

PRODUCERS VISITS FOR FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2008 **(25th Feb to 9th Mar)**

LUIS ARMANDO CHOCO, COCOA PRODUCER



My name is Luis Armando Choco, an indigenous Mayan living in the village of San Pedro Columbia, Toledo District, Belize. I am currently managing the Toledo Cocoa Growers Association (TCGA). I have been working with the cocoa farmers for almost 5 years and have since developed a close working relationship with them, developing farmer ethics and understanding basic social and economic needs. Since becoming Fairtrade, the TCGA has accomplished various social, environmental and economic benefits for the farmers, including the rehabilitation of an abandoned cocoa plantation whose income provides jobs for farmers and assistance for local schools. Similarly, it provides loans to farmers for major orchard maintenance thereby increasing productivity. Fairtrade contributes significantly to farmers when given the right to decide where their money will be spent.

The TCGA is a grassroots association whose vision is to “improve the socioeconomic standard of living of its farmers through competitive and diversified systems of production that incorporate sound ecological practices”. Today the TCGA has a membership of 1020 farmers, both men and women, whose lives are dependent on sustainable farming, cocoa being one of their major sources of income. TCGA continues to work for the interest of the farmers, maintaining Fairtrade and Organic certification as well as maintaining a premium price for quality cocoa beans.

My own responsibilities, amongst others, include the daily purchasing of cocoa beans, ensuring that all the procedures of certifiers are adhered to and ensuring that our farmers are being provided with the best technical and capacity-building skills necessary for them to increase productivity and attain the maximum benefit from the price they receive.

NIMROD WAMBETTE, COFFEE PRODUCER



I am Nimrod Wambette, 53, married with 7 children. I have a Bachelor of Education degree and I am both a school teacher and a part time Arabica coffee farmer. I am a member of the Konokoyi Growers' Cooperative Society, my local cooperative, and of the Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise, our larger regional cooperative. I am the son of a peasant farmer who has lived and grown coffee all his life at the foothills of Mt. Elgon in Eastern Uganda. My father, 88, had three small coffee gardens from which he raised school fees for our education.

Gumutindo means undisputed quality of pure washed Arabica coffee of high density and distinctive cup. It is medium roasted to deliver citrus sweet flavour. It goes through an elaborate garden management free of chemicals, selective harvesting, and careful processing before delivery.

Since joining the Fairtrade family, the horizon for us small farmers looks brighter with each harvest. The benefits include a price which is shielded from falling below \$1.21, and a social premium for economic and social projects which benefit all people who live in the coffee growing areas. Examples include community roads, school furniture contribution, mosquito nets and treatment to selected homesteads, footbridge timber across streams between ridges, etc...

Through adherence to Fairtrade generic standards and farming practices which emphasize organic manure and environmental awareness, we are contributing to as solution to climate change in a small way. Democratic practices are also entrenched with accountability on the lips of every member farmer.

The **FAIRTRADE** movement is a movement of trade with **responsibility** and **compassion**. It is the most **humane** way of relating between small producers and coffee consumers. **LONG LIVE FAIRTRADE.**

YAHYA MSANGI, TRADE UNION ORGANISER



My name is Yahya Msangi, I am a project coordinator. I have an MSc in Environmental Resource Management from UCD in Dublin. I work with the Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU) and the Tanzania Association of Occupational and Public Health Experts (TAPOHE).

TPAWU is a trade union established in 1996 with a current membership of 32,000.

TAPOHE offers training to workers and communities on matters related to human rights, occupational health, public health and environmental management.

From my point of view, the benefits of Fairtrade are the payment of a premium and better working conditions. The premium in particular makes Fairtrade stand tall amongst many other similar initiatives. Workers and communities receive tangible measurable benefits. In Fairtrade farms working conditions are better than in the other farms – with access to training, welfare facilities and medical treatment.

For example, at Kibena tea factory in Southern Tanzania, the salaries are higher than on any other tea estate in Tanzania, protective clothing is provided and machinery has extra safety precautions, women and men enjoy equal pay and rights, and they now have two nursery schools, an estate shop, plots for growing food, a fruit tree nursery, a bicycle track along the road for safe cycling - the first bicycle track in Tanzania!