

## All Party Group on FAIRTRADE Launches Fairtrade Fortnight 2016

29 February 2016

**Belfast, NORTHERN IRELAND:** The All Party Group on Fairtrade (APGF) officially launched Fairtrade Fortnight 2016 at Stormont Parliament today. Fairtrade Fortnight runs from February 29 to March 13, 2016.

APGF is tasked in achieving Fairtrade accreditation for Northern Ireland - a devolved region.

Guest speakers included Steven Agnew MLA, APGF Vice-Chair; Dr Christopher Stange – APGF Secretariat; Sheena Biju – Fairtrade coffee producer from India and Kevin McCullough – UK Fairtrade Foundation followed by a question and answer session.

Invited guests included MLAs, Local Council Authorities, Fairtrade Steering Groups across Northern Ireland and Statutory Bodies/Charities/NGOs/businesses involved in Fairtrade.

Secretariat support for the APGF is provided by the Consulate for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland. This support led to the initiative, establishment and running of the APGF, which is on-going.



R-L: John Dallat MLA – APGF Member; Steven Agnew MLA – APGF Vice-Chair; Kevin McCullough – UK Fairtrade Foundation; Sheena Biju – Fairtrade Coffee Producer, India; Dr Christopher Stange – Secretariat APGF & Consulate of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to Northern Ireland

The concept of Fairtrade accreditation for Northern Ireland, developed from the Fairtrade Towns initiative with criteria established for the Northern Ireland Assembly, Government

(Central and Local) and the public/private sector to achieve Fairtrade status for Northern Ireland. Is as follows:

- All cities and at least 55% of local authorities to have Fairtrade status.
- All local authority areas and at least 55% of towns with a population of 6,000 or more to have active Fairtrade groups working towards Fairtrade status.
- At least 60 per cent of higher education institutions to have active Fairtrade groups working towards Fairtrade status.
- Parliament/Assembly and Government to use, promote and make available Fairtrade products internally, and to actively promote Fairtrade Fortnight each year.
- Fairtrade to be promoted in schools through the curriculum, procurement and other possible means.
- Schools, Further Education Institutions, Faith Groups, Trade Unions, business networks, voluntary and youth organisations to pledge to use and promote Fairtrade.

Steven Agnew MLA said: "Northern Ireland is showing how as a devolved region we can take steps for international impact. In the case of Fairtrade we are making a huge difference on the lives, food security and sustainability of developing world producers and their families. We look forward to the challenge and vision of achieving Fairtrade accreditation for Northern Ireland, encouraging all stakeholders, to embrace this initiative and make Northern Ireland a Fairtrade region."

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

**ENDS**

**Editor's Notes:**

**Officers and Members of the Group**

- Chairperson - Pat Ramsey MLA (SDLP)
- Vice-Chairperson - Steven Agnew MLA (Green)
- Secretary - Megan Fearon MLA (Sinn Féin)
- Treasurer - Jim Wells MLA (DUP)
- Chris Lyttle MLA (Alliance)
- Phil Flanagan MLA (Sinn Féin)
- Anna Lo MLA (Alliance)
- David McNarry MLA (UKIP)
- Robin Swann MLA (UUP)
- John Dallat MLA (SDLP)
- Claire Sugden MLA (Independent)