

## Northern Ireland achieves Fairtrade region status

19 June 2017

**Belfast, NORTHERN IRELAND:** Northern Ireland has become a Fairtrade devolved region after fulfilling the main targets of having all its five cities and six of its 11 councils attaining Fairtrade status to include their respective towns.

The remaining councils are currently working towards the Fairtrade standard.

Central government, higher education institutions, schools, places of worship, businesses and workplaces have also played a vital role in the initiative, many attained or working towards Fairtrade accreditation.

**The main beneficiaries of the Fairtrade system are the Caribbean, Central America, African and Pacific countries.**

To celebrate this accolade of achievement the official declaration and launch of the report was made today in the Great Hall, Parliament Buildings, Stormont sponsored by Steven Agnew MLA, Chairperson, on behalf of the All Party Group (APG) on Fairtrade. Fairtrade products were generously donated by the Co-op, Fish Hoek and Divine Chocolate with catering by Eurest.



(L-R): Steven Agnew MLA, Chairperson APG on Fairtrade; Tim McNarry; Dr Christopher Stange, Secretariat APG on Fairtrade & Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland displaying Fairtrade regional certificate at Stormont

Fairtrade provides a commitment to enable the most marginalised small-scale producers of the developing world to successfully trade in the global market to alleviate poverty, create empowerment and a future, working towards the United Nations' (UNs') Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through purchasing and procurement of Fairtrade certified products.

Fairtrade commodities are produced under the strictest environmental and social conditions through internationally recognised best practices, free from exploitation, child labour and human trafficking.



**Steven Agnew MLA, Chair of the All Party Group on Fairtrade** said: "I am delighted that Northern Ireland has attained the status of Fairtrade region. This has come as a result of the hard work and efforts of the local Fairtrade campaign, championed by Vincentian Dr Christopher Stange. This achievement is notable in that it came about without the support of the Executive Office, as was the case with other devolved regions. Fairtrade status will bring about better outcomes for producers in developing countries as well as the people of Northern Ireland as consumers."

**Michael Gidney, Chief Executive UK Fairtrade Foundation** said: "Congratulations to all the communities, individuals and organisations who've worked tirelessly over many years promoting Fairtrade across Northern Ireland on this achievement. Fairtrade has shown that together we can effect real change for farming communities in the global south, yet in too many places, Fairtrade products remain the exception, not the rule. From Stormont to community groups, churches to corner shops, it's fantastic to see the people of Northern Ireland finding new ways to unite communities and stand up for marginalised farmers and workers who deserve a better deal. Joining forces as a devolved region through Fairtrade sends a powerful message that Northern Ireland is committed to ending the scandal of unfair trade."

**Peter Gaynor, Executive Director Fairtrade Ireland** said: "We have seen local authorities, Fairtrade Towns groups and the All Party Group on Fairtrade do a huge amount in recent years in Northern Ireland to promote Fairtrade. It is a real achievement from all of this work that they are now becoming a Fairtrade devolved region - And of course Christopher Stange himself deserves a very big thank you for all his work personally. Fairtrade began with the dedicated work of small groups of people and this is a great example of these groups coming together to achieve something bigger together. "



**Dr Christopher Stange, Secretariat All Party Group on Fairtrade and Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland** said: “This regional commitment to the developing world through local action and purchasing Fairtrade products is the culmination of two decades of voluntary action, uniting all sections of society. Through Fairtrade we ensure a better future for those less fortunate creating a lasting legacy and connection between the developing world and Northern Ireland.”

18 Northern Ireland towns and one island have achieved Fairtrade status with the remaining 17 currently working toward with active groups.

Two-thirds of our higher education institutions have achieved or working towards the Fairtrade standard.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editor:**

For full details on the campaign and achieved criteria: <https://www.northernirelandfairtrade.org/projects>

Northern Ireland follows the other devolved regions of Scotland (2013) and Wales (2008) to become the third to achieve the accolade.

Fair Trade sales, including products bearing the Fairtrade certification mark have been available across Northern Ireland for over 20 years, since the Fairtrade labelling initiative was launched in 1995.

Fairtrade currently works with 1,210 Fairtrade certified producer organisations, across three continents and in 74 different developing countries, where Fairtrade is 50% owned by the producers representing farmer and worker associations.

There are approximately 5,000 Fairtrade certified products with some ranges exclusively Fairtrade. These include tea; coffee; sugar; bananas; cocoa; chocolate; coconut; pineapple; nuts; spices; cotton; gold; cut flowers; wine; beer and cosmetics.

Global Fairtrade sales are £6.2 billion (2017) with the UK being the largest international consumer market in excess of £1.8 billion, and Ireland €268 million. Over £130 million Fairtrade premium is generated annually from global sales for re-investment by farmers into their own communities.