



## WFTO Urges Change by Governments, Fair Trade Agenda to Improve Women's Lives Marking International Women's Day: March 8

Women do most of the work in the world—67%, in fact, according to a UN report—yet receive 30 to 40% less than men for comparable work, and in many developing countries women receive no remuneration at all. However, the struggle for women's equality has achieved great social, political and economic change, improving the lives of working women and their families on a global scale. Fair Trade is an important part of this change. The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) is marking International Women's Day by celebrating the inspiring women who participate in Fair Trade enterprises and by urging governments and organizations to embrace an agenda for change.

Fair Trade helps improve the lives of women globally by promoting sustainable livelihoods and development opportunities, and by ensuring those who do the work reap the reward of their efforts.

### A new Fair Trade Principle on gender equality

This work is backed by the [10 Fair Trade Principles](#). In 2013, WFTO revised Principle 6 to focus on non-discrimination, gender equity and women's economic empowerment, and freedom of association in the supply chain. The principle requires WFTO and its members to promote gender equity, guarantee women have access to resources, land and property, receive equal pay for work of equal value—even in informal employment situations—and that women's special health and safety needs are taken into account.

WFTO urges governments and the Fair Trade Movement to embrace gender equity. The following policy changes are recommended:

#### Recommendations for Governments:

- Recognition and consideration of informal women workers in government statistics, planning, programming and budgets.
- Increased participation of informal women workers in the government at all levels of policymaking; especially in trade policymaking.
- Support for women's Fair Trade enterprises with tax breaks, incentives for domestic, public procurement, tax free exports and market access.
- Establishment of a low interest fund to provide women's collective enterprises with working capital.

#### Recommendations for the Fair Trade Movement:

- Promote greater representation of women in governance roles and highlight the importance of women's economic empowerment in Fair Trade.
- Fair Trade regional and country networks should develop their own competencies and expertise to ensure that all producers can engage in the concepts and all the principles of the Fair Trade





movement and benefit equally, and to build domestic markets and government support for Fair Trade

- Regional and national networks must become stronger platforms for advocacy in favour of women and informal workers.

International Women's Day serves to highlight the courage, success, and positive developments in the fight for gender equality worldwide. WFTO is a proud part of this fight. For example, in Africa WFTO members are partnering in a project that is reaching thousands of informal women workers in Ghana (cocoa farmers), Kenya (handicraft producers), and Uganda (coffee farmers and handicraft producers). Led by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing & Organizing (WIEGO), the project provides crucial business and leadership training, giving women the knowledge and tools they need to claim their rights as workers and to access markets. To learn more and meet some of the women who are benefiting, visit [www.wiego.org/wee/fair-trade](http://www.wiego.org/wee/fair-trade).

Women have achieved social, political and economic changes that have affected many lives of women on a global scale. However, discrimination, inequality and injustice against females continue to be global problems that call for more action.

#### **Meet inspiring women whose lives have been changed by Fair Trade.**

To inspire change, WFTO is featuring stories of women across the globe who have been inspired and empowered by Fair Trade and made a difference in their lives. See stories [here](#).

For more information, contact:

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<sup>1</sup>Fair Trade Advocacy Office publication "Fair Trade and Gender Equality" quoting The UN Commission on the Status of Women's Reports.

- The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges (UN Report/December 2011) [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2012/3](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2012/3).

- Empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions (UN Report/December 2012) [www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2012/4](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2012/4).