



## The World Banana Forum (WBF)

*Working together for sustainable banana production and trade*

### Report of the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC26)

*Attended by the Steering Committee (SC) members and Working Group (WG) coordinators*

**09-10 July 2024**

**Online Meeting**

**Tuesday, 09 July 2024**

#### **1. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat**

Mr Pascal Liu, (FAO) opened the meeting by providing a brief welcome on behalf of the WBF Secretariat.

#### **2. Opening remarks, objectives and expected outcomes of the SC26 meeting by the Steering Committee/Advisory Board Co-Chairperson**

Ms Christelle Owona (Compagnie Fruitière) spoke about the numerous challenges faced by the global banana industry and pointed out the importance of in-person events like the Fourth Global Conference of the World Banana Forum (WBF4C) in discussing such issues. She noted the high representation of women in the industry, and the significance of discussions specifically related to gender during the conference. Ms Owona presented a brief outline of the planned discussions, and highlighted recent developments in Europe, such as the EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD) and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) as key topics that need to be addressed. Finally, Ms Owona outlined the agenda, objectives and expected outcomes of Day 1 of the SC26.


#### **3. Presentation of the new Steering Committee**

Mr Liu expressed his gratitude to the departing SC members and extended a warm welcome to the new members. He then provided an overview of the new SC's composition, noting that seven out of the 42 organizations are still in the process of finalizing their membership to the WBF. He discussed the geographical representation of the SC, noting that participation from Africa and Asia could be improved and mentioned that members of the Advisory Board (AB) had offered to reach out to stakeholders in these regions.

Mr Jean-Francois Billot (Afruibana) volunteered to reach out to trade unions in Africa. Ms Jennie Coleman (Equifruit) mentioned her efforts on building interest in the WBF among North American stakeholders. Ms Kahlil Apuzen-Ito (FARMCOOP) mentioned her willingness to engage with federal organizations and farmer networks in the Philippines. Finally, Ms Svetlana Boincean (IUF) inquired about the process for introducing additional trade unions representation to the SC and proposed to nominate one trade union organization per region as a way of increasing the representation of Asia and Africa.

Mr Liu informed the audience about twenty-six organizations which expressed interest in joining the WBF. He briefly described the Risk Assessment and Due Diligence process carried out by FAO to ensure that each private sector partnership adheres to FAO's principles for engagement, relevance to FAO's mandate and alignment with FAO's priorities. Under this process, the input suppliers Anglo American and Yara International were assessed with high and medium reputational risks, respectively.

Mr Matheus Lima (FAO) provided a brief overview regarding their interest in WBF activities. He mentioned



that following a presentation of the Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF) initiative during ACORBAT 2024, both organizations approached the Secretariat with interest in collaborating to find joint solutions to reduce supply chain emissions, since fertilizers are one of the main contributors to the carbon footprint of banana production.

Mr Xavier Roussel (DOLE) and Mr Patricio Rodriguez (DOLE) highlighted the importance of having fertilizer companies involved in the initiative, since they are important contributors to Scope 3 emissions and therefore reduction targets. Mr Edgar Monge (TESCO) mentioned that since the WBF rejected chemical companies in the past it should maintain a coherent approach. Mr Liu clarified that the rejection of membership was based on a specific FAO risk assessment and not necessarily due to the type of activities. In general, while some SC members expressed interest in exploring possible collaboration with Yara International, the meeting showed very little interest in collaborating with Anglo American. As a result, Mr Liu suggested the following next steps:

- 1- The Secretariat will discuss with the FAO unit responsible for engagement with the private sector to understand the type of relationship that may be established with Yara International under FAO rules;
- 2- It will report the outcomes of these discussions to the SC and ask for confirmation of interest in approaching Yara International;
- 3- It will write to Yara International to understand why they want to join, what type of collaboration they seek and what benefits and risks this collaboration could bring to the WBF.

**Decisions:**

- The Secretariat will continue its efforts to ensure geographical balance in the SC.
- The Secretariat will follow the three step approach indicated above to address the request from Yara International.
- The Secretariat will not engage further with Anglo American.

#### **4. Formation of the new Advisory Board**

Mr Liu shared information on the establishment of the AB, explaining that while the Board does not have decision-making powers, it provides guidance to the WBF Secretariat in implementing the WBF's work programme and the SC's decisions. He then asked the current members of the SC about their interest in joining the new AB, stressing the importance of aiming for diversity in geographical, gender and stakeholder group representation. Several organizations expressed their willingness to participate in the AB, and some indicated they would need to consult internally before confirming their interest.

**Decisions:**

- Send a communication to SC members to enquire about their interest in becoming members of the Advisory Board.
- Establish the Advisory Board, ensuring diversity in geographical, gender and stakeholder representation.

#### **5. Main outcomes of the Fourth WBF Global Conference and its side-events**

##### **Fourth WBF Global Conference**

Mr Lima presented the main outcomes of the WBF4C regarding sustainability and environmental challenges. These included proposals to raise awareness about the impact of climate change on banana production, promote the widespread use of the CWF tool, and increase genetic diversity in banana production systems while strengthening the implementation of agroecological practices.

Mr Victor Prada (FAO) outlined main outcomes on the other workstreams of the WBF during the WBF4C. He mentioned several proposals made during the conference to enhance the WBF's role in advocating for fair pricing mechanisms, fostering shared responsibility, promoting living wages, supporting collective bargaining agreements, and reducing certification and auditing costs to alleviate administrative burdens on producers.

Regarding labor rights and social responsibility, the proposals included increased support for the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards, promotion of gender equity initiatives, and support for the establishment of social dialogue mechanisms. It was also emphasized that the WBF will

continue to strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration and inclusive participation, and support regional and national efforts to address specific challenges, such as regulatory frameworks and issues affecting smallholders.

### **Third International Meeting on Gender Equity in the Banana Industry (IMGE)**

Mr Adriele Benedetto (FAO) presented the conclusions of the IMGE, emphasizing the need to raise awareness about the challenges women face and to share best practices for promoting gender equity. He outlined the conference outcomes indicating that the WBF will assist members in complying with due diligence legislation, promote gender-responsive remediation processes and support the ILO in promoting the application of international labour standards in the banana industry, particularly those related to gender equity. The IMGE highlighted the importance of shared responsibility and collaboration along the supply chain, the integration of gender-sensitive assessments into occupational health and safety (OHS) programs and the need for policies to protect workers from gender-based violence and harassment.

### **Event on Fusarium Wilt TR4 and the Future of the Banana Industry**

The event highlighted the importance of international collaboration and knowledge exchange platforms to share good practices, research findings, technologies, innovations, and policy recommendations. The need for increased support and investment from both governments and the private sector in implementing TR4-related strategies was discussed. Emphasis was placed on developing surveillance networks, standardizing diagnostic protocols, incorporating technologies for early detection and response, and integrating gene sequencing into diagnostics. Moreover, it was agreed on the importance of developing resistant banana varieties, strengthen research on biological control agents, increase genetic diversity, expand field trials, and ensure equitable access to innovative hybrids and varieties.

### **Global Conference on Living Wages and Income in the Banana Industry**

Mr Prada briefly presented the outcomes of the Global Conference on Living Wage and Income in the Banana Industry and mentioned that the topic would be further discussed on Day 2.

### **Banana Diversity and Tasting Event**

The event, aimed at promoting genetic diversity in banana production systems and held in collaboration with the Alliance of Bioversity-CIAT showcased various banana and plantain varieties. It featured a scientific display highlighting the global diversity of bananas, and participants had the opportunity to taste several varieties. Mr Sebastien Carpentier (Alliance of Bioversity International-CIAT) informed that the genetic materials of the [International Musa Germplasm Transit Center](#) are available for study and practical applications. He stressed the importance of utilizing this diversity in breeding programs and encouraged the involvement of researchers and stakeholders' members of the WBF with the center.


## **6. Activities of Working Group 01, the Subgroup on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Biodiversity Conservation and the TR4 Global Network**

### **Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF) Initiative**

Mr Lima presented updates on the CWF Initiative. Key updates included incorporating 2024 emission factor values, establishing new accounts for Mexico and Ghana, and enhancing the tool's performance with support from the FAO IT team. Outreach activities included presentations at international events and efforts to align the CWF tool with the [Science-based Target Initiative \(SBTi\) FLAG](#) guidance. The methodological guide was translated into French and plans to translate also the tool into French were mentioned.

A proposal for the next phase of the CWF initiative including updates in the methodological guide and tool – based on user feedback and evolving carbon accounting frameworks –, development of an e-learning course, and implementation of massive capacity building sessions in producing countries was presented.

The tool's updates will include the implementation of new user types, modules for maritime transport, ripening, input manufacturing, advanced analytics, and the capability to track GHG emissions across multiple years. Mr Lima mentioned that the Secretariat is actively reaching out to donors with proposals to fund the



next phase of the initiative.

Ms Jennie Coleman (Equifruit) inquired about the funding requirements of the CWF Initiative and the type of funding the Secretariat is currently seeking. Mr Lima explained that the tool development was funded by FAO, while the development of the first methodology received support from GIZ. Presently, the WBF Secretariat is applying for international funding opportunities, such as those offered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with the backing of banana-producing organizations and governments.

Mr Patricio Gutierrez (Dole) suggested reaching out to the Gates Foundation to explore potential collaboration and offered to share relevant contacts and information with the Secretariat.

#### **Sustainable soil management in the banana industry**

Mr Lima presented an overview of a pilot project focused on the adaptation of the [Global Soil Doctor Programme \(GSDP\)](#) for banana production, expected to be launched in Colombia by the end of this year. The pilot aims to establish a farmer-to-farmer training network on sustainable soil management practices focused on climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. The initiative, developed by the WBF Secretariat and the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), is funded by an European retailer and supported by local partners including AGROSAVIA, AUGURA and ASBAMA. The pilot, which will start in the Magdalena region and target smallholder farmers will involve the development of banana-specific training modules based on the WBF's and GSP's existing resources as well as on the [GIZ's Manual on Sustainable Agriculture](#). The idea is to replicate the pilot to other regions and countries to also benefit medium and large producing companies.

Mr Luud Clercx (AgroFair) offered to share relevant materials on sustainable soil management in banana production to enhance the project's knowledge base.

#### **Plastics in the banana industry**

The Secretariat has prepared, with support of the FAO Team in Agricultural Plastics and Subgroup members, a factsheet on sustainable plastic management in the banana value chain. The publication addresses various topics, including types of plastics used in different operations, their environmental impacts when improperly managed and innovative good practices implemented by value chain actors.

In addition to the factsheet, the Secretariat has prepared a survey designed to gather data on plastic use and management from various value chain actors to identify challenges and opportunities for reducing plastic pollution. The survey targets smallholders, producer organizations, exporters, retailers, and certification schemes, covering topics like plastic usage, disposal, sustainable practices, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), plastic reduction targets, and certification standards. Mr Adriele Benedetto (FAO) mentioned that the confidential results of the survey will help pinpoint priority intervention areas and support resource mobilization for target initiatives on plastic management.


Several participants, including AEBE, Equifruit, COLEAD, GlobalG.A.P, and Tesco, praised the initiative and expressed interest in participating in plastic-related activities.

#### **Updates on activities of TR4 Global Network (TR4GN)**

Mr Lima reminded participants of the main outcomes of the Event on *Fusarium Wilt TR4 and the Future of the Banana Industry*, held on 11 March 2024, prior to the WBF4C. He informed SC members that FAO continues to support countries on the implementation of simulation exercises regarding TR4 and mentioned that during the thematic session of WG01, a member suggested to organize a webinar on the experience of China with Fusarium TR4, featuring a presentation of the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) on TR4-resistant banana varieties and Integrated Pest Management strategies. He then concluded by mentioning that the TR4 Global Network database was updated with fifty-two new resources.

#### **Draft action plan for WG01**

The draft action plan for WG01 was presented and discussed, proposing several initiatives. These encompass continuous support for supply chain actors to measure and reduce the carbon and water footprint of their



operations, along with training on the CWF tool and mitigation strategies. Additionally, the Secretariat will continue to raise awareness and build capacity through the TR4GN, focusing on prevention strategies, lessons learned, technological innovations, and knowledge sharing. To support understanding of environmental regulations, the Secretariat will organize technical webinars and facilitate discussions on new regulatory trends. It was also emphasized that there is a need to increase discussions on genetic diversity via webinars and knowledge-sharing events.

It was proposed to advance with the Global Soil Doctors Pilot Programme in Colombia to promote sustainable soil management and climate change adaptation practices. Furthermore, it was proposed to publish a factsheet on sustainable plastic management in the banana industry and launch a survey to identify best practices and prioritize interventions for reducing plastic impact in the banana value chain.

**Decisions:**

- The Action Plan for the WG01 was approved.

## **7. Activities of Working Group 03 and the Task Force on Gender Equity**

### **Activities on occupational health and safety and decent work**

Mr Prada presented the short and medium-term planned activities for the WG focused on OHS and decent work. For OHS, the Secretariat plans to resume tripartite discussions in Cameroon to update and approve the Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI) manual. In Colombia, efforts will aim to secure financial partners to expand gender sensitive OHS training and share best practices, building on previous sessions held in Urabá and Santa Marta. A flyer summarizing the outcomes of OHS training in Ghana and Colombia will be developed and distributed to WBF members. Additionally, the Third International Meeting on Gender Equity report will be published in multiple languages.


Proposed activities on Decent Work include exploring cooperation with industry actors, governments and intergovernmental organizations on themes such as health and safety standards, workplace violence and harassment, gender equity, child labour issues and decent youth employment. The Secretariat will support the development of a guide on child labour prevention and the promotion of decent youth employment for the Ecuadorian banana industry, based on a national consultation held in May 2023. Moreover, the Secretariat is seeking a focal point for WG03 activities and proposing working alignment with the CSDDD requirements, which mandate reporting standards for value chain actors. Mr Prada emphasized that the directive has a strong focus on decent work, covering employment conditions, health and safety standards, fair wages and social dialogue, with penalties for non-compliance, especially regarding child labour issues.

### **Activities on gender in the banana industry**

Mr Prada outlined upcoming activities on gender equity under the Task Force. These activities include publishing the BOHESI Guidelines for Healthy and Safe Employment of Women Workers in Latin America in English and organizing webinars to raise awareness about gender issues in the banana industry. The webinars will cover topics such as the [Tesco Gender Toolkit](#), the [ILO Participatory Gender Audit](#), and lessons from gender equity initiatives in other agricultural supply chains, featuring case studies from organizations like the International Women's Coffee Alliance and the World Cocoa Foundation. Additionally, the Secretariat plans to develop a factsheet highlighting successful case studies related to women's employment in the banana industry. He then informed the audience that the [ESRS indicators](#) on gender equity, part of the CSRD, encompass areas such as gender representation, equal opportunity policies, gender pay gap, workplace harassment, support for gender-specific challenges, and capacity building needs. He mentioned that the capacity-building activities facilitated by the WBF could assist companies in reporting on these areas.

## **8. Discussion of the draft action plans for WG03 and the GE-TF**

### **Action Plan – Working Group 03 and GE-TF**



Mr Prada then presented the draft action plan for WG03, covering OHS, gender equity and decent work activities. The OHS plan involves promoting international labour standards through the BOHESI framework, including tailored gender-sensitive training sessions. The decent work strategy focuses on improving health and safety policies by enhancing information sharing and capacity building among workers and trade union representatives and by supporting the creation of gender-sensitive codes of conduct. The action plan also includes publishing guidelines for the healthy and safe employment of women in the Latin American banana industry, organizing webinars, developing awareness materials, and leveraging existing resources. It was proposed to enhance advocacy efforts for policies protecting workers from gender-based violence and harassment, in line with ILO conventions and to increase support for legal frameworks related to gender equity, equal pay and abolishment of workplace harassment. The plan also includes support for trade union participation in commissions and assistance to stakeholders in conducting self-evaluations to monitor progress and promote women's leadership.

Mr Wilbert Flinterman (Fairtrade International) and Mr Prada discussed the WBF's approach to addressing major compliance gaps and enhancing field activities by reviewing and aligning training materials with producers' needs, emphasizing the importance of social dialogue as a key reporting indicator.

Participants highlighted several important topics for future discussions, including promotion of social dialogue in local communities, trade unions, grass-root associations, and women's representation, particularly in countries with weaker trade unions. It was emphasized that there is a need for transparency and public involvement in due diligence processes to avoid superficial compliance. Ms Adela Torres (COLSIBA) also called for increased dialogue and collaboration among all stakeholders, including trade unions, to create a more equitable and respectful industry.

**Decisions:**

- The Action Plan for the WG03 was approved.

## **9. Conclusion remarks – Day 1**

Mr Liu summarized the decisions and discussions held, expressing gratitude to the participants for their contributions and invited them to continue their active participation on Day 2 of the SC26.

**Wednesday, 10 July 2024**

## **10. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat**

Mr Pascal Liu opened the meeting and welcomed all participants to the second day of the SC26.

## **11. Opening remarks by the Steering Committee/Advisory Board Co-Chairperson**


Mr Andrew Biles (Chiquita) provided the opening remarks by presenting the current trends and challenges faced by the global banana industry and calling for increased research and cooperation among all stakeholders to develop long-term sustainable solutions. He then presented the objectives, expected outcomes and agenda for the second day of the SC26.

## **12. Activities of Working Group 02, the Commission on Living Wages and Income and its Subgroups**

### **Discussion of the draft action plan on Living Wages and Income**

Mr Prada presented the draft action plan on Living Wages and Income of the WG02, detailing expected activities of Living Wage Commission and its Subgroups on Markets and Methodologies.

The commission will support the ILO in tripartite discussions to establish living wages and will work on tools for setting minimum and sustainable prices. It will also support the creation of a Sustainable Purchasing Practices database and a database of National Wages/Labour Legislations. Discussions on applying the Anker



Benchmarking Methodology and the application of the Salary Matrix will continue. In addition, the WBF will continue to facilitate dialogue on data collection and monitoring tools, risk-based approaches and auditing processes regarding living wages.

Mr Prada outlined some of the specific CSRD indicators of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) concerning [Workers in the Value Chain](#), highlighting the need for standardized methodologies to evaluate working conditions, wages and how countries will implement these standards.

Several participants raised concerns about the European-centric nature of the due diligence legislations. Mr Liu and Ms Coleman noted that Canada's [Bill S-211 on Child Labor and Forced Labor in Supply Chains](#) represents a first attempt to introduce such principles into North American markets. Mr Prada also mentioned that major importing countries in Asia are developing similar sustainability directives.

Ms Marike de Peña (CLAC) proposed to amplify the focus of the Living Wage Commission to include decent work and emphasized the importance of including environmental considerations on the Due Diligence discussions. She also highlighted the importance of reducing the burden on producers by adapting user-friendly methodologies and tools. Ms Torres acknowledged the need for companies to improve prices and sales while ensuring fair treatment of workers, advocating for collective bargaining as a solution.

Mr Flinterman warned against focusing on the technicalities of Living Wage estimations within the Living Wage Commission. Instead, he proposed a broader focus on wage development in the banana industry in relation to minimum wage setting and collective bargaining. He also noted the importance of globally monitoring wage development in relation to minimum wage laws, collective bargaining, and inflation to gauge proximity to living wage benchmarks. He suggested building on the Salary Matrix with the help of experts to develop sectoral data on wage growth compared to inflation and attention to the role of minimum wage adjustment and collective bargaining for each banana origin.

Mr Jose Antonio Hidalgo (AEBE) emphasized the need to have a process of homologation to reduce administrative costs for producers when assessing living wages.

Mr El'vis Beytullayev (ILO) reiterated key points discussed during the WBF4C, and shared the outcomes of the [Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages](#) (February 2024). He emphasized the need for transparency in living wage estimates and methodologies, ensuring they are open to scrutiny and accessible for constructive dialogue between workers and employers. Mr Beytullayev underscored that the ILO's effectiveness depends on the operationalization of these methodologies at the national level and stressed the importance of social dialogue and collective bargaining to achieve decent wages as a fundamental right. Finally, Mr. Javier Aguirre (Agro America) addressed the topic of living wages in Guatemala and expressed interest in utilizing the ILO's work to conduct a focused study on establishing living wage benchmarks in the country's banana sector.

#### **Decisions:**


- The Action Plan for the WG02 and Living Wage and Income Commission was approved.

#### **Updates on Living Wage Legislation Desk Review within the Subgroup on Methodologies and Tools**

Ms Helena Abou-Haidar Ventura (FAO) presented updates on the development of a comprehensive database of national legislation in banana-producing countries. She outlined the objectives, key information, and next steps of the activity, which aims to analyze the various legal frameworks affecting the labour dynamics of the industry. To date, the WBF Secretariat has collected information from 132 legislation across 14 banana-producing countries.

Mr Billot drew attention to the [ongoing efforts of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations of ILO](#) and suggested this could provide an objective framework to streamline future efforts.

Mr Flinterman suggested creating an annual report on minimum wages in banana producing countries, detailing yearly increases, their correlation with living wages, and whether they were established through



collective bargaining agreements.

**Decisions:**

- The WBF Secretariat will explore the feasibility of including minimum wage analysis in the study.

### 13. Certification Commission

Mr Prada presented the activities and proposed next steps of the Certifications Commission, which aims to discuss the feasibility of an international agreement to reduce certification and audit costs. He reviewed the outcomes of the Commission's inaugural meeting, including AEBE's presentation of a study on standards overlap among certification schemes and suggested to explore linking Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) indicators with certification standards. Mr Prada also informed participants about the upcoming second meeting of the Certification Commission and provided a brief outline of the proposed agenda.

Ms de Peña suggested including a discussion on mutual recognition of different certification schemes in the agenda of the next meeting of the Commission and stressed the importance of setting targets aimed at reducing the number and complexity of requirements. She also highlighted the practical need to engage governments of producer countries in the implementation of CSDDD regulations.

**Decisions:**

- The WBF Secretariat will include the discussion of mutual recognition of different certification schemes in the commission's agenda.

### 14. Global Value Chain Certification Specialist - Terms of Reference

Following a request from producer organizations for a technical coordinator to facilitate and conduct technical work for the Certification Commission, the WBF Secretariat has prepared the terms of reference for this position. Mr Prada shared the draft terms of reference, detailing the main tasks and responsibilities of the Global Value Chain Certification Specialist.

He explained that estimated budget would be between USD 50 000 and USD 70 000, with variations depending on experience and duty station of the consultant and noted that several producer organizations have expressed interest in contributing to the funding of this position

Mr Hidalgo emphasized the importance of financial contributions from various stakeholders to ensure industry commitment and maintain neutrality. Several participants highlighted the importance of the commission, underscoring the need for a specialist to contribute to this effort.

**Decisions:**

- The Secretariat will reach out to members regarding their willingness to financially support the coordination of the commission.

### 15. Regional Commissions

Mr Prada presented a proposal for future activities of the Regional Commissions, outlining a range of initiatives focused on environmental, economic, and social sustainability with a regional perspective. A proposal to organize WBF meetings during [Fruit Attraction 2024](#) (FA24) was presented and welcomed by SC members, who emphasized the importance of holding discussions during the trade fair.

The proposal included the organization of three panel discussions on the following topics (tentative titles): *Impacts on Global Fruit Value Chain Actors following the approval of the CSDDD* (8 October); *Living Wages, living Income and fair prices in fruit production following the approval of the CSDDD* (9 October), and *Fruit Certification following the approval of the CSDDD* (10 October).

Participants agreed on the importance of discussing a broader range of policy issues, such as living wages and



income, and expanding the focus beyond CSDDD in the WBF Panels at FA24.

Mr Prada informed SC members that producer organizations (AEBE, CORBANA, AUGURA, ASBAMA, ADOBANANO, and CORBANA) volunteered to fund interpretation during FA24 and mentioned that a meeting of the WBF's regional commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will be held on 12 July to discuss the WBF participation in the fair.

Several suggestions were made by SC members including the possibility of organizing a panel on the impacts of the [new regulations on organic production and labelling in the EU](#) for smallholders; to discuss phytosanitary issues such as TR4 and Moko diseases and to emphasize the importance of collective bargaining agreements as effective mechanisms, amongst other topics. SC members recommended avoiding panels with too many panelists to leave time for discussion. Additionally, it was suggested to explore the possibility of organizing WBF events during the International Fresh Produce Association conference in the future. The Secretariat welcomed the suggestions and indicated that, due to time constraints, additional topics would be explored for future events.

#### **Decisions:**

- The WBF will organize three panel discussions during FA24 with interpretation funded by producer organizations. There will be no more than 5 panelists in each panel to enable effective discussion.
- A meeting of the regional commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss the WBF's participation in FA24 will be held on 12 July.

### **16. National Commissions**

Mr Prada briefly presented proposed activities for the National Commissions of Colombia and Ecuador on environmental sustainability, living wages, shared responsibility, and decent work. It was proposed to conduct capacity-building activities on carbon and water footprint measurement, supporting climate change adaptation initiatives and facilitate knowledge exchange on integrated pest and disease management strategies, including TR4 and emerging pests.

Moreover, it was proposed that the national commissions could facilitate national dialogues on living wages and living income, due diligence regulations, consumer awareness on sustainability challenges in banana production, gender-based employment barriers and be a general platform for policy dialogue on national issues.

Participants suggested involving governments in the national commissions and that some of the proposed topics could be discussed within the working groups. There were suggestions that the national commissions could support the involvement of smallholder producers with a bottom-up approach.


Ms Torres stressed the importance of social dialogue and proposed that national actions should leverage ILO initiatives and collaborate with NGOs to improve workers conditions.

Mr Prada emphasized the potential for increased FAO involvement in wage discussions on the agricultural sector and the importance of collaboration with ILO.

### **17. Smallholders Commission**

Mr Lima provided a brief update on the activities of the Smallholders Commission (SHC), highlighting five key priority areas identified during the SHC meeting in May 2024. These areas include: 1) adaptation to and the impact of new regulations, such as the EU's regulations on organic production; 2) involvement of women and youth in the banana sector; 3) engagement of smallholders within the commission and other working groups; 4) sustainable production among smallholders and 5) fundraising initiatives for projects that support smallholders. He observed the low attendance at the meetings and requested support from SC members for ideas to boost participation.

He then presented two proposals discussed within the commission. The first proposal involves conducting a baseline study to understand the role of smallholders in global markets. The idea would be to gather and



analyze data from FAO and Fairtrade regarding the participation of smallholders in global exports. The analysis would also aim to identify the specific challenges these producers face, such as access to markets, pricing, and competition, as well as opportunities, including potential market niches and emerging trends that could benefit their operations. The second proposal is focused on developing a targeted advocacy brief aimed at buyers and larger market players. The brief would be designed to emphasize the numerous benefits of purchasing products directly from smallholders. This advocacy effort seeks to foster stronger relationships between buyers and smallholders, promoting sustainability and fairness in global trade practices.

Mr Gutierrez asked about the land size requirements the commission uses to qualify smallholder farmers. Ms. de Peña responded by noting that this is a complex and ongoing global discussion. She mentioned that the new EU legislation sets the threshold at 5 hectares, while in Ecuador, smallholders are defined as having land sizes until 30 hectares or more. She also pointed out that many countries have different criteria, reflecting the diverse agricultural contexts worldwide.

**Decisions:**

- The Secretariat will continue its efforts to increase participation in the SHC.
- The Secretariat will start to compile FAO information on the participation of smallholders in global markets.

## **18. Proposed process for the review of the WBF Charter**

Mr Pascal Liu provided an overview of the WBF Charter, underscoring its importance in defining the vision, mission, scope, activities and objectives of the WBF. During the WBF4C, a review of the Charter was proposed to ensure its relevance and alignment with the members' common objectives 15 years after it was designed and to discuss the amendments suggested by FAO's legal office. It was agreed to establish a temporary task force for this review. Ms Boincean mentioned the IUF's letter to the SC regarding the Charter and emphasized the IUF's intention to discuss the governance of the WBF. She mentioned that ensuring freedom of association should be a key objective for the WBF and stressed the necessity of a thorough review of the Charter.

Mr Liu then invited members to join this task force, emphasizing the need for an inclusive and balanced group comprising various stakeholder groups and regions. Once the task force is formed, the Secretariat will share with its members the comments received from FAO's legal office.

Several organizations volunteered to participate in the task force, including AEBE, AgroAmerica, AUGURA, Alliance of Bioversity International-CIAT, Chiquita, Compagnie Fruitière, Corbana, Dole, Equifruit, Fyffes, the Government of the Dominican Republic, IUF, Rainforest Alliance and Tesco.

**Decisions:**


- The Secretariat will contact SC members interested in participating in the temporary task force and organize its first meeting.

## **19. Election of the SC/AB co-chairs**

Mr Pascal Liu expressed gratitude to Ms Owona and Mr Biles for their support as SC/AB co-chairs during the last six years. Both Ms Owona and Mr Biles shared their experiences in the role and emphasized the importance of having a comprehensive understanding of the entire banana industry to effectively grasp the context in which the WBF operates. They encouraged other members to consider stepping forward for these roles, highlighting the rewarding and insightful nature of the position.

Several participants expressed interest in applying for the position but requested additional information about the responsibilities and activities of the role.

**Decisions:**

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- The WBF Secretariat will share details about the responsibilities and expected activities of the AB and SC co-chairs via email to give members time to consider their candidacy.
  - The Secretariat will collect applications via email and notify SC members regarding the election process.

## **20. Conclusions of Day 1 and Day 2**

Mr Liu concluded the meeting by providing an overview of the decisions made on various topics, including work plans of the working groups, the events of FA24 and the WBF Charter. He extended his deepest thanks to SC members for their active participation in the fruitful discussions on both Days of the SC26, and thanked interpreters, technicians and other FAO colleagues for their support to the meeting. He congratulated the WBF Secretariat for the excellent organization of the meeting and closed the session.

## Annex 1. List of participants

### Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC26)

09-10 July 2024

#### List of participants and observers of SC26

#	Organization / Organización / Organisation	Name / Nombre / Nom	Surname/Apellido/Nom	Participation/ Participación / Participation
1	Acorbanec	Richard	Salazar	Observer
2	AEBE	Jose Antonio	Hidalgo	SC Member
3	AEBE	Agustin	Delgado	SC Member
4	Afruibana	Jean- François	Billot	SC Member
5	Agroamerica	Javier	Aguirre	SC Member
6	Agrocalidad	Fanny	Tenorio	SC Member
7	Agrofair	Luud	Clercx	SC Member
8	Agrofair	Marcos	Miedema	SC Member
9	Alliance Bioversity International-CIAT	Yu-Chun (Patty)	Liao	SC Member
10	Alliance Bioversity International-CIAT	Sebastien	Carpentier	SC Member
11	APIB	Julio	Merida	SC Member
12	Asbama	Dayana Andrea	Vasquez Barajas	SC Member
13	Asbama	Jose Francisco	Zuñiga C.	SC Member
14	Augura	Emerson	Aguirre Medina	SC Member
15	Augura	Isabel Cristina	Yoshioka Tamayo	SC Member
16	Bama	Trude	Solvang	Observer
17	BANELINO	Gustavo	Gandini	Observer
18	CATAS	Xue	Zhang	SC Member
19	CATAS	Jingyang	Li	SC Member
20	Chiquita	Carlos	Crespo	SC Member
21	Chiquita	Andrew	Biles	SC Member
22	CIRAD	Carolina	Dawson	Observer
23	CLAC Comercio Justo	Marike	Runneboom de Pena	SC Member
24	COLEACP	Morag	Webb	Observer
25	COLSIBA	Adela	Torres	SC Member
26	COLSIBA	Elvis	Rivas Fernández	SC Member
27	Compagnie Fruitière	Christelle	Owona Lasme	SC Member
28	Corbana	Mariano	Jiménez	SC Member
29	Corbana	Omar	Sánchez	SC Member

30	Corbana	Jhamna	Magsig Castillo	SC Member
31	Demeter	Eduardo	Tilatti	Observer
32	Dole	Xavier	Roussel	SC Member
33	Dole	Patricio	Gutierrez	SC Member
34	Equapak	Guillermo	Maura	Observer
35	Equapak	Paola	Cabrera	Observer
36	Equifruit	Jennie	Coleman	SC Member
37	Fairtrade Africa	Nicholas	Ofori	Observer
38	Fairtrade International	Wilbert	Flinterman	SC Member
39	Fairtrade International	Silvia	Campos	SC Member
40	FARMCOOP	Kahlil	Apuzen-Ito	SC Member
41	Fyffes	Carlos	Espinosa	SC Member
42	Fyffes	Stella	Davis	SC Member
43	GIZ	Vivian	Rangel	Observer
44	GIZ	Damián	Villacrés	Observer
45	GlobalG.A.P	Johannes	Weh	SC Member
46	GlobalG.A.P	Nolan	Quiros	SC Member
47	Golden Exotics Limited	Lilian Yvonne	Karikari	Observer
48	Golden Exotics Limited	George	Kporye	Observer
49	ILO	El'vis	Beytullayev	SC Member
50	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union - Ghana	Esinam	Poku	Observer
51	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union - Ghana	Morgan	Ayawine	Observer
52	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union - Ghana	Laudina	Affum	Observer
53	IUF	Svetlana	Boincean	SC Member
54	On Stage	Luis	Garcia	Observer
55	On Stage	Oswaldo	Arroyo	Observer
56	On Stage	Ricardo	Pareja	Observer
57	Permanent Mission of Cameroon to FAO	Moungui	Médi	SC Member
58	Permanent Mission of Colombia to FAO	Nestor	Pongutá	SC Member
59	Permanent Mission of Colombia to FAO	Armando	Benedetti	SC Member
60	Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to FAO	Carla	Sierra	SC Member
61	Permanent Mission of Ecuador to FAO	Patricio	Troya Suarez	SC Member
62	Permanent Mission of	Veronica	Gomez	SC Member

	Ecuador to FAO			
63	Permanent Mission of India to FAO	Jujjavarapu	Balaji	SC Member
64	Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to FAO	Patricia	Rodriguez	SC Member
65	Rahan Meristem	Oshry	Markovich	Observer
66	Rainforest Alliance	Oscar	Maroto	SC Member
67	Reybanpac	Maria	Benavides	SC Member
68	Reybanpac	Paulo	Mello	SC Member
69	Reybanpac	Sandra	Guerrero	SC Member
70	Sainsburys	Nahuel	Tunon	SC Member
71	Tesco	Edgar	Monge	SC Member
72	UNIVALE Frutas	Silvio	Romao	Observer
73	We World	Margherita	Romanelli	Observer
74	FAO	Victor	Prada	FAO/EST
75	FAO	Adriale	Benedetto	FAO/EST
76	FAO	Matheus	Lima	FAO/EST
77	FAO	Helena	Ventura	FAO/EST
78	FAO	Laura	Del Castillo Buelga	FAO/EST
79	FAO	Pascal	Liu	FAO/EST
80	FAO	Sabine	Altendorf	FAO/EST
81	FAO	Yujeong	Hwang	FAO/EST