

Fairtrade Fortnight 2012 Celebrated at Stormont Parliament

05 March 2012

Belfast, Northern Ireland: Fairtrade Fortnight 2012, which runs from February 27 to March 11, was highlighted at Stormont Parliament today, by the Fairtrade Belfast Committee and sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdfM), Junior Ministers.



R-L: Jonathan Bell MLA, Jnr. Minister – OFMdfM; Martina Anderson MLA, Jnr. Minister – OFMdfM; Dr Christopher Stange - Chair of Fairtrade Belfast and Hon. Consul of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland

The theme of this year's Fairtrade Fortnight is "Take a Step for Fairtrade", where around the world we all work collectively to highlight the plight of developing world farmers to create a sustained awareness of Fairtrade.

The event was attended by Ministers, MLAs, MPs, MEPs, Central and Local Government officials, Charities, Fairtrade Groups, Statutory Bodies, businesses and invited guests, including the speakers: Jonathan Bell MLA, Jnr. Minister – OFMdfM; Martina Anderson MLA, Jnr. Minister – OFMdfM; Dr Christopher Stange, Chair of Fairtrade Belfast and Hon. Consul of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland; Sigfredo Benitez – Manager of Fairtrade Coffee Cooperative Los Pinos, El Salvador; and Peter Gaynor – Executive Director, Fairtrade Ireland and Board Member of Fairtrade International.

Ensuring companies pay guaranteed prices, Fairtrade addresses the injustices of modern trade, which penalises the poorest producers. It enables the most disadvantaged developing world's small-scale producers to successfully trade in the global market in order to alleviate poverty, working towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), through purchasing and procurement of Fairtrade certified products.

Fairtrade is about local consumerism and procurement having a direct effect in an international context, currently assisting over 8 million people in 63 different developing countries. By changing attitudes and habits through a more widespread awareness and understanding of the way we in Northern Ireland live, we can have a positive impact on people in the developing world whom we may never meet.



Fairtrade Belfast Committee Members with OFMdfM Jnr. Ministers, MLAs and representatives from Fairtrade Ireland and the Northern Ireland Co-operative

Dr Stange further commented: “Fairtrade annual sales now exceed £1.3 billion (UK - 2012) and 160 million Euro (Ireland - 2012) but sadly although these figures are impressive, every household in the UK and Ireland only spends on average £1/week on Fairtrade with many businesses, government Departments, statutory bodies, local councils and individuals spending zero, demonstrating the real scope for growth. Solid robust policies across government (central/local) for Fairtrade procurement and tendering are required to be at the centre of our national effort and public conscience to help make poverty history.”

The event was made possible through the generous support of the Northern Ireland Co-operative, whom supplied different Fairtrade products and gifts for the speakers, Graham Construction, Belfast City Council and the Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

ENDS

Notes for Editor:

For more information: www.fairtradebelfast.org