

Andrews Memorial Primary School
Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Combined Press Release

February 26, 2009

Andrews Memorial Primary Hosts Caribbean Fairtrade Banana Producer

COMBER, Northern Ireland: Fairtrade Fortnight 2009 (23 February – 8 March), “Make it Happen...Choose Fairtrade”, had a special guest from the Caribbean speak to students during Assembly at Andrews Memorial Primary School.

Mr Cornelius Lynch, banana producer and manager of the St Lucia National Fairtrade Organisation, explained Fairtrade and his work in St. Lucia, in conjunction with the other Caribbean farming organisations of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Dominica. The farmers collectively work together with the Windward Islands Banana Development and Exporting Company (WIBDECO), whom handle the distribution of bananas and fresh produce from the Windward Islands to the United Kingdom.

Lynch has positively welcomed Fairtrade’s involvement in the Windward Islands, explaining that through Fairtrade and consumers purchasing socially and environmentally conscious produced products, the banana industry in the Windward Islands has been able to survive.

“Fairtrade has had a huge impact on me and our communities in many ways. Beginning with improving the standard of living, changing the mind-set of little or no regard for the environment, bringing people of common objectives together, empowering producers and communities, and the list goes on. In short, Fairtrade has proven to be our window of hope in this global environment.”



L to R:
Garrett Robinson, Mr Ralph Magee – Principal, Andrews Memorial Primary School, Aaron McCloskey, Dr Christopher Stange – Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) and Secretary of Fairtrade Belfast, Mr Cornelius Lynch - St. Lucia National Fairtrade Organisation, Lois Gale, Ms Catherine Brogan – UK Fairtrade Foundation, Leah Harvey

Dr Christopher Stange, Secretary of Fairtrade Belfast and Hon. Consul for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) in Northern Ireland, thanked Mr Ralph Magee, Principal of Andrews Memorial, Mr Cornelius Lynch, and Ms Catherine Brogan of the UK Fairtrade Foundation. Stange commented: “It was excellent to have the students hear firsthand about Fairtrade and the difficulties being faced by farmers in the Windward Isles. Any opportunity where you can bring a grower and consumer in direct contact goes a long way in understanding the circumstances surrounding products we all readily consume. The difference we can all play to create a better system of trade and social justice for small developing world producers is a shared responsibility.”

The visit to Andrews Memorial continues and develops the link already forged between the Consulate for SVG and the school. In December 2008, Children from Andrews brought in old copper coins to support the purchase of new dictionaries for the children in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The visit of a Fairtrade producer links to curriculum work being carried out in school and promotes the ethics of Fairtrade to a wider audience. Mr Magee commented: "Children of today will become the consumers of tomorrow. Any message that conveys the principles of environmentally sensitive and politically fair agricultural production has to be a positive. With Comber a significant focus for Northern Ireland's food production, this visit is especially relevant."

ENDS

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