25 June 2012 (Brussels) – The Rio+20 Summit concluded on 22 June 2012 with disappointing results. The European Union must now take leadership in the follow-up actions agreed at the Summit, namely the development of Sustainable Development Goals, which must be people-centered. Achieving such goals will require a wide set of EU policy and market-led measures, including support to the uptake of Fair Trade.

The outcomes document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20 Summit) has been criticised by civil society and policy-makers alike for its lack of ambition and of action-oriented decisions. Even the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated “the efforts have not lived up the measure of the challenge” and urged world leaders to take action.

Sergi Corbalán, Executive Director of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office stated “The Fair Trade movement calls on the European Union to take up the challenge by the United Nations Secretary General and provide the necessary leadership on the road from the Rio +20 towards the adoption of people-centered Sustainable Development Goals”.

Despite the shortcomings of the Summit’s outcomes document, the Fair Trade movement welcomes the recognition to the contribution to sustainable development played by small-scale farmers and its emphasis on the need to enhance employment and income opportunities for all, especially for women and men living in poverty and to ensure that workers have access to education, skills, healthcare, social security, and fundamental rights at work.

The European Union has already recognised that Fair Trade is a valuable market-driven tool to foster sustainable and inclusive growth in developing countries. “The Fair Trade movement looks forward to working with the European Union to increase the number of producers that are able to trade under Fair Trade terms and to create a shift in the market place towards more sustainable consumption, both in the EU and in the Global South”, concluded Sergi Corbalán.

The Fair Trade Advocacy Office (FTAO) speaks out for Fair Trade and trade justice with the aim to improve trading conditions for marginalised producers and workers in the South. It is a joint initiative of the European Fair Trade Association (EFTA), Fairtrade International (FLO and the World Fair Trade Organization-Europe (WFTO-Europe). These networks bring together over 2 million Fair Trade producers from more than 60 countries, 24 labelling initiatives, hundreds of specialized Fair Trade importers, over 3000 Worldshops and more than 100,000 volunteers.

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