EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HOSTS A FAIR TRADE BREAKFAST

13 October 2011 (Brussels) – In the framework of Fair Trade fortnight in Belgium, the European Parliament hosted a Fair Trade breakfast today in Brussels, with the participation of around 40 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) as well as representatives from the European Commission, EU Member States Permanent Representations, Southern countries Embassy officials, together with the Fair Trade movement and Fair Trade producer representatives.

The breakfast was hosted by Linda McAvan, the Chair of the Fair Trade Working Group, a cross-party group of MEPs, working together for EU policies in support of Fair Trade.

The participants enjoyed sampling a range of Fair Trade products while listening to testimonials from Fair Trade producer representatives from Malawi and Tanzania. These representatives explained the obstacles marginalised producers and workers in the South face to trade their way out of poverty, and what Fair Trade has meant for them.

The European Commission (EC) is expected to publish, by the end of 2011, its proposal for a new EU Trade and Development Strategy, a joint initiative by Commissioners De Gucht (Trade) and Piebalgs (Development). The breakfast thus served as an opportunity to discuss what this new EU Trade and Development strategy could do to make trade work also for marginalised producers and workers in the South.

As Sergi Corbalán, Executive Director of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office explained “There is only so much that trade negotiators and government officials can achieve to make trade flows work for development. An increasing number of EU consumers, local authorities, companies and producers in the South are showing leadership, and increasing success, to achieve this. That is why the new EU Trade & Development strategy should put in place an enabling environment to empower these actors to continue and maximize their potential to make trade work for development “


Extra information:

European Parliament and Fair Trade. The European Parliament (EP) is a long-lasting supporter of EU policies in support of Fair Trade. The President of the European Parliament, Mr Jerzy Buzek, reiterated this support during this year’s World Fair Trade Day1. As well as in September 2011, when the European Parliament passed a resolution ‘on a New Trade Policy for Europe under the Europe 2020 Strategy’2 where it clearly calls again for the ‘European Commission to ensure coordinated policies in support of Fair Trade’3.

The Fair Trade Advocacy Office speaks out for Fair Trade and trade justice with the aim to improve trading conditions for the benefit of small and marginalised producers and poor workers in developing countries.

2 (2010/2152(INI)) Rapporteur: Mr Daniel Caspary.
Based in Brussels, the office coordinates the advocacy activities of the main Fair Trade Networks: Fairtrade International (FLO), World Fair Trade Organization-Europe (WFTO-Europe), and European Fair Trade Association (EFTA). These three networks bring together over 2 million Fair Trade producers from more than 60 countries, 20 labelling initiatives, hundreds of specialized Fair Trade importers, 3000 worldshops and more than 100,000 volunteers.

**Dyborn Chibonga - Chief Executive Officer, National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM).** He has served in this role since 1999, managing the membership association of over 100,000 farmer members and a staff of 320 in 15 locations across the country. In his experience with NASFAM, Mr. Chibonga has taken the project from an initiative to becoming a model rural producer organization in Southern Africa. Mr. Chibonga is a member of the Trade Policy National Working Group and part of the Malawi government agriculture cluster for the World Trade Organization and EU-ACP EPAs negotiations. He serves on numerous boards, including his role as former Chairperson of Feed the Children Malawi (previously Cheshire Homes Malawi) from 1998 to 2005, where he is still a member. He was also an Advisory Council member of World Vision Malawi from 1999 to 2008. His most recent appointments include the boards of Press Agriculture Ltd., Natural Resources College, and the International Nut Cooperative (INC) which is selling Fair Trade nuts under its own brand, Liberation.

**John Kanjagaile - Export Manager, Kagera Cooperative Union in Tanzania (KCU),** where he has been in this role for over 15 years. He is responsible for selling all the coffee produced by its members. KCU is based in the Kagera district, on the Western side of Lake Victoria. It is one of the oldest coffee cooperatives in Tanzania with over 60,000 members and last year they produced some 4500 metric tons of coffee, of this, 3260 metric tons was under Fair Trade conditions. Kagera Cooperative Union also owns part of Tanica, a factory which produces soluble coffee for the local market. Mr. Kanjagaile is also a small coffee-farmer himself and has explained that in the years of low market prices, he was able to get up to 3 times as much income as other farmers who were not part of a Fairtrade certified cooperative. He is now 54 years old and father of 7 children. He also holds a Degree in Accountancy.

**European Parliament Fair Trade Breakfast** has been hosted in the context of Fair Trade Week in Belgium, an initiative of the Belgium Development Cooperation. More information on other events linked to the Fair Trade week in Belgium is available under [www.befair.be](http://www.befair.be).