



International Coffee Organization
Organización Internacional del Café
Organização Internacional do Café
Organisation Internationale du Café

WP Council 186/08

18 September 2008
Original: English

E

International Coffee Council
101st Session
22 – 26 September 2008
London, England

**Request for observer status at the
101st Session of the Council received
from Oxfam**

Background

Oxfam International has submitted a request for observer status for two representatives at the 101st Session of the Council (Ms Marieke Poissonnier and Ms Els Keytsman). A copy of a letter from Oxfam outlining how its presence as an observer can contribute to the transparency and work of the ICO is attached, together with letters of support from three non-governmental organizations supporting its request.

Action

The Council is requested to consider this request.

Your mark

Date

4 September 2008

Contact / e-mail

Marieke Poissonnier
marieke.poissonnier@oww.be

Our mark

2008/PD/EK/MP/ICO01

Attachments

- Two official attendance forms observer status
- Support of other NGO's for Observer Status

Tel.

+32 9 218 88 59

Mr. Nestor Osorio
Executive Director
International Coffee Organization
22 Berners Street
London W1T 3DD England

Regarding: Observer status for non-governmental organizations at the International Coffee Organization (ICO)

Dear Mr. Osorio

Over the last years, a new International Coffee Agreement was discussed and agreed. Members of the International Coffee Organisation and the organisation itself have made efforts to come to a balanced agreement on coffee. Also Oxfam International has made its contributions to an improvement and made suggestions to the agreement. In the years to come, we will work with the 2007 agreement and want to follow up the implementation of the document.

Consistent with the current and proposed procedures for admission of observers for the 101st Session of the International Coffee Council, please consider our official application form in attachment. This accompanying letter reflects our view on observer status for civil society and more specifically for non-governmental organizations.

International Commodity Bodies were originally set up as intergovernmental bodies dealing with trade issues. We see they have been evolving toward organizations servicing commodity communities, including governments, but also a wider range of stakeholders including producers. This statement is not only our viewpoint, it is shared and supported by a study on international commodity bodies, carried out by the Investment Development Consultancy.¹

¹ Final report of the Study on the Future of International Commodity Bodies, Volume I: Main Report. By Investment Development Consultancy (IDC), May 2007. Chapter 4: The Future Role of International Commodity Organizations. p. 54.

We are pleased to read in the International Coffee Agreement that the ICO wants to “establish and strengthen cooperative activities with appropriate non-governmental organizations having expertise in relevant aspects of the coffee sector and with other experts in coffee matters.”²

Further on, the agreement clearly mentions that this organisation wants to develop sustainability on economic, social and environmental level.”³ We are happy to read this.

Non-governmental organizations are stakeholders too as for issues raised in international commodity bodies. Moreover, they can offer know how, expertise and experience on international trade issues, labour conditions, or environmental questions. For instance, Oxfam has proved its expertise and persistence to contribute to a balanced coffee agreement for all parties involved. Oxfam can offer its economic know how and expertise on international trade. Besides that, Oxfam does relevant research on environmental issues the coffee sector is faced with. In this respect, an Oxfam-report of June 2008 points out the consequences of climate change on the coffee production in Uganda.⁴ Furthermore, Oxfam is a Council member of the Common Code for the Coffee Community, and has working groups focussing on labour rights and on sustainable value chain in several sectors like coffee, cocoa, tea, cotton and palm oil. In the process of editing the new agreement, Oxfam has proved through policy papers like ‘Grounds for Change’ its expertise and conviction to contribute to a balanced agreement for all the parties involved in the coffee supply chain. Taking all this into account, we modestly believe our organization, supported by theoretical as well as practical know-how, has the expertise as required in the agreement. Oxfam is convinced of the good intentions of the ICO; likewise, we are convinced that we can contribute and offer an added value to the discussions held at the Council-meetings.

Oxfam is but one of other relevant non-governmental organizations that can contribute to the objectives of the ICO.

Cooperation between the ICO and NGO’s can take many forms, but in our opinion, observer status is a prerequisite. This idea is largely shared by the approach of other international organizations. An organization like UNCTAD has often repeated its appreciation on cooperation with civil society. In addition to this, UNCTAD has a transparent application process for observer status. Non- governmental organizations have to complete an application questionnaire, provide information on their aims and objectives, activities, members, structure and sources of revenue. UNCTAD then prepares a document on the basis of the information, questionnaire and supporting documents. A Trade and Development Board decides upon applications for observer status. A list of observers is made public and is adopted from time to time.

A similar system is applied by a smaller organization and international commodity body, namely the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO). This organization elaborated a multi-stakeholder initiative, called the Roundtable for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy, together with relevant partners from civil society among which Oxfam. Currently, dialogues are held at this roundtable between cocoa farmers, processors, manufacturers, governmental and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, the ICCO has offered Oxfam observer status to its Consultative Board on the World Cocoa Economy. The advantage of these systems of

² International Coffee Agreement 2007, Chapter VI, Article 16. p.14.

³ International Coffee Agreement 2007, Chapter I, Article 1 (3). p.2.

⁴ Turning up the heat: Climate change and poverty in Uganda. Oxfam GB, June 2008. <

http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/results.asp?sf_20=oxfam_archive_flag&st_20=NOT+Y&sf_01=CTI&TLE&TAG=&CID=&st_01=turning+up+the+heat&SORT=DATE%2FD

observer status is the emphasis being put on what the non-governmental organizations stand for and what their added value is for the international organization. Once observer status is obtained, a non-governmental organization can easily register to attend a next council meeting without going through the administrative process again.

The ICO has chosen for another strategy for observer status. In the agreement, the following is stated: "At each session, the Council shall decide on the admission of observers."⁵ The council makes its decision on a brief application form of the concerned NGO and will do that again at every session. We regret this rather time-consuming approach but we respect the 2007 agreement. Therefore, we think this lining up of the most important arguments for observer status, is appropriate.

Observer status is a first step towards full cooperation between an international organization and non-governmental organizations. Through constructive discussions, based on information made available, we are convinced that cooperation can only add to the functioning of the organization and the implementation of this new International Coffee Agreement.

On behalf of my colleagues at Oxfam, I genuinely hope you consider this matter.

Yours Sincerely



Els Keytsman, Head of the Policy and Advocacy Department
on behalf of

Koen Van Bockstal
CEO Oxfam-Wereldwinkels

⁵ International Coffee Agreement 2007, Chapter VI, Article 11 (3), p.11

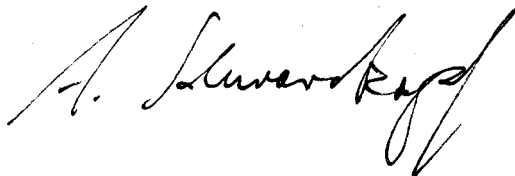
ATTACHMENT II:
OTHER NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING OXFAM'S DEMAND FOR
OBSERVER STATUS

Christliche Initiative Romero (CIR)

As CIR (Christliche Initiative Romero, Germany) we are supporting that an observer status is given to an NGO, in this case to Oxfam International at ICO (International Coffee Organization).

CIR jointly with IUF, International Union of Food Workers, Oxfam, Rainforest Alliance, Pesticide Action Network, participates in the stakeholder-initiative of 4C Association. CIR is doing awareness raising work in the North and supporting social projects in Latin America.

In this moment CIR, representing civil society chamber in the 4C Association, occupies the vice-presidency. Our experience about important development aspects to reach more sustainability in the coffee supply chain, is that the involvement of important sectors like NGOs representing interests of civil society are an important step forward. For this reason we support Oxfam International for an observer status in ICO and would be pleased if there would be a corresponding move possible by ICO.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Schwarzkopf', written in a cursive style.

Albrecht Schwarzkopf, Head for coffee topics in CIR, vice-president 4C Association

Muenster, Germany, 28 of August 2008

TransFair

TransFair as well as the Church Development Service (EED) welcome the initiative of Oxfam to quest for observer status at the International Coffee Organization (ICO). On behalf of both organizations I herewith sign the attached letter from Oxfam to ICO.

TransFair is the German national initiative of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International based in Cologne, founded in 1992 and has been lobbying on behalf of small producers in the coffee sector since then.

The Church Development Organization (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst www.eed.de) based in Germany, Bonn supports NGO's and church based institutions in Africa, Asia and South America. Its lobby activities are focused on human rights, trade justices as well as sustainability. The EED has been involved in Fair Trade since the movement started over thirty years ago.

Tina Gordon

Presse- & Öffentlichkeitsarbeit

TransFair

Verein zur Förderung des Fairen Handels
mit der "Dritten Welt" e.V.

Köln-Sülz

Web: www.transfair.org
www.rugmark.de

Van: Facco [mailto:facco@contag.org.br]
Verzonden: vr 5/09/2008 0:36
Aan: Marieke Poissonnier
Onderwerp: Support Declaration CONTAG

Support Declaration

Presentation

The National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) is a third-grade union organization, formed by 27 Agricultural Workers Federations (FETAGs), situated in the States and Federal District, aggregating more than 4.342 Rural Workers' Unions (STRs) affiliated, with head office in Brasília, Brazil. This organization has 12 state federations affiliated which represent 270 thousand family farmers coffee producers and 480 thousand permanent and temporary rural workers who labour in the cultivation and coffee harvesting in Brazil.

Declaration

The CONTAG comes by this to manifest its total support to the Oxfam International application to obtain the observer status to participate in the International Coffee Organization (ICO) meetings. Contag is convinced that Oxfam International presents the technical and political conditions to represent the civil society at the dialogue and decision instances at the ICO ambit, assuring, by this, the opening and democratic participation in the International Coffee Organization.

Manoel José dos Santos
President

Alberto Broch
Vice-President