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FAIRTRADE

Anti-Racism action at the Fairtrade Foundation

Fairtrade is a global movement for change. In the UK, we work directly with businesses, consumers, and campaigners to call for trade that is fair for farmers and workers in low-income countries who grow the food that we eat or into the products we all love. We do this by working with Producer Networks, representing millions of farmers and workers around the world, calling collectively for change that will deliver fair trade and higher incomes. We are led by the principles of partnership, integrity, respect and accountability.

It is within this overarching mission and our guiding principles that we have been working on embedding active anti-racism into our day-to-day activities as an organisation and thinking about the wider work needed for change across the Fairtrade system and wider sector. In the summer of 2020 staff at the Fairtrade Foundation set up its Anti-Racism Steering Group, which has facilitated organisation-wide discussions and spaces for reflection, as well as strategies to embed anti-racism in the long-term.

We take this work very seriously. In the UK, we are working across five different pillars to embed anti-racism in our activities. These pillars look at recruitment practices, procurement, staff culture, our public communications and our relationship with the Producer Networks. We have engaged with external experts to facilitate discussions on racism in the wider sector and have developed and amended some of our communications guidance to ensure that we are conscious and aware of the language we are using and its impact on the communities we work with. We have also developed a number of proposals to embed these pillars into organisational plans.

As a global system we want to ensure that our work in this area is directed by the concerns of affected communities here in the UK and overseas. We are striving to undertake this work in a way that is useful and sensitive to farming communities, and we understand that these conversations cannot be rushed or pushed onto them. At a global level, each Fairtrade market will address anti-racism in an appropriate way for their societal and cultural context.

We are on a learning journey as an organisation, and it is a step forward that the Anti-Racism Steering Group is playing a convening and supporting role in drafting the organisational strategies that we need. The work of the group is being fully supported by the Board and Senior Leadership Team. But we also acknowledge that in order to fully embed anti-racism we must work across the Fairtrade system and collaboratively with experts throughout the sector.

We will continue to push ahead in this area and look forward to building a long-term vision of anti-racist action both within the Foundation and the global Fairtrade system. We aim to have a fuller statement published by the end of the year and commit to updating on our progress and challenges as we move forward on our anti-racism journey.

The Fairtrade Board and Senior Leadership Team

September 2022