



## **WORLD BANANA FORUM**

*working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

### **Second meeting of the Steering Committee**

*Attended by the Steering Committee and Working Groups' coordinators*

23-24 November 2010  
FAO Headquarters, Rome  
Culture Change Room

### **Draft report**

#### **Introduction**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) held an international forum on sustainable banana production and trade ("*World Banana Forum*") from 7 to 8 December 2009 at its headquarters in Rome, Italy. This meeting was organized by the Multi-stakeholder Forum (MSF) project, which is implemented by FAO with co-funding from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom. The meeting participants decided to establish the World Banana Forum (WBF), a permanent structure with five Working Groups (WGs). A Steering Committee was formed and held its first meeting during the forum. It held an electronic conference in February 2010. Nine months later, the Steering Committee (SC) members of the WBF and its Working Group coordinators met again in Rome with the following objectives:

- Ensure the future of the World Banana Forum beyond December 2010.
- Reflect upon the work accomplished so far by the Working Groups and assess a possible reorganization.
- Define further the governance of the SC and the WGs.
- Analyze and review the communications strategy of the WBF to reach new members.

This meeting was preceded by an e-conference, held from 10 to 12 November 2010.

A total of 23 participants attended the meeting, including representatives from banana farmer organizations, trade associations, private companies (including major banana marketing companies and retailers), trade unions and other civil society organizations. Participants came from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. The list of participants can be found in annex.

## Summary of the first day (Tuesday, 23 November 2010)

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

Mr. Pascal Liu, coordinator of the project, welcomed the participants and explained that two new participants were recently added to the Steering Committee: Ms. Anne Heurtaux (Ministry of Agriculture of France) and Mr. Jorge A. Sauma (CORBANA, Costa Rica). The agenda was then reviewed and approved.

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

Mr. Víctor López, from the Secretariat of the WBF, explained the different activities that the Secretariat has carried out for the last year. He explained how the Secretariat has been supporting the development of the Working Groups and the efforts made to improve the flow of communications. He also explained the actions taken to promote the enlargement of the Forum, including the liaison role that the Secretariat has been playing with Governments. He also referred to the recent adoption of a new logo in order to improve the corporate identity of this initiative.

The Secretariat has produced and updated a considerable amount of documents, some of which were designed to introduce the WBF to potential new donors. The fundraising activities have been a constant concern and an area of effort for the Secretariat and the Task Force on Fundraising for the last year. Finally, Víctor talked about how the Secretariat has been facilitating the work of the Steering Committee and explained new ideas to guarantee its stability.

#### Decisions:

- The participants appreciated the work accomplished by the Secretariat and agreed that its continuity is essential for the development of the Forum itself.

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

Since several coordinators attended this meeting, at least one for each of the five Working Groups explained to the participants the developments in the Working Groups' activities. There was an interesting debate arising from each of the presentations, which proved that holding a joint meeting (SC members + WG coordinators) was an excellent idea. Below is a summary of the key points discussed:

WG01. Good development of ideas and planning of activities. Sustainability and the effect of production systems on the environment is at the core of the WG's concerns. Several coordinators' meetings and one open meeting for WG01 members (Antwerp, July 2010) held so far. Good attendance and interest in pushing forward this group, which has already a defined working plan for two years. The definition of its first pilot projects was expected for the next days immediately after this meeting.

WG02. It has produced a first output, a study on Living Wage. This was done by a consultant hired and paid by some of the key members of this WG. They recently held a meeting open to all interested players in Machala, Ecuador (field visits + 2 day meeting). It was a success with a high attendance and the support from the Government of Ecuador (who sent a high-level representative). Two pilot projects on the definition of a living wage are in the pipeline in Latin America. In addition, there might be another one in West Africa.

WG03. It also held its first open meeting in Ecuador (November 2010). It was decided that the WG's name would be shortened to: "Labour Rights / Derechos Laborales / Droits du travail". The WG has set collective agreements and women at work as its priorities for 2011. It was said that "labour rights and gender issues in the context of small farmers" needed to be addressed urgently since no other WG has been working on this issue. Freedom of association and collective bargaining were highlighted as well as priorities for this WG. Some SC members suggested that the ILO should be more involved. There was also a general concern about

the feasibility of some of the WG03's objectives. It was said that it might be better for the effectiveness of the WG to set accomplishable goals (those which depend on actions that can be executed by members of the WG itself within a relatively short time frame of 1 or 2 years). Finally, it was agreed that a teleconference will be held in January 2011 to identify potential pilot projects; this would be followed by an in-person meeting in August 2011.

WG04. There were a couple of conference calls, with an active small team of coordinators (they had to reorganize the coordination team after some months without activity at all). The participants suggested involving further initiatives such as GSCP or ISEAL. Some participants noted that adopting certification schemes is a challenge for small producers and SMEs, who do not perceive them as an investment, but rather as a cost.

WG05. There were some email exchanges, but the group never started working properly. However, it was made clear that there was a big interest in assessing the effects of the use of agrochemicals on human health. It was suggested that the WG would focus first in the reduction of the use of pesticides and, second, on the proposal of alternatives. There was some discussion about the possibility to merge this group with one or some of the others. It was highlighted several times that health is a key issue which needs properly addressing.

More information about this issue can be found on the document "Report of Working Groups' activities", see annex for details. The reorganization of the WGs was a decision to be discussed between WG's coordinators on the following day.

The Secretariat will set up two email accounts in DGroups for each WG: one for all members of the WG and one reserved for the WG's coordinators.

#### **4. Funding of the World Banana Forum**

Pascal Liu gave a summary of the main expenditures of the project during the years 2009 and 2010 and presented the financial report (available upon request; document code: WBF-SC2-2010-07efs). He also presented a provisional budget for the years 2011 and 2012 and a funding plan with a membership payment scheme for the WBF (documents WBF-SC2-2010-08e and WBF-SC2-2010-010e). This idea was developed by the Task Force on Budget and Fundraising and endorsed by the last e-conference. A document showing the insights related to governance and funding of initiatives similar to the WBF (document WBF-SC2-2010-11e) was presented for analysis.

Pascal explained that the DFID project will definitively end in December 2010 and therefore FAO's ability to continue facilitating the WBF in 2011 depends on raising funds for a new project. The new project would be funded by a new multi-donor trust fund to be opened by FAO and would rely on the contributions of donors plus the WBF membership fees. The latter will be essential to the survival of the WBF in 2011 since no donor money is expected to be received in the coming months. France has pledged a contribution of USD 32,000 but at least half of this amount will support WG01, therefore the funding of the Secretariat remains unresolved so far. Some participants stated that in order to become sustainable the WBF should primarily rely on self-funding by its members.

There were several suggestions in terms of approaching public donors considering the new mixed funding scheme of the WBF: Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Norway and Belgium.

There was a question about a "Plan B" in case it was not possible to obtain contributions from donors. Pascal explained that the minimum length of the new project should be 12 months, for which, at least US\$ 100 000 of membership fees should be secured between December 2010 and February 2011.

It was suggested that the item "in-kind contribution of Forum members" needed to be considered. The Secretariat invited members to send more precise figures about the time they have contributed freely to WBF work.

A participant felt that the funds allocated for research activities in the budget for 2011-2012 were low. The Secretariat explained that the foreseen amount was meant just to enable the start up phase of a project; afterwards own/extra funds would need to be identified by the WGs.

#### Decisions:

- The Committee approved the expense figures corresponding to the years 2009 and 2010. The extra effort to minimize costs was appreciated.
- There was a **general agreement to approve the new mixed funding scheme**. The Committee approved the provisional budget, the funding plan 2011-2012 and the fee structure. The participants gave the commitment of their organization to pay the fee. Membership fees will start to be applied for the year 2011.
- The Task Force on Budget and Fundraising (TF01) will have the overall responsibility for the collection of fees with the assistance of the Secretariat. It will report to the SC and seek the assistance of SC members in approaching WBF members for the collection of fees through their contacts.
- The new funding scheme foresees a sliding scale for contributions (document code WBF-SC2-2010-10e). The classification of members into each of the categories will be done by the TF01. It will oversee the process and, in case there is some doubt on the fee a member should pay, it will refer the matter to the SC for decision. Members may increase voluntary contributions above the level of the membership fee.
- The Secretariat will prepare a document for internal agreement to be sent to all the WBF members. This agreement will guarantee the payment of the membership fee within a determined period of time. Flexibility in payment dates may be granted to civil society organizations that have strict budget cycles or donor-imposed spending plans.
- It was noted that some donors might want to allocate their contributions only to certain items (i.e. Secretariat's work, developing countries' participants, pilot projects). It was agreed that it will be offered to interested donors the possibility to pay:
  - a/ an amount to be equally distributed amongst the budget items that are indispensable to the sustainable operation of the WBF,
  - b/ an amount to be allocated mainly to one of the 3 working groups (for instance, 80% for a selected WG and 20% for support costs).
- Approaching governments for fundraising will be done by highlighting the objectives and outputs that the WBF and its WGs pursue. The WBF is a means to reach specific and tangible outputs. The concept note will be revised based on the outputs decided by the WGs. It will focus on the urgency for action and the tangible outputs that the WGs will deliver.
- Mr. Jeroen Kroezen, from Solidaridad, will join the Task Force on Fundraising (TF01).
- A participant asked if, on an exceptional basis, his organization could also pay the 2011 membership fee of a member organization that was struck by a hurricane. Everyone agreed.
- The Secretariat and TF01 will have to decide on the level of the fee for individuals if there is an individual application for membership; this will be shared with the SC for approval.
- Amendments will be made to the table of rights of members and observers to reflect the fact that coordinators have not been elected so far, and to add the right to belong to a WG for both, members and observers.

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

The first hours of the second day were needed to finalize the discussions of the last item above.

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

This session addressed several issues that needed to be clarified. Specifically, it was mentioned that the SC needed a more defined statute and more balanced representation of regions, stakeholders and gender. There was also debate regarding the participation of governments' representatives in the Forum as well as European producers associations and certification schemes. There was general agreement on the need to thank governments for their interest as well as to welcome any other governments that might show active interest in the Forum in the future. It was recalled that, generally speaking, governments have tended to support this Forum.

#### Decisions:

- The Secretariat will draft a document proposing roles, rules and responsibilities of the SC and its members for discussion. The document will include issues such as the procedures for decision making, admitting new members, ensuring balanced representation, number of SC members, duties and responsibilities of SC members and sanctions in case of non compliance.
- Every WG should have at least one representative in the SC.
- The SC will meet at least every quarter, either in person or through conference calls. There should be at least two in-person meetings every year.
- The SC will reply to communications received from governments on a case by case basis.
- The Secretariat will make a proposal of new members to invite.
- European producers associations and certification schemes are welcome to the SC; the Secretariat will prepare an invitation letter addressed to both entities.
- The WBF decisions and outputs will be available for free to everyone. However, guidelines on responsible behaviour for the Forum's members and observers might be useful to prepare.

### **6. Promoting the WBF: Communication strategy**

The Secretariat explained in detail some ideas about how to foster communication on the Forum's activities. It stressed the need to revive the Task Force on Communications. It was proposed to debate about how to enlarge the membership of the Forum and if it would be appropriate to widen its scope to include fresh pineapples (idea proposed during the last e-conference).

#### Decisions:

- The WBF logo developed by the Secretariat is approved.
- From now on the Secretariat will use only one email address ([wbf@fao.org](mailto:wbf@fao.org)) in order to streamline communications. Members are requested to check that their spam filters recognize this address.
- The Task Force on Communications (TF02) needs to be reorganized; it will start from the previous participants, but whoever is in the position to join and contribute actively is welcome.

- There are six target groups for communication as follows:
  - Members
  - Donors
  - Governments
  - Retailers
  - International institutions
  - Specialized media
- There is no need now for preparing a communication campaign specifically targeting mass media. This could be done when the WGs have concrete outputs to show.
- The main goal of the communication strategy should be attracting new members to the WBF. An appeal for membership written and presented in an attractive way is needed.
- A special effort needs to be made to identify interested retailers. The TF02 will work on a list of contacts from this sector (e.g. British retailers, members of the Consumer Goods Forum).
- A press statement needs to be prepared in response to potential interest and questions from the media. It is preferable to have a written reply to send rather than to speak spontaneously of the Forum. The Secretariat and TF02 will work together on this document.
- Roberto Vega, George Jacksh and a CSO member of the SC will present the WBF at the next GSCP meeting to attract new members
- In the table of rights of members and observers (document code WBF-SC2-2010-09e), the membership to any WG should be clearly marked as an option for both members and observers.
- In the home page of the WBF website a tab “Want to become a member” and a related page will be added.
- Regarding agrochemical companies, it was decided that they should not be members of the Forum for the moment; however they could be consulted and heard in the framework of specific WG’s activities, such as scientific studies.
- Regarding the inclusion of pineapples, many expressed that it was a good idea given the fact that this commodity shares most of the challenges that the banana sector is facing. However, it was decided that it was too early to decide about implement this change, as the WBF lacks resources and needs to be strengthened. The issue will be discussed again in the next SC meeting.

## 7. Working Groups’ governance and parallel discussions

The WG coordinators met during about three hours in a separate room to discuss issues of interest to the WGs. Specifically, it was requested that the WG coordinators debate about:

- Expected outputs of the WGs (a detailed list is needed for approaching donors);
- Coverage and synergies of the WGs, addressing gaps and overlaps (discussion of possible mergers and review of possible gaps);
- Definition and role of the WG’s coordinators (periodicity, rotation policy, etc).

After the group discussion, the participants re-convened in the Culture Change room to present their decisions and recommendations to SC members.

Participants in the WGs session: Will Stephens (Tesco), Jeroen Kroezen (Solidaridad), Inge Van den Bergh (Bioversity), Iain Farquhar (Banana Link), Sébastien Zanoletti (UGPBAN), Sylvain Cuperlier (Dole), Patricia Bresciani (Dole), Alex Yeboah-Afari (VREL), Víctor Quesada (ASEPROLA), Raúl Harari (IFA), Matthew Fischer-Daly (SAI).

## Summary of discussions:

- WG topics established at WBF meeting in December are retained.
- Organizing WGs in line with the three 'pillars' of sustainable development – social, environmental and economic – provides clarity, is coherent with WBF theme of “working together for sustainable banana production and trade” and addresses the inevitable limitations that WBF members face if they want to participate in many WGs.
- WGs have focused thematic scope but many agenda items; therefore, to be effective there is a need to prioritise and a need for short-term and longer-term planning.
- WG Coordinators with the support of the so-called “core group members” are responsible for organization, administration as well as focusing the WG on its topics, objectives and decisions. The figure of a rotating *rapporteur* is also advisable.
- WG01 on Sustainable Production Systems and Environmental Impact focuses on environmental sustainability, but not exclusively.
- WG02 Distribution of Value focuses on economic issues; it has prioritized living wage as a first action item, and it has established communication with WG01, recognizing that collective bargaining is the legitimate place for discussion of salaries beyond any agreed “floor wage” in the industry at national level. WG02 is doing complementary work on the distribution of value throughout the value chain, some of which will necessarily result from discussions in the 'pilot' living wage initiatives that are planned to take place in 2011.
- WG03 Labour Rights focuses on labour relations and social issues; it has prioritized freedom of association and collective bargaining rights and gender discrimination as the first action items. WG03 has selected its priorities in order to try to move beyond the conflicts identified in the industry. It will work on other workplace issues such as occupational safety and health. Together with Dr. Raúl Harari it will prepare a proposal on health issues (health of workers and local communities).
- Certification schemes are thematically diverse. Some do not have a labour rights focus. In the experience of trade unions the certification schemes do not demonstrate a practical understanding of how to exercise the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and in the experience of producers, the benefits of certifications do not materialize from buyers.
- Agrochemical impacts on human health and natural resources are recognized by all as critically important; instead of leaving the issues unaddressed, WG01 should work on impacts of agrochemicals on the natural environment and WG03 on human health impacts (this decision resulted from a vote by all present).
- Occupational Health and Safety - identified as a priority for WBF and a gap in current WGs action items - is to be addressed in WG03.
- Community Impacts - identified as a priority for WBF and a gap in current WGs action items – needs further definition and is to be addressed in WG03. Community impacts may include corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes but more broadly refers to investment in medical, healthcare, education and to other services of benefit to banana exporting communities.
- A participant suggested that a specific committee to ensure coordination among the WG and coverage of all topics may be needed, although time did not allow for sufficient discussion of the proposal. This suggestion needs to be explained and discussed further, as it may overlap with the coordinating role of the Secretariat.



### Decisions of the Steering Committee:

- WG04 on Certifications is disbanded, and the topic of certifications will be considered in the remaining WGs where the particular certification is most appropriately addressed.
- WG05 on Agrochemicals is disbanded, at least for the time being. The impact of agrochemicals on human health is to be treated in WG03 on Labour Rights & Social Issues, and environmental impacts of agrochemicals and alternatives are to be treated in WG01 on Sustainable Production Systems and Environmental Impact. The option of re-forming a separate WG for agrochemicals and health might be reconsidered at the next WBF meeting depending on progress made in this area.
- WG Coordinators will develop Terms of Reference for Coordinators and Core Group members in a teleconference to define issues such as rights and duties of coordinators.
- WG work plans - including objectives, outputs and responsibilities – are to be developed by each WG over the coming weeks, then shared among WG coordinators, via teleconferences and/or email and finally sent to the SC for review.
- Health is recognized as a critical issue of utmost importance for the WBF. A particular effort must be made to ensure that it is appropriately addressed by the three main WGs.

## 8. Wrap-up session

The wrap-up session was chaired by Mr. George Jaksch who reviewed together with the plenary the main decisions taken regarding each of the chapters described above. These decisions or recommendations have been listed at the end of each of those chapters.

In conclusion, **the Second meeting of the Steering Committee held in Rome expressed consensus on the need to secure the future of the World Banana Forum.** Recommendations were made concerning the communication strategy and decisions were taken to promote the enlargement of the WBF, which is open to anyone interested and involved in the banana sector. The SC agreed to reorganize the previous five working groups in three bigger WGs. These will cover three key domains of sustainable development: respect of labour rights, environmental protection and fair distribution of value.

The Steering Committee confirmed its willingness to open a new project under the auspices of the Trade and Markets Division of FAO, which will continue to facilitate the World Banana Forum provided sufficient funding is made available by WBF members and donors. A new mixed funding scheme was approved (it foresees approximately 25% from the membership and 75% from external donors).

The SC approved the proposed budget, membership fees and funding plan for 2011-2012 (these documents are available upon request). The future of the WBF will rely on continuing support from its members. Commitments by members to provide enough funds for the years 2011 and 2012 are expected to be signed as soon as possible.

**The next SC meeting could be held in May or June 2011. The Secretariat will propose venues and dates in the first quarter of 2011.**





**Thank you to all the participants for their enthusiasm and commitment!**

## ANNEXES

### **Annex 1**

#### **Agenda**

**Second meeting of the Steering Committee (SC)  
23-24 November 2010, FAO HQ, Rome**

**A046 – Culture Change Room**

#### **Tuesday 23 November**

*[all sessions with SC members and WG coordinators will be held at the A046 room]*

- 9.00 Registration of participants
- 9.30 **Welcome to participants and new members**
- 9.35 **Adoption of the agenda and election of chairpersons for the meeting**
- 9.40 **Activities of the Secretariat since the last Forum meeting**  
(report by Secretariat)
- 9.45 **Activities of the Working Groups (WGs)**  
(reports by WG coordinators):
- Outcomes so far
  - Planned activities and expected outputs
- 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.20 **Activities of the Working Groups (continued)**
- Needed resources
  - Synergies between WGs
  - Need for restructuring/reorganization?
- 13.00 Lunch break
- 14.30 **Funding of the World Banana Forum**
- Current situation of budget
  - Provisional budget for 2011-2012
  - Outcome of contacts with potential donors
  - Partial self-funding by members:
    - \* Fee structure for members (sliding scale)
    - \* Rights of members
    - \* Status of non-paying participants (observers)
- 17.00 End of first day

## **Wednesday 24 November**

- 9.30 **Funding of the World Banana Forum (continued)**  
- Adoption of decisions on membership fees, rights, etc.  
- Strategy for member adhesion  
- Fundraising activities with donors
- 11.00 Coffee break
- 11.20 **Role and membership of the Steering Committee**  
*[For Steering Committee members only. The WG coordinators will have a parallel meeting in the EST Reference Room (D838) from 11.20 to 15.15]*  
- Role  
- Membership: enlargement?
- 12.00 **Promoting the WBF: Communication strategy**  
- WBF logo  
- Communication with governments  
- Communication with the media  
- Strategy for increasing the membership  
    \* Within the banana industry  
    \* Opening up to new members (e.g. consumer associations, retailers)  
    \* Opening up to similar industries (e.g. fresh pineapple for export)?  
- Open discussion on the possible inclusion of pineapples
- 13.00 Lunch break
- 14.30 **Promoting the WBF (continued)**
- 15.15 **Governance of the Working Groups**  
*[with SC members and WG coordinators]*
- 16.15 **Wrap-up session**  
- Summary of main decisions  
- Discussion on possible dates and places for the 2011 Forum meeting  
- Adoption of work plan for 2011
- 17.15 Meeting closes

## Annex 2

### Final list of participants

#### Steering Committee members

Koronado Apuzen (Farmcoop)  
Gilbert Bermudez (COLSIBA)  
Iain Farquhar (Banana Link)  
George Jaksch (Chiquita)  
Pascal Liu (FAO)  
Sue Longley (IUF-UITA-IUL)  
V́ctor Ĺpez Saavedra (FAO)  
Renwick Rose (WINFA, Association of Caribbean Farmers)  
Alistair Smith (Euroban)  
Will Stephens (Tesco)  
Jorge Toapanta Vera (Asociaci3n de Bananeros Orenses)  
Jon Tugwell (Fyffes)  
Roberto Vega (Dole)

#### Working Groups coordinators

##### **WG01**

Jeroen Kroezen (Solidaridad)  
Inge Van den Bergh (Bioversity)  
George Jaksch (Chiquita)  
Sylvain Cuperlier (Dole)  
Iain Farquhar (Banana Link)  
Śbastien Zanoletti (UGPBAN)

##### **WG02**

Patricia Bresciani (Dole)  
Alistair Smith (Euroban)  
Gilbert Bermudez (COLSIBA)

##### **WG03**

Alex Yeboah-Afari (Vrel)  
V́ctor Quesada (Aseprola)

##### **WG04**

Matthew Fischer-Daly (SAI)

##### **WG05**

Raúl Harari (IFA)

Haakong Aasprong (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, observer)

### Annex 3

#### Second meeting of the Steering Committee

23-24 November 2010, FAO HQ, Rome

#### List of documents

Document title	Document code
1. List of documents	WBF-SC2-2010-01e
2. Agenda	WBF-SC2-2010-02e
3. List of participants	WBF-SC2-2010-03e
4. Report of Secretariat's activities	WBF-SC2-2010-04e
5. List of members of SC and Working Groups	WBF-SC2-2010-05efs
6. Report of Working Groups' activities	WBF-SC2-2010-06e
7. Financial report 2009-2010	WBF-SC2-2010-07efs
8. Proposed budget for 2011-2012	WBF-SC2-2010-08e
9. Rights of members and status of observers	WBF-SC2-2010-09e
10. Proposed fee structure for members	WBF-SC2-2010-10e
11. Table with other multi-stakeholder initiatives	WBF-SC2-2010-11e
12. Electronic conference report	WBF-SC2-2010-12e

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