

THE PROPOSED CONTENTS OF THE “SKELETON” OF THE NEW “CHARTER OF FAIR TRADE PRINCIPLES”

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The following text is a “beefed-up skeleton” of the possible new Charter to replace the existing 2009 WFTO-FI Charter of Fair Trade principles. It is not a draft text for a new Charter, it is a consultation document meant to prompt feedback on the possible structure and objectives per section.

1. INTRODUCTION

The international Fair Trade movement has significantly changed in recent years: several new certification bodies are now involved in Fair Trade; WFTO developed its own Guarantee System, there are also new Fair Trade labels, such as the WFTO label or the SPP Symbol of Small Producers, several Fair Trade importers included also products from the North in their catalogue list (the so called “Domestic Fair Trade”); Fairtrade International has set up new tools (beyond the “Fairtrade mark”) to engage with businesses, the Fair Trade Town Campaign is active all over the world; there is an increasing number of business-led sustainability initiatives which present themselves as having similar objectives to Fair Trade. In parallel, some countries in Europe and Latin America have adopted laws or Fair Trade public strategies. Brazil has adopted the first national Fair and Solidarity Trade system in the world. Last but not least, the United Nations adopted in September 2015 the new UN Sustainable Development Goals, which include many issues that the Fair Trade movement tries to address.

All these developments and processes require a new articulation of what makes Fair Trade unique and how it adds value to these developments and processes.

In this context, WFTO proposed at its 2015 AGM to renew the Charter of Fair Trade Principles, elaborated and signed in 2009 by WFTO and Fairtrade International; WFTO wishes to lead this process, in an inclusive way. The WFTO-Global Board set up a Working Group with Terms of Reference with the main goal to propose a new Charter.

2. AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT

The aims and non-aims of the new Charter will be:

AIMS

- 1) multiplication of Fair Trade actors and approaches in a common vision and frame, by a shared vision and fundamentals about what Fair Trade is and what are his aims
- 2) More than only listing principles, to identify shared values by the Fair Trade movement (e.g equity, equality, solidarity, etc)

- 3) Be a political document that is open for endorsement by the wider Fair Trade movement.
- 4) Show that Fair Trade is not owned by one or two organizations. Instead, serve as a tool to seek to engagement and/or endorsement by a wide number of stakeholders

NON-AIMS

- a) To be an international guidance document on Fair Trade standards, criteria or labels

WFTO will approach this task of course starting from its heritage, standards and Fair Trade definition (approved in 2001 and also shared and signed by Fairtrade International), but available to consult and to confront it with others Fair Trade organization and networks active at international level, open to debate it, but with not the aim to find a way to dilute or watering down the Fair trade vision, aims and standard; this is the challenge!

STAKEHOLDERS & TARGETS

There is a wide variety of stakeholders for which the new Charter should be useful, in different ways:

- 1) Fair Trade organisations and networks, including Fair Trade producers, Fair Trade activists
- 2) Public Authorities (Fair Trade Towns, local, regional, national governments and international institutions)
- 3) Wider civil society actors
- 4) Business actors
- 5) Academics / thought-leaders.

For each stakeholder and target, we should explain what we want them take from the Charter.

3. FAIR TRADE IS A COMMON VISION

Since we are writing a “political document” which should be endorsed by multiple organizations, not just WFTO, this section will be very important. Here is what we need to write:

- Why did Fair Trade begin ?
- How is FT different from conventional trade?
- What does FT try to achieve?
- Why is FT so important in the 21st century?
- How has FT changed over the years from just a North-South vision to a multi-regional vision including North-North and South-South?
- How is FT related to other social movements?
- What are new (compared with the historical Fair Trade aims and activities) possible goals which should be important to achieve?
- How have different organizations like WFTO and FI tried to implement FT practices?

Based on the above, we have to establish/prove that even though there might be different approaches to implementing or thinking about FT, the organizations which are claiming to be involved in Fair Trade are recognizing to respecting and to achieve a set of principles, practice and goals that are fundamental to FT, and similar across the world.

4. DEFINING FAIR TRADE

The new Charter will NOT come up with a new definition. It will instead refer to the agreed Fair Trade definition (2001, FINE). But the “consultation process” will be an opportunity to assess if the current “core” definition is general enough for all organizations/bodies active on Fair Trade.

The section could however refer to some recognised Fair Trade schemes (link to WFTO standard are in the Annexes).

5. FAIR TRADE MOVEMENT CURRENT CHALLENGES

This section could address key challenges the movement is facing. For example:

- What are some of the “measurable” objectives of FT?
- How to assess the impact of Fair Trade?
- How does one calculate Fair Price, and the link with the living wage?
- How does one monitor FT practices and enforce compliance?
- How and why do FT practices differ across countries and regions (what is FT in one context may not be in another context)?
- How do we ensure that FT is sustainable?

6. FROM NOW TO THE FUTURE

In this section we will lay down some steps of the roadmap for the future, in order to give an idea of how will the Charter become “alive” once endorsed by WFTO and key Fair Trade movement stakeholders.

But we could also include some “issues-themes” that we can consider strategic for the future, and strictly linked with the document aims. This could include (just some examples):

- What are some of the synergies we expect to achieve with other movements to establish a true “economic solidarity” movement.
- What are some of the obstacles we face and how will we overcome them.
- Possible Fair Trade recognition by public institutions: a threat or an opportunity?

ANNEXES

In order to make the main text of the Charter not too long, it may be wise to add a few additional documents as annexes. This could include a brief history of Fair Trade (which could include links for those that wish to go deeper, links to Fair Trade schemes, it could also include a section on implementation challenges). For instance:

1. A Brief History of Fair Trade (with links to deep it)
2. Link, presentation and/or full text of the 10 WFTO core principles
3. WFTO Achievements (a short presentation about few WFTO's major achievements in last 10 years to show how much progress we have already made. Just a proposal...)
4. Other stuff