



By Carl Collen

Tuesday 17th April 2018, 11:00 GMT

Commonwealth Fairtrade groups unite

Organisations come together to urge Commonwealth leaders to make trade fair



Fairtrade organisations across the Commonwealth have come together to call on heads of government to prioritise fair trade.

An open-letter has been sent to leaders asking them to use their position to improve the lives of farmers and workers across the Commonwealth.

The call comes during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which is taking place in London and Windsor until April 20.

Fairtrade is active in 29 countries across the Commonwealth with 1m Fairtrade smallholder farmers and agricultural workers living and working in Commonwealth countries, as well as large consumer markets for Fairtrade goods in the UK, Canada, Australia & New Zealand.

The letter, which has been sent to Commonwealth heads of government including UK Prime Minister Theresa May, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Canadian Prime Minister

Justin Trudeau and Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, asks leaders to prioritise five issues set out recently in a report from the Fairtrade Foundation.

These issues include supporting women's economic empowerment, including measures to promote women's leadership, access to finance and asset ownership; committing to living incomes and living wages across the Commonwealth; combating modern slavery through the implementation of effective measures across the Commonwealth, including legislation where appropriate; developing trade policies across the Commonwealth guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their achievement by 2030; and investing in producers, including young people, and providing incentives for businesses who are actively seeking to achieve higher ethical and sustainable standards, including Fairtrade.

"The Fairtrade movement has come together to urge the Commonwealth to

prioritise fair trade for development throughout the 53 member states," said Tim Aldred, head of policy and research at The Fairtrade Foundation. "Fairtrade is making a real difference in the lives of some of the world's poorest people, but much more remains to be done.

"The Commonwealth can lead the way in unlocking the power of trade to end poverty and human rights abuses," he added.

Support for women's economic empowerment, including measures to promote women's leadership, access to finance and asset ownership, represents a huge opportunity for the Commonwealth, the letter noted.

Women, on average, comprise 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries but own far less land and livestock than men.

It is calculated that closing the employment participation gap and wage gap between women and men would have a global value of US\$17tn.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

© Copyright Market Intelligence Ltd - Fruitnet.com 2014. The copyright on this article and all content published on Market Intelligence Ltd - Fruitnet.com is held by Market Intelligence Ltd - Fruitnet.com Limited, a joint venture between Market Intelligence Limited and Dr Rolf M Wolf Media GmbH. All rights reserved. Neither this article nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, including print-outs, screen grabs and information retrieval systems, without the prior permission of the copyright owners.

FRUITNET.COM

Among the other measures proposed is a commitment to living incomes and ending poverty wages in the Commonwealth supply chains; for example banana workers in the Lower Volta region of Ghana receive about £122 a month and a rise of only £44 would provide workers with the living wage.

"Fairtrade is supportive of existing efforts brought forward by countries including the UK and Canada to address

modern slavery and human rights abuses, and we hope that other Commonwealth countries will follow suit," the organisation noted. "Australia is expected to pass its own modern slavery law in the coming months."

Embracing Fairtrade represents a "huge commercial opportunity" for the Commonwealth, the organisation said. The Fairtrade retail market in the UK grew 7 per cent in 2017, according to independent data.

Additionally public support is at an all-time high with new data showing that 93 per cent of people are aware of Fairtrade while 83 per cent of people trust the Fairtrade Mark whilst more businesses than ever before are getting behind Fairtrade.