

**Fairtrade Foundation submission to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee inquiry
on Covid-19 and food supply**

April 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Fairtrade Foundation welcomes the opportunity to respond to the EFRA Committee's inquiry on COVID-19 and food supply.
- 1.2. Fairtrade in the UK is part of a global Fairtrade system which supports 1.71 million Fairtrade workers in 73 countries around the world. Our vision is to make trade fair and secure a better deal for farmers and workers, contributing to the UK's wider international development efforts and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 1.3. The Fairtrade Foundation has been monitoring the impact on Fairtrade producers, smallholder farmers and workers in developing countries, who play an important role in UK food supply chains, during the COVID-19 emergency. We are already seeing a devastating impact in some sectors, leading to heavy job and/or income losses amongst groups who were already vulnerable. This will increase poverty and disrupt UK food supply chains unless urgent support is given.
- 1.4. There is an urgent need for a coordinated response to the crisis facing developing countries, which includes the protection of jobs and livelihoods, provision and support for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) alongside immediate support to strengthen already fragile healthcare systems. We would also like to see the UK Government take the lead on a coordinated global response through a comprehensive set of wider economic measures which ensures the long term resilience of international supply chains.
- 1.5. Information in this submission is correct to the best of our knowledge and offered in good faith. Due to communication difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have not been able to independently verify all information.

2. Key messages

- 2.1 The COVID-19 crisis **exposes the fragility of global supply chains and the importance of ensuring sustainable livelihoods for the farmers and workers within them.** During the crisis and in recovery, the Government response needs to support smallholder farmers and workers in our supply chains, both in the **immediate health impacts of the crisis and economic protection of jobs and livelihoods.** Investing in resilient supply chains now will not only support UK food security in the long term, but better enable us to meet future global shocks such as new pandemics or climate related risks.
- 2.2 **Farmers and workers are at a high risk of losing their jobs and their livelihoods.** Farmers and agricultural workers are already among the **world's poorest people**, living in communities with weak or non-existent safety nets. **Governments, retailers and traders need to work together to protect jobs and livelihoods** during this period and beyond.

- 2.3 Lockdowns in importing countries, whilst necessary for public safety, are resulting in the **rapid and severe drop in orders and/or cancellations of existing contracts** in some supply chains, leading to further heavy job losses. **Government crisis response needs to address overseas imports.** The **decisions and actions of businesses and retailers during this time will also be critical** to the lives of millions.
- 2.4 One of the biggest, immediate risks facing farmers and workers remains the **health impacts associated with the spread of COVID-19.** Many of the communities Fairtrade works with are already living with **inadequate health care, a lack of safe water and sanitation, and are at risk of hunger and malnutrition.**
- 2.5 Fairtrade producers are raising concerns about **access to adequate food and essentials to feed themselves and their families.** There are growing international concerns about **food security**¹. Job losses / unemployment, coupled with border closures and surging global food prices, could risk many farmers and workers being unable to feed themselves and their families. This is only likely to compound the health crisis resulting from COVID-19.
- 2.6 There are growing reports of the **impact of movement restrictions on the transport and export of goods,** including reported shortages in packaging, transport drivers, market/auction closures and shipping / freight delays and challenges.
- 2.7 The pandemic is putting the **most vulnerable at increased risk of human rights violations,** both because job losses and increased poverty lead to distress strategies, and because movement restrictions lead to a lack of independent observation or inspection.
- 2.8 As the virus continues to spread, there is a **need for wider economic measures** to mitigate both the immediate health impacts of the crisis, whilst taking steps to ensure continued livelihoods. **Governments need to coordinate a sustainable, global response to support developing countries** during the crisis and recovery which supports achievement of the SDGs and commitments to tackling the climate crisis.

3. Fairtrade response to call for evidence

- 3.1 Have the measures announced by the Government to mitigate the disruptions to the food supply chain caused by the pandemic been proportionate, effective and timely?
- 3.2.1 The Fairtrade Foundation welcomes the steps already taken by the Government to support developing countries impacted by COVID-19, many of whom are critical for the UK's supply chains. We welcome the statement made by the International Development Secretary at the recent World Bank meeting which pledges to support the World Bank to help build more resilient economies and stronger healthcare systems².

¹ <https://insight.wfp.org/covid-19-and-the-5-major-threats-it-poses-to-global-food-security-1c4da2ff6657>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-calls-for-long-term-approach-to-prepare-for-future-pandemics-at-world-bank-meeting>

- 3.2.2 It is understandable (and welcome) that UK aid has prioritised vital public health measures³ in its initial aid decisions. It is important to recognize that the impact on jobs and livelihoods in developing countries has also been rapid and deep, with hundreds of thousands of farmers and workers experiencing job losses and loss of income.
 - 3.2.3 Without action now, farmers and workers in the Global South will soon be unable to feed themselves and their families, and will also be highly vulnerable to the public health crisis as it spreads.
 - 3.2.4 The long term damage to business continuity for agricultural producers could also have far-reaching consequences for the UK's international food supply chain and global economic recovery.
 - 3.2.5 10-15% of the UK's food comes from developing countries, and 50% from overseas⁴. By supporting producers through this emergency, both economically and in public health, we will support UK food security during the crisis and in recovery.
 - 3.2.6 The Fairtrade Foundation would like the Government to ensure that support is provided to support vulnerable communities such as these, and that decisions in this area are expedited.
- 3.3 Are the Government and food industry doing enough to support people to access sufficient healthy food; and are any groups not having their needs met? If not, what further steps should the Government and food industry take?
- 3.3.1 Key Fairtrade products include “core basket” products such as bananas and other fruits and British staples such as tea, cocoa and coffee. These Fairtrade products deliver significant development impact for farmers and workers in the Global South, supporting them to achieve sustainable livelihoods and improved working conditions⁵.
 - 3.3.2 As in 3.1 above, it is vital that any Government response addresses the impact of COVID-19 on smallholder and farmers and workers who produce essential and popular UK food items. We are keen to see a response which addresses both the immediate health impact of the crisis, whilst taking steps to ensure continued livelihoods. Doing so will be vital to mitigate the medium-long term impact on the UK's food supply chains and support UK food security.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-leads-global-fight-to-prevent-second-wave-of-coronavirus>

⁴ Based on analysis of official DEFRA statistics

⁵ For example, there are over 25,000 farmers and workers producing Fairtrade bananas. In 2017, global Fairtrade banana sales generated €31.3m in Fairtrade Premium for investment in communities. In 2017, Fairtrade worked with over 260,000 cocoa farmers, delivering €38 million in Fairtrade premium. For more information on Fairtrade's impact: <https://www.fairtrade.net/library/monitoring-the-scope-and-benefits-of-fairtrade-summary-monitoring-report-10th-edition>

- 3.3.3 This crisis brings home the critical role that retailers and the food industry, now, more than ever, has to ensure food security in the UK. The Fairtrade Foundation is continuing to work with commercial partners and to support them with gathering up to date supply chain information on the impacts of the pandemic.
- 3.4 What further impacts could the current pandemic have on the food supply chain, or individual elements of it, in the short to medium-term and what steps do industry, consumers and the Government need to take to mitigate them?
- 3.4.1 Further impacts of the pandemic on the UK's food supply chain are likely to arise as production and output is reduced due to the proliferation of the illness and continuation of lockdown measures in origin countries. The risk of mortality and illness is high in many producer countries, and widespread infection would not only be devastating for already vulnerable farmers and workers, but could also affect UK businesses. Supporting farmers and workers during the pandemic is not only a moral duty, but will be integral to ensure UK food security and supply chain resilience.
- 3.4.2 Government will also need to take steps to address challenges to trade facilitation brought about by border closures and transport delays. The Fairtrade Foundation would like to see the UK Government take a cross-departmental approach to trade facilitation which upholds 'trade for development' objectives, commitment to the attainment of the SDGs and environmental and human rights commitments.
- 3.4.3 The World Food Programme has also highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on food security in developing countries⁶. Job losses and unemployment will have a significant impact on farmers and workers' ability to buy the food and essentials to feed themselves and their family. In many developing countries, families already spend upwards of half their income on food in normal circumstances⁷. Faced with the potential for a global recession and increasing food prices, developing countries may experience a situation in which imported food becomes more expensive, while simultaneously earning less money through the export of goods.
- 3.4.4 Within this context, the role of the UK Government in supporting developing country farmers and workers will be vital if it wishes to not only uphold its commitment to poverty reduction, but mitigate the impact for the UK international food supply chain.
- 3.4.5 Additionally, human rights risks could rise in factories and agricultural settings in food supply chains, both because poor incomes / job losses lead to distress strategies, and because movement restrictions lead to a lack of independent observation/inspection.
- 3.4.6 If employment becomes scarce or income drops there is a higher risk that farmers and workers accept abusive working terms and conditions. External scrutiny by journalists, researchers and agency staff will also reduce due to movement restrictions, for example if plantation communities are placed in isolation. Human rights due diligence processes will be harder to operate.

⁶ <https://insight.wfp.org/covid-19-and-the-5-major-threats-it-poses-to-global-food-security-1c4da2ff6657>

⁷ <https://insight.wfp.org/covid-19-and-the-5-major-threats-it-poses-to-global-food-security-1c4da2ff6657>

- 3.4.7 In this context it is very important that UK businesses remind their suppliers of the importance of maintaining high human rights and workers rights standards, despite the difficult circumstances.
 - 3.4.8 Buyers should also provide reassurance to suppliers – for example, confirming that existing contracts will be honoured, by guaranteeing future sales, and providing supportive finance. Business can also offer additional finance and share good practice with suppliers.
 - 3.4.9 Adapting workplaces and training workers to protect from COVID is vital to protect staff and maintain business continuity. Buyers can help suppliers in delivering such measures with finance and by sharing best practice.
 - 3.4.10 Business decisions in response to the virus will have profound impacts on vulnerable people in UK supply chains. We are keen to see responsible business practices which could help cushion the blow for vulnerable people in the supply chain, and good information sharing which informs responsible decision making.
 - 3.4.11 Long term, there is an opportunity to assess how the UK could take steps to strengthen the resilience of its food supply chains, including through the introduction of mandatory human rights due diligence for businesses and organisations.
 - 3.4.12 The focus of buyers will understandably be on availability and supply chain challenges in the short term. This needs to be held together with maintaining good ethical standards both to meet our commitments to uphold human rights in business operations and to maintain the resilience of the supply chain through the immediate crisis and to retain resilience for the future.
- 3.5 How effectively has the Government worked with businesses and NGOs to share information on disruptions to the supply chain and other problems, and to develop and implement solutions? How effectively have these actions been communicated to the public?
- 3.5.1 The Fairtrade system stands ready to support with any coordinated response to the ongoing crisis.
 - 3.5.2 The Fairtrade system is actively coordinating information flows between Fairtrade International, Producer Networks and national Fairtrade members, including the Fairtrade Foundation. These are now delivering a regular information flow on supply chain issues and producer community realities, and enabling decision making on responses.
 - 3.5.3 The Fairtrade Foundation is compiling regular briefings compiled from a wide range of sources that it will continue to share with commercial partners and Government.

4. Impact on Fairtrade commodities

Fairtrade products are found in most UK shopping baskets, and also provide a life line for developing country farmers and workers, with important development impact⁸.

4.1 Tea

- 4.1.1 The tea sector has been seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacts were felt early, and are now deepening with cancellation of orders and shipping contracts, and significant delays to shipments worldwide. Some of the major tea buying auctions have been suspended and/or postponed. Others have moved online.
- 4.1.2 Impacts appear to have so far been most acute in Asia, and particularly in North East India, where it is currently peak harvest season. However, the increase in precautionary measures and lockdowns in East African producing countries, including Kenya and Malawi, is likely to increase difficulties.
- 4.1.3 India has now extended its national lockdown to 3rd May. On 6th April the Government issued an order confirming that tea estates were exempted from the lockdown, and could reopen with a maximum of 50% of their workforce. As of 20 April, all tea estates can resume operations with 50% of their workforce. The tea industry in Assam is estimating losses of between 50-80 million kg of tea, with an approximate value of Rs1,218 crore (approx. 146 million Euros)⁹.
- 4.1.4 A huge concern for plantation workers in North East India remains the impact of the loss of livelihoods, including workers' ability to buy essential provisions and access cash, and the serious risks to health posed by the spread of the pandemic. In some estates, the 50% limit on workforce is being managed through rotation of workers. The Indian government has identified coronavirus hotspots across India, with several of these located in tea producing regions. As such, tea plantation workers in India are at high risk of health impacts from COVID-19 should the virus reach estates.
- 4.1.5 The response to the health crisis has so far varied between state governments. The Assam Government, for example, has given each estate Rs 5000 to implement awareness raising programmes and has made some direct payments to workers. We understand that some producers have already used the flexible Premium facility to purchase masks, sanitizer and disinfectant, and, in some cases, to make cash disbursements to workers.
- 4.1.6 In Africa, there are growing reports of the impact of lockdowns on production, tea auctions and transport/export. While many of the auction houses remain open, there are reports of buyers suspending their activities despite strict restrictions which has impacted on prices. In Kenya, the East Africa Tea Trade Association is working on an online trading platform.
- 4.1.7 In Uganda, the suspension of public transport has affected worker mobility. Some farmers and workers have chosen to stop operations; as such lower volumes of tea are being produced. For producers continuing with operations, operating costs have increased due to the need to provide additional health and safety equipment.

⁸ In 2017, €188.8 million in Fairtrade premium was paid to producers. On average each Fairtrade producer organisation received more than €118,000 in Fairtrade premium used in delivering health and education services to workers, training and capacity training and in credit and finance.

⁹ <https://nenow.in/north-east-news/assam/assam-tea-industry-to-loss-80-million-kgs-of-tea-worth-rs-1218-crore-report.html>

- 4.1.8 In Sri Lanka, plantations are open with workers using precautionary measures. As elsewhere, workers are facing challenges due to the closure of factories and buyers suspending activities meaning they are unable to sell their leaf. However, auctions are now being conducted online, and we understand that, exports are taking place.

4.2 Flowers

- 4.2.1 The flower industry in all origins continues to be severely impacted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with widespread job losses and reduced workers employed on farms only able to sustain minimal works.
- 4.2.2 In East Africa, there are a number of risks to workers including the immediate loss of salaries as a result of unemployment and a growing concern about the availability of and access to food for workers sent home and/or those with reduced salaries. In addition, laid off workers will struggle to access healthcare and there is little in the way of other social security available.
- 4.2.3 Many workers on flower farms in East Africa are migrants who face additional risks and difficulties. If they return home they risk spreading the disease, but staying means being left without pay away from home, having to pay rent and buy food.
- 4.2.4 In Kenya, the Agricultural Employers Association (AEA) and Central Organisation of Trade Unions (Cotu) have agreed to send home 50,000 workers without payment¹⁰. Many farms are remaining open but with limited capacity and only a skeleton workforce on a rotational basis (i.e the workforce has been divided into two groups, with farms paying workers 50%). Farms have estimated that they will only be able to sustain the current situation of heavily reduced sales for on average two months. Air freight is becoming an increasing issue, and many farms are reaching out to their customers for support in accessing cargo flights to Europe. In positive news, 8 of the Fairtrade certified farms report using the increased flexibility of the Fairtrade Premium rules to fund much-needed food packages and sanitisers; some report “up-skilling” laid-off workers through Premium-funded tailoring courses to create face masks for workers.
- 4.2.5 The flower industry in Uganda employs 10,000 people, 80% of whom have been sent home without pay and most farms are closed. We understand that the Government of Uganda is looking at ways to ensure people have access to adequate food, although there is a concern about how workers will be reached. As with Kenya, air freight is also limited.
- 4.2.6 In Ethiopia, air freight capacity is available and reports are that export is at around 60% of capacity.
- 4.2.7 Fairtrade sales have dropped in Ecuador, alongside general sales of flowers. Workers have currently been asked to take a holiday but it is unclear how many people will be able to return to work after the holiday period. There are reports that farms have begun to lay off workers.

4.3 Wine

- 4.3.1 In response to an increase in the rate of infections of COVID-19, the South African government introduced a country wide lockdown on 27th March, which included a ban

¹⁰ <https://www.sde.co.ke/article/2001367038/covid-19-crisis-cotu-okays-sacking-of-50-000-farm-workers-without-pay>

on the export of South African wines, and on the sale of alcohol throughout the country. Workers were however exempted from restrictions and farms are able to continue to operate following health and safety precautions.

- 4.3.2 The South African government briefly lifted the ban on 7th April, but on 17th April announced the halting of wine exports due to an increase in criminal activity – wine transports taking place while its sale continues to be prohibited throughout the country has meant that transportation trucks were being targeted and closed wine outlets burgled.
- 4.3.3 The impact of this ban is causing producers significant challenges. There are 40,000 people and families employed on farms in South Africa. Despite workers being exempted from lockdown rules, prohibition of wine exports and of local sales means there is insufficient demand for the wine being produced. Without sales many producers will struggle to pay worker wages.

4.4 Cocoa

- 4.4.1 The impact of COVID-19 on cocoa farmers is beginning to be felt throughout West African and Central/South America and Caribbean origins, with one of the main concerns being the continued reduction in the price of cocoa, by around 25%. Before the pandemic, the price was around 3,000 dollars per metric ton while the price has continued to drop (currently at \$2,276/MT)¹¹.
- 4.4.2 Ghana's cocoa revenue is expected to receive a shortfall of \$1 billion¹² which will affect the entire sector. There is a growing food security concern as global food supply prices are fluctuating, with prices increasing for basic food items, coupled with the concern that strict lockdown measures might affect food availability due to lack of storage infrastructure and shortage of food reserves (especially in urban areas).
- 4.4.3 As with other commodities, the transport and export of cocoa is likely to become increasingly challenging due to border closures.
- 4.4.4 There is a growing concern about the health risk for cocoa farming communities, who have a high rate of pre-existing health conditions resulting from poverty and poor nutrition as well as a lack of adequate healthcare.

4.5 Coffee

- 4.5.1. The current impact on the coffee sector varies depending on the origin country's harvest season. Coffee from Central American and Mexico has already been harvested, but around 60% of the harvest of Fairtrade coffee, from Peru, Colombia and Brazil, occurs between April and August. If movement restrictions continue and farmers and workers are unable to reach coffee farms coffee production could be challenging.
- 4.5.2. Peru and Brazil report a scarcity of containers, which could cause problems in shipping coffee in the coming months.
- 4.5.3. The impact on coffee farmers in South East Asia is varied, but it is expected that impacts will increasingly be felt as border closures affect transport/export and the wider global economic downturn slows prices. The worst affected country so far appears to be India, with earlier contracts with shipments in April and May delayed due to port closures and reports of cancelled contracts.

¹¹ Information correct as of 22nd April 2020. For up to date information on world prices please see: <https://www.indexmundi.com/commodities/?commodity=cocoa-beans>

¹² <https://www.pulse.com.gh/bi/strategy/coronavirus-effect-cocobod-predicts-ghana-will-lose-dollar1bn-in-cocoa-revenue-as/39dtw9e>

- 4.5.4. There is a perceived high health risk of COVID-19 in coffee growing communities, as the majority of coffee farmers live in remote areas, with limited access to health care facilities.

4.6 Bananas

- 4.6.1 While the banana sector has so far been relatively unaffected by the outbreak of COVID-19, increased lockdown measures in origin countries and logistics/transport challenges mean that it is likely that impacts will begin to be felt as the virus spreads and lockdown measures continue.
- 4.6.2 In many origins, banana production has been exempted from strict lockdown measures, and so many farms have been able to continue operations, albeit with a reduced workforce. Across origins, there are fewer workers on plantations and processing facilities as a result of necessary social distancing and health and safety rules. Caribbean and South American producers report that transport and export logistics are increasingly affected by the pandemic. While most ports remain operational, reduced working hours for farmers and workers and a reduction in drivers transporting the goods, there is the increasing concern that further delays are likely. Producers are having to work extra hours each week in order to make up for the reduced work force and to maintain production.
- 4.6.3 In Colombia, workers over the age of 65 must stay home, but will continue to receive a basic wage. These measures are increasing the production costs facing farmers and producers.
- 4.6.4 In Ecuador, which has so far been the worst country in the region affected by the pandemic, producers are reporting uncertainty about the availability of packaging to transport bananas for export.
- 4.6.5 In the Dominican Republic, Haitian migrant workers who cannot return home due to border closures, are unable to apply for government aid since many lack necessary documents. Fairtrade certified organisations are taking steps to support stranded migrant workers including organising food donations.
- 4.6.6 Producers in West Africa report that the agricultural sector is so far unaffected but that all farmers and producers are taking necessary health and safety precautions. Producer organisations are using thermometer guns to check the temperature of staff upon entering and leaving work. There is a concern that should the situation extend beyond 3 months, volume of production could be impacted.

4.7 Sugar

- 4.7.1 As with other commodities, the sugar sector is beginning to experience the effects of COVID-19 with lockdown measures and movement restrictions limiting labour supply and farm operations, while border closures and export restrictions are also causing significant challenges for some producers. Potential slump in demand in Europe and American markets as a result of the pandemic also means that sugar producers are at a growing risk of loss of livelihoods and growing unemployment in the coming months, if business operations cannot be maintained.
- 4.7.2 Many sugar producing countries have entered into total or partial lockdowns with restricted movement, which limit operations and ability to harvest. A failure to process sugarcane creates a lag in the agricultural calendar and could impact external markets.
- 4.7.3 The immediate impact is being felt most acutely by those in harvest season.

- 4.7.4 As with other sectors, limited labour as a result of movement restrictions, is increasing the costs of production for many producers.

4.8 Cotton

- 4.8.1 The fashion sector as a whole has been severely impacted by the COVID-9 pandemic, with all UK clothing stores closed. Many retailers and brands have received criticism for cancelling order, which has resulted in widespread job losses for garment workers, particularly in Bangladesh where more than a million garment workers have been sent home without pay or lost their jobs¹³.
- 4.8.2 Cotton is between crop seasons producers have mostly sold 80-90% of the cotton the last season. However, when the market opens at a lower price, which is likely, farmers are very likely to see their incomes affected. The sector is also affected by the closure of ginning units and spinning mills as a result of various states of lockdown, resulting in a further loss of livelihoods for the sector. The spinning mills are already struggling with loan repayments.
- 4.8.3 The sowing of the new crop typically starts in May, but this will be affected by the delay in the supply of seeds and other inputs. These seeds are usually distributed by the end of April.
- 4.8.4 There are also reports of port closures causing difficulty in clearing/exporting products.

5. Fairtrade actions

- 5.1 Coordination processes have been established between Fairtrade International, Producer Networks and national Fairtrade members, including the Fairtrade Foundation. These are now delivering a regular information flow on supply chain issues, and enabling decision making on response.
- 5.2 A temporary change has been made in Fairtrade Standards to give producer groups additional flexibility in use of Fairtrade Premium during the COVID response. In particular, that substantially more of the Premium can be used as cash payments subject to the agreement of FP Committees¹⁴.
- 5.3 Producer Networks across the Fairtrade system are now consistently reporting public health and / or economic support actions taken at farm / plantation level, including movement restrictions / social distancing, and health education. Economic support measures reported include forward purchase by co-operatives of farm produce (India) and exploring the use of Fairtrade Premium to provide income support (Kenya).
- 5.4 We understand that many producer groups are using the emergency Premium arrangements to meet COVID related needs, including public health measures and social protection. This is

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/02/fashion-brands-cancellations-of-24bn-orders-catastrophic-for-bangladesh>

¹⁴ Details are contained in a Letter to Fairtrade producer groups: https://files.fairtrade.net/standards/Announcement_Premium_COVID19_EN_FINAL.pdf. This formal letter to Fairtrade Producer groups, employers and traders from Fairtrade International recognises the challenging circumstances now faced by producers, but encourages full respect for workers' rights during this period, and encourages public health measures in the workplace.

helping to manage the initial phases of the crisis, though at the same time is drawing down quickly on Premium reserves which will need replenishment.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

- 6.1 The crisis shows us the underlying fragility in our food system, and the need to build resilience. Our supply chains are only as strong as the weakest link. Supporting farmers and workers now will not only be critical to the lives of millions, but is also in the interests of UK food security and resilience.
- 6.2 During this crisis, the importance of systems of social protection, business reserves, strong organisations and investment in public health are becoming apparent. Farmers that have been able to build up these systems are in a stronger position to face the crisis. Where that has not been the case, and where farmers and workers have been close to the poverty line, the crisis pushes them, and the businesses they work for, into a desperately difficult situation more quickly.
- 6.3 The Government must address overseas imports in its immediate response to the crisis. The Fairtrade Foundation is asking the Government to take urgent steps to support the protection of jobs and livelihoods, provision and support for PPE alongside immediate support to strengthen already fragile healthcare systems. We encourage the Government to work with NGOs/IGOs, governments at origin, retailers and traders to support farmers and workers who are most at risk from poverty and hunger.
- 6.4 In recovery, the UK Government has the opportunity to “build back better” with a new commitment to producers which upholds commitments to poverty reduction, human rights and the environment – which, as we are now seeing, will be vital to ensuring UK food security and the resilience of food supply chains against future global shocks.

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