercial competition reached an unprecedented example of collaboration on living wages, potentially there is space for precompetitive cooperation among the dominant players in the banana industry. WBF working group 02 members will participate in an in-person meeting in Panama organized by the WBF Secretariat where living wages will be discussed.

Mrs. Carolina Dawson provided information regarding the potential project on decent standards of living in Ivory Coast, which has a broader scope than the living wage benchmark. This project would be complementary to current activities on living wages planned in the country and its coordinators are seeking funds to implement it.

### **Decisions:**

- Collaborate with the GLWC in order to include gender aspects and the “gender pay gap” in the living wage methodology
- Discuss possible mechanisms to increase wages in addition to the establishment of benchmarks

**The World Banana Forum (WBF)**  
*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

**Follow-up:**

6.0	Distribution of value in the banana industry	Deadline	Leader	Support
6.1	Discuss the WG02 outputs to be presented in the Global Conference in the WG02 in-person meeting in Panama.	27/06/17	V. Prada	A. Smith
6.2	Identify with WG02 members potential partners for the WBF work on living wages.	31/08/17	V. Prada	A. Smith
6.3	Prepare the WBF strategy on living wages and countries to be covered.	22/08/17	V. Prada	A. Smith
6.4	Explore funding opportunities for the living wage benchmarks.	30/10/17	V. Prada	A. Smith
6.5	Prepare a proposal of WG02 outputs to be presented in the Global Conference.	14/07/17	V. Prada	A. Smith

**7. Administrative and financial matters**

Mr. Prada gave an update on the status of the fee collection and noted that although this process takes a considerable amount of the Secretariat’s time, it is indispensable to ensure the operation of the WBF. So far, more than 850 emails have been exchanged to perform this activity. The early payment strategy defined during the seventh SC meeting is finally producing results, as the percentage of WBF members who provided their contribution on time is higher than in previous years.

Mr. Prada provided a brief summary of the Living Wage Initiative (LIWIN), the financial contributions from IDH and Fairtrade International and the impact this initiative may have among both the private and public sectors. He also presented an update on the Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI) and its potential extension until the end of 2018. Mr. Kroezen explained the latest agreements with IDH in response to their request to increase the cash and in-kind contributions from private sector partners. The latter is a condition to extend the project.

Ms. Adam provided a brief update on the carbon and water footprint (CWF) project. The first stage of the project has been funded by GIZ in Costa Rica. The conversations to start a subsequent second stage of the project has already started. There are possibilities to extend this initiative to other banana-producing countries.

Regarding the revision of annual fees, Mr. Liu explained the steady increase of responsibilities in the Secretariat over the last years. The number of activities has expanded so much that more human resources are necessary to ensure an appropriate performance of the Secretariat in project implementation, project proposal formulation and WBF regular activities. As the annual fees have remained unchanged over the past four years, it has become necessary to increase the fee to a level where at least one more stable consultant could be appointed. The required increase would be close to twenty percent. The participants agreed that a fee increase is needed. Some warned that companies might have to submit the increase to the approval of their board, which might raise the risk of the board deciding to leave the WBF rather than accepting a substantial increase. To avoid this risk, it was suggested that an alternative could be a smaller increase taking place automatically every year. The WBF Secretariat should discuss this issue with the EB and prepare a communication explaining the need for the increase.

## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

Regarding the election of new SC members during the Conference, it was reminded that SC members are elected as representative of their organization and not in their personal capacity.

### Decisions:

- FAO is requested to extend the WBF multi-donor project and trust fund until 31 December 2019.
- Continue discussing the main suggestions from FAO's Legal Office for the revision of the WBF charter including main concerns such as decision-making rules and membership fees.

### Follow-up:

7.0	Administrative and financial matters	Deadline	Leader	Support
7.1	Follow up with the fee collection campaign 2017.	31/12/17	V. Prada	
7.2	Request the extension of the BOHESI project to IDH.	31/08/17	J. Kroezen	VP
7.3	Follow up on the potential second stage of the CWF project and funding opportunities.	15/09/17	F. Adam	
7.4	Discuss the fee increase proposal with the EB and prepare a communication for WBF members.	31/08/17	P. Liu	
7.5	Request WG coordinators to provide quarterly updates on their activities. The Secretariat will prepare a proposal for the EB.	31/08/20 17	P. Liu	
7.6	Review fee table, looking at possible discrepancies.	31/08/20 17	V. Prada	P. Liu

**Friday, 10 June 2017**

### **8. Labour rights, gender and health and safety in banana production**

Ms. Anna Cooper gave a quick overview on the activities of Working Group 03, specifically on the reactivation of the WG03 coordinating group with joint trade union/company lead coordination by Christelle Lasme from Compagnie Fruitière and Iris Munguía from Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Sindicatos Bananeros y Agroindustriales (COLSIBA). Other activities include a full review of the WBF's Best Practices Portal on Social Practices. She presented: the work of the WBF Gender Equity Task Force which includes reports on the conditions of women in the banana industry in Latin America, Africa and the Caribbean; the work on the gender pay gap and the collaboration with WG02; and the development of terms of reference for guidance on new and expecting mothers. She also stressed the need to include new stakeholders apart from CSOs into the Task Force.

Ms. Adwoa Sakyi from the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) in Ghana gave an update on the advances for women in labor relations in Ghana. This ranges from gender research on women's employment, promoting women's issues in collective bargaining, muster training, education and training, and dialogue with companies. IUF organized workshops on women's leadership in order to initiate women's committees. She reported that women were empowered to negotiate collectively for better conditions.

## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

Ms. Iris Munguía followed with updates for women in Latin America. She discussed the advances on the Sexual Assault Clause signed in 2013 with Chiquita, IUF and COLSIBA. There is also a pilot project in Panama to place more female workers in labor intensive positions within the banana industry. However, she expressed her concern that in other countries women’s employment is decreasing.

Ms. Cooper presented the proposal for the Meeting on Gender Equity, and called for members to share their ideas on who to invite. Mr. Jeroen Kroezen followed with updates on the Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI) project.

### **Follow-up:**

8.0	Labour rights, gender and health and safety in banana production	Deadline	Leader	Support
8.1	Share ideas on who to invite to the gender meeting, in particular industry players and gender experts.	31/08/17	A. Cooper	V. Prada
8.2	Search for funding opportunities for the gender equity meeting.	30/07/18	A. Cooper	V. Prada
8.3	Involve experts from FAO’s Social Protection Division (ESP) in the preparation and fundraising of the gender equity meeting and WBF Global Conference.	30/07/17	V. Prada	A. Cooper
8.4	Share contacts for potential keynote speakers.	31/08/17	A. Cooper	V. Prada
8.5	Provide support to the Global Living Wage Coalition in order to include gender pay gap questions in the survey to be conducted in the Ivory Coast benchmark.	31/08/17	A. Cooper	V. Prada

## 9. Activity Planning

Ms. Adam presented the work plan for the Global Conference, which addresses the logistics, the promotion and communication strategy, and the on-site and post-conference phases. It was highlighted that there was much recruitment to be done for the planning, for the on-site staff, and for the interpretation. She presented the sessions prepared for the Global Conference requesting feedback in terms of panelists, moderators and topics. Members were asked to consider the options for panelists and speakers while bearing in mind the need for regional, gender and sectoral diversity.

### **Decisions:**

- Ensure a balanced composition of the panels in terms of gender, regions and stakeholder groups
- For Session 1 (WG03):
  - Explore the possibility of including the topic “Impact of Certifications”.
  - Invite BAMA to be part of the panel.
- For Session 2 (WG01):
  - Explore the possibility of specifying “Environmental” impacts of certification schemes.
  - Replace some European panelists for African panelists to ensure geographical balance

## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

- Ms. Lasme will ask a colleague to participate in the panel.
- COLSIBA proposes Gloria Garcia to participate in the panel.
- Ms. Saki will contact Golden Exotics to explore their potential participation in the panel for Organic Banana production.
- For “Looking ahead: priorities and key opportunities”, it is suggested to include COLSIBA and a Consumer organization (CI)/national consumer organization in the panel.
- For Session 3 (TR4):
  - Include a representative from an Asia-Pacific regional organization.
  - Explore the possibility of including strategies for early detection of the disease as a topic.
  - Explore the possibility of bringing main trading companies and producing organizations into the panel.
- For Session 4 (WG02):
  - Include in the panel a small association of farmers (WINFA, small producers of Peru, etc.), a supermarket/retailer (Tesco/Carrefour, Edeka, etc.), a major producing association (AEBE/Augura/CORBANA/Banasan), a major trader (Dole, Chiquita, Del Monte) and a transport company such as Maersk.
  - Propose a concrete title for the topic “Consumers”.
  - Include the gender / gender pay gap aspect here as a topic.
- For the TR4 hands-on session: Explore the possibility of including sanitizers in the discussion.

### Conclusions and next steps

Mr. Liu highlighted the following main decisions taken by the meeting:

1. Further develop the work plan for the organization of the Conference and include a time frame (OC to follow up)
2. Revise the Conference programme to attract more participants and achieve geographical, gender and stakeholder balance (OC)
3. Start raising funds actively for the Conference and consider reviving the Task Force on Fundraising (OC, EB and Secretariat)
4. Support the OC in the above activities (SC members and WG coordinators)
5. Deliver the WG’s outputs and prepare a plan to present them effectively during the Conference panels (WG coordinators)
6. Continue discussing the revision of the Charter

Mr. Liu closed the meeting by thanking the participants, the facilitators and the WBF Secretariat staff. He expressed his gratitude to Nelson Castro, who had decided to leave Rome at the end of June, for the good work done at the Secretariat and wished him good luck.