

Fairtrade Celebrated at Stormont Parliament

March 03, 2009

Belfast, Northern Ireland: One of the main highlights of Fairtrade Fortnight 2009 in Northern Ireland was the event at Stormont Parliament today, organised by the Fairtrade Belfast Committee and kindly sponsored by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs): Anna Lo MLA, David McClarty MLA and Alex Attwood MLA.

The ceremony was attended by Ministers, MLAs, Local and Foreign Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Charities, Fairtrade groups and invited guests, including the main speakers: Mrs Anna Lo MLA, Junior Minister Mr Gerry Kelly MLA, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Dr Christopher Stange, Secretary of Fairtrade Belfast and Hon. Consul of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), Mr Wilbert Valverde, COOPEAGRI Costa Rica, Mr Nasser Aburarha, Palestine Fairtrade Association and Mr John Daly, Fairtrade Mark Ireland.



**L to R:
Wilbert Valverde, COOPEAGRI,
Junior Minister Gerry Kelly MLA,
Anna Lo MLA, Christopher Stange,
Secretary of Fairtrade Belfast and
Hon. Consul of St. Vincent and the
Grenadines (SVG), Carmel Hanna MLA,
Nasser Aburarha, Palestine Fairtrade
Association, Minister Caitriona Ruane MLA
and Committee Members of
Fairtrade Belfast**

The message was clear from all speakers in that Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and improved terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world.

When consumers choose Fairtrade products, the price they pay covers the cost of sustainable production but also provides a premium that is invested in social, environmental and economic projects in these developing countries. In doing so, Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional trade, which traditionally discriminates against the poorest, weakest producers. It enables those people to improve their position and have more control over their lives.

Dr Stange explained: "Fairtrade has been instrumental to the banana industry in the Caribbean Windward Islands but the key is development and eradicating poverty. Engagement with central government for the provision of funding to facilitate the diversification of the agricultural sector, not only in the Caribbean but other African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States would be most welcomed and is desperately needed."

Minister Kelly said: "In organising and promoting Fairtrade Fortnight 2009, you are setting an example to others and offering insight and education in equal measure. Fairtrade, from producers to policy-makers; from growers to government, is a positive agent for change, and is a collective responsibility."

"Clearly, there are inextricable links between Fairtrade and inter-culturalism and citizenship. These links resonate with the high-level ambitions of our Programme for Government, in which we seek to grow a dynamic and innovative economy, which in turn, helps create a fair and prosperous society, built upon the principles of equality and sustainability."

The event concluded by recognising the work of those individuals, organisations and schools who are championing Fairtrade across Belfast via the Annual Fairtrade Belfast Awards, which are voted for by members of the public.

ENDS

Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
16-18 Glen Road, Comber, Co. Down
BT23 5EL, Northern Ireland
UNITED KINGDOM
T: +44 (0)28 9187 4697
F: +44 (0)28 9187 0792
Email: consul@svgconsulate.co.uk
Website: www.svgconsulate.co.uk