

April 2011

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منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food  
and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of  
the  
United  
Nations

Organisation  
des  
Nations  
Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et  
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones  
Unidas  
para la  
Agricultura  
y la  
Alimentación

## COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP ON BANANAS AND TROPICAL FRUITS

#### FIFTH SESSION

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 3 – 5 May 2011

### REPORT ON THE WORLD BANANA FORUM PROJECT

*Communication prepared on the occasion of The Fifth Session of the  
Intergovernmental Group on Bananas and Tropical Fruits*

#### **Background**

The World Banana Forum (WBF) promotes the adoption of good practices for sustainable banana production and trade worldwide. Its participants include companies, farmer organizations, trade associations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes and governments. It was established in a meeting at FAO's headquarters in December 2009 which was attended by over 150 participants including government representatives. Following the meeting, the WBF was presented to the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Bananas and Tropical Fruits (IGG)<sup>i</sup> where several governments expressed their support. From the perspective of governments the WBF can generate interesting public goods such as reduction of pollution, sustainable management of natural resources, mitigation of climate change, higher export earnings, poverty alleviation and reduction of social conflicts.

The creation of the WBF was the result of a long process of collaboration among the various stakeholders of the banana sector. FAO has facilitated this process since early 2009 through the multi-stakeholder forum project. Several member countries that produce and import bananas in Latin America, Africa and Europe participated actively in the project. The UK Department for International Development funded this initiative from 2009 to 2010. A second phase of the project is now in preparation and should start soon. It will be funded by a mix of contributions from the Forum's participants and voluntary contributions by donors.

#### **Structure and activities of the World Banana Forum project**

**Structure.** Three thematic Working Groups (WG) work autonomously with the support of the Secretariat of the WBF. Additionally, a Steering Committee (SC) oversees the development of the Forum, guarantees its balance and objectivity and validates the outputs of its WGs. The SC is composed of representatives of some 15 organizations from all over the world.

**Update on the activities carried out by the WBF's working groups<sup>ii</sup>:**

*WG01 - Sustainable Production Systems and Environmental Impact*

Two sub-committees were created within this group: the first sub-committee specifically focuses on optimizing agro-chemical use, and in particular on reducing their environmental impact; the second one concentrates on the development of a “virtual library” presenting best practices related to sustainable banana production.

*WG02 – Distribution of Value*

This working group will implement three pilot projects about decent work in Latin America and Africa in 2011 and a detailed study on costs distribution throughout the banana value chain.

*WG03 – Labour Rights*

This working group plans to develop a database on the current situation of freedom of association and collective bargaining in 25 exporting countries and to analyze gender issues in the hiring process and at the workplace.

**Relationship between the World Banana Forum project and the IGG**

The World Banana Forum is facilitated by the Trade and Markets Division of FAO, which hosts its Secretariat and coordinates the Forum on extra budgetary resources. The WBF’s activities complement those of the IGG by providing a place where the stakeholders that are not member of the IGG can meet. The WBF works in close collaboration with the IGG and all IGG members are invited to join the WBF and attend its meetings. The WBF meetings will be held, whenever it is possible, back to back with the IGG sessions (in 2011 this was not possible due to the current state of reformulation of the WBF project). Lastly, the WBF does not deal with issues such as *trade disputes* or *setting standards*, for which other institutions already exist. The outputs of the WBF are available for free to everyone, but they should not be used by any government to justify trade discriminations.

**More information is available from the Secretariat of the World Banana Forum at:**  
[wbf@fao.org](mailto:wbf@fao.org)

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<sup>i</sup> See document CCP:BA/TF 09/CRS 12, accessible at <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/meeting/018/k6848e.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> For more info, please visit: <http://www.fao.org/economic/worldbananaforum/wbf-working-groups/en/>