



## WTO Public Forum Side Event

Panel  
**Transforming Global Trade for Smallholders:  
Building Back Fairer Post COVID-19**  
Wednesday, September 29th, 16:30-17:30 CEST

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ADVOCACY OFFICE



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**Online:** See the recording [here](#).

### Objective

This panel event, organised on 29th September 2021 by Fairtrade International as part of the **WTO Public Forum 2021**, dealt with how to transform global trade for smallholders. Panellists discussed lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis and how to [Build Back Fairer](#).

The panel was composed of:

- **Daniel Legarda**, Ecuador's Vice-Minister of International Trade,
- **Roxana Cayo**, President of the National Fair Trade Platform in Bolivia
- **Anders Aeroe**, Director of Division of Enterprises and Institutions at the International Trade Centre,
- **Nyagoy Nyong'o**, Global CEO of Fairtrade International.

**Sergi Corbalán**, Executive Director of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, served as moderator.

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### Main points by panellists



**Daniel Legarda** emphasised that policymakers should facilitate processes for smallholders, instead of creating trade barriers, with the overall aim of improving resilience in the face of external factors. He further stated that **digitalisation** can help optimise processes and negotiations. He added that governments should raise awareness on consumption of Fair Trade products, promote Fair Trade producers, **provide a regulatory framework** for Fair Trade actors, and implement better standards for food safety and food quality. He stressed the importance of dialogue between different stakeholders and said that Ecuador has set up an **interinstitutional committee** with representatives from the private and public sectors. He underlined that **associations between smallholders** can help strengthen their voices vis-à-vis the government and buyers. He contended that they can also help improve best practices, food safety and market standards. He claimed Aid for Trade can help producers meet those standards and improve food safety.

He concluded by stating that smallholders have proven during the pandemic that they can be resilient and flexible, asked for **public authorities to increase support for market access and trade facilitation**, and called for strengthening institutions and organisations such as the WTO, NGOs, and local associations.



**Roxana Cayo** argued for food systems that place human beings at the centre and that ensure **food security and independence**. She explained that the pandemic had a strong impact on the livelihoods of smallholders in Latin America and the Caribbean and caused food shortages. She said that there's a need for strong organisations that promote cooperation between small producers, increasing resilience and solidarity. She contended that promoting on-farm consumption and local markets can help tackle food insecurity. She called for **participation of society** in putting in place policies to fight poverty. She asked policymakers to consider the social and environmental costs of their decisions.

She finished by asking for policies that would **increase demand for Fair Trade products** around the world, and asked authorities to promote the **participation of small producers in public procurement**.



**Anders Aeroe** explained that **small scale farmers are key to the global supply chain but get very little out of it**. He called for a transformation of global food systems to make them more sustainable and fairer. He underlined that it is possible to empower farmers while making global food systems

more sustainable and fairer and increasing food security. In Ghana, for example, the ITC helped cocoa farmers continue with their work throughout the pandemic thanks to their strong local partnerships. He called for joint action and **private-public partnerships** to produce transformative impact coupled with long term ambition. He also emphasised that digitalisation could bridge the gap between producers and consumers and unlock new opportunities.

He gave some examples of how ITC is supporting alliances in value chains. In Ghana, they **worked with all the actors in the cocoa value chain to support fair trade**. He announced that ITC will be launching a downloadable guide on the international coffee trade ([The Coffee Guide, Fourth Edition](#)). He also remarked that there is a growing interest in the market to buy products that are fairly produced.



**Nyagoy Nyong'o** highlighted that living income and living wages are human rights. She explained that Fairtrade system's mission is to support sustainable livelihoods for farmers and workers argued that **market solutions are not enough, and governments need to play a role in achieving this**. She thanked the German government and GIZ for their support for African farmers and workers during the pandemic. This helped them not to rely only on exports. She also congratulated **Ecuador** for their Fair Trade public policies and **Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire** for their cocoa "living income differential" initiative. She said that the FTAO is creating an informal network of countries interested in promoting Fair Trade at national level. She stated that Fair Trade is **not just about labels but about social justice**. She pointed out that problems such as child labour and deforestation arise from the fact that smallholders get very low prices for the cocoa. She called for addressing **the root causes of these issues**.

She finished by stating that there is not a single tool to achieve sustainable and fair trade for vulnerable farmers and workers, hence the need to work in partnerships with local communications, consumers, farmers, buyers, and international organisations. She requested global solutions to address the issue.

## Close



**Sergi Corbalán** thanked all panellists and participants for useful interventions. He highlighted that all panellists referred to the need to transform the global food system so that smallholder farmers can get a living income. He also emphasised that all the panellists underlined the importance of partnerships to achieve this goal.