



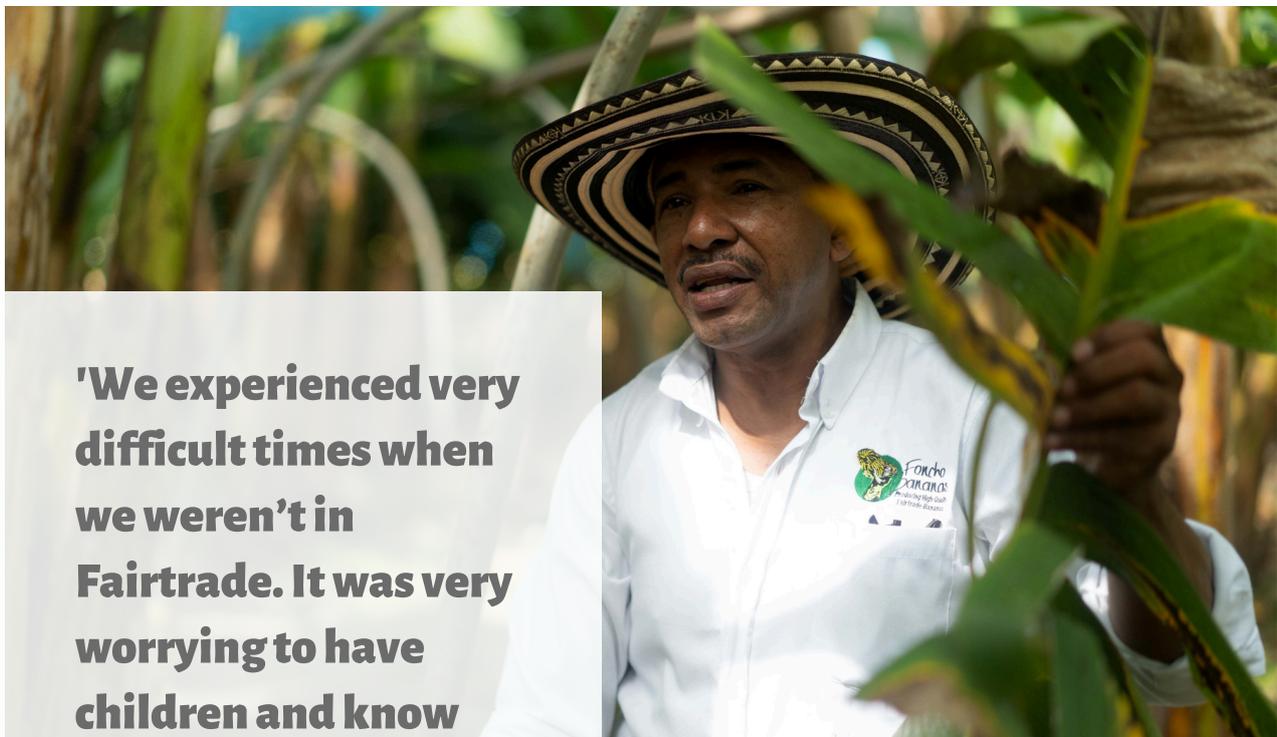
THE FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION MANIFESTO

Image: Emilia Debrah, Fairtrade cocoa farmer, from Ghana. Photo credit: Chris Terry.

WHAT IS THE FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION MANIFESTO?



The Fairtrade Foundation has three asks of the next government to build fairness and resilience for producers and consumers. This is more important than ever. Many of the farmers overseas who produce the goods we rely on in the UK are facing the impacts of both climate change and poverty. We need action to achieve fair prices and address power imbalances for farmers. Now is the time to redouble our efforts and do more. The next Government will have the power to act.



'We experienced very difficult times when we weren't in Fairtrade. It was very worrying to have children and know you couldn't provide the opportunity for the life they deserve.'

Image: Foncho Cantillo, banana farmer, Colombia.
Photo credit: Chris Terry.

THE FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION'S THREE ASKS OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT

1.

Develop trade policy that works for people and planet. These policies must improve resilience for the smallholder farmers and workers producing food overseas, and support innovative business approaches to enhance environmental and social sustainability.

2.

Legislate to ensure responsible business. The legislation must ensure that businesses address human rights and environmental violations in supply chains, including deforestation, while taking full account of the needs of farmers and workers.

3.

Strengthen UK aid by responding to the needs and priorities of farmers and workers who make a crucial contribution to the global food system.

In recent years, we've seen how global events can have a major impact on UK food supplies, from the disruption caused by COVID to the conflict in Ukraine. We need to invest for the future, building fair and strong trading partnerships, with businesses working for people and planet, that will ensure the ongoing availability of our food in the face of a changing climate. And we need to do this by investing in the people that grow our food overseas – farmers and workers in low-income countries growing products such as bananas, coffee and cocoa.

WHAT DO FARMERS NEED?



Fairtrade represents more than two million farmers and workers across the world, producing many of the UK's most well-loved products. But too many farmers still struggle with unsustainably low prices and are unable to use trade as a route out of poverty. Many of the major challenges in global supply chains – including child labour, gender-based exploitation and deforestation – are exacerbated by poverty. And unless farmers earn a fair price that enables them to care for their families, farms and futures, these systemic problems will remain.

A fair price changes everything. It means farmers and workers able to invest in stronger and more sustainable businesses, their families able to afford food and clothing, and their communities able to build schools and health facilities. Climate change makes fair prices even more urgent. A fair price is critical both to help farmers adapt to the impacts of climate change, and to support their contribution to a more environmentally sustainable global food and trade system.

Achieving higher prices is also connected to another key issue for farmers and workers: power. The unfair distribution of power in supply chains, which often denies producers the right to make their voices heard or to influence the terms on which they trade, is also seen in other key areas of decision-making, from the design of policies affecting their access to international markets, to the delivery of promised climate funding from wealthy countries. Ensuring that the voices of farmers are heard in all these key areas is crucial to supporting the resilience of their livelihoods and creating a fairer system.

‘There are times when it feels like we are not selling, we are being bought. But Fairtrade feels like a partnership, caring about people and environment.’

Silvia Herrera, coffee farmer, Mexico



POLICIES THAT DELIVER ON PRICE & POWER AT PACE

Following the forthcoming election, the next UK government has the ability to support farming communities to achieve higher prices and have greater power over the decisions that impact their lives and livelihoods, through rapid action in three key areas.

TRADE POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Trade policy has a valuable role to play in tackling some of the most pressing challenges facing farmers overseas. But this will require an approach to trade that fully addresses the connections between trade, development and the environment, by embracing fairer, more equitable and more resilient trading relationships that strengthen farmers livelihoods. Reforming our trade system also requires a commitment to innovation that can be supported via government policy. A crucial emerging opportunity is to encourage more pre-competitive collaboration between businesses, through initiatives such as Fairtrade's Shared ImPACT, to support environmental and development objectives.



The next UK government should commit to publishing a trade strategy that addresses the key links between trade, development and environmental sustainability and supports the UK to meet objectives across all three. It should also address UK competition law to provide support for innovations in the area of pre-competitive collaboration.



Image: Jaime Alberto Garcia Florez from Red Ecolsierra Co-Operative in Colombia. Photo credit: Chris Terry

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Businesses have a responsibility to ensure that their practices and supply chains are not contributing to human rights abuses, modern slavery or environmental damage such as deforestation. Government legislation on deforestation and Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence can level the playing field and ensure that all major businesses are doing their part. But it must be designed in a way that does not place the burden of compliance on those least able to afford it – smallholder farmers and workers.



The next UK government should therefore deliver regulation that requires all large companies to tackle deforestation and human rights violations in their supply chains, while ensuring that the costs and burdens of compliance do not fall to farmers and workers themselves. The voices of farmers and workers must be heard as a key part of this process.

STRENGTHENED UK AID

UK aid can play a crucial role in supporting smallholder farmers and workers in UK supply chains, and their families, with programmes to boost incomes, strengthen workers' rights, build resilience to climate change and shift to low carbon production.



The next UK government should put a focus in its use of the aid budget on supporting farmers and workers in their communities with programmes to tackle poverty and build their resilience, taking an approach driven by the voices and participation of producers themselves. In addition, the next UK government should honour its climate finance commitments, including a promised £500 million fund to tackle deforestation, with a substantial proportion earmarked for supporting smallholder farmers and workers.

'Climate change is a problem. It's not only happening on a global scale. We, the farmers, have to live with it every day.'

Ebrottie Tanoh Florentin, cocoa farmer from Côte d'Ivoire. Photo credit: Peter Caton.



We look forward to discussing these asks with the next Government.

If you have any questions about The Fairtrade Foundation Manifesto please email policy@fairtrade.org.uk.

We'd love to hear from you.

fairtrade.org.uk

Fairtrade Foundation,
Unit 5.07, The Loom,
14 Gower's Walk,
London, E1 8PY

Registered charity no. 1043886
A company limited by guarantee,
registered in England and Wales no. 02733136