



FLOWERS NEWS 3 April 2007



Newsletter by the Secretariat of the Review Committee FFP

Dear readers:

The creation of this newsletter is to inform you about the latest news in the flower industry around the whole world. Our writers are the members of the Review Committee of FFP and sympathising organisations. Below each article you will find the name of the writer and his/her e-mail address in case you want to know more about the subject.

Enjoy it and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any comment and/or question about this newsletter.

Regards,

Editors

Betsabé Lugo Rodríguez
Secretariat Amsterdam

Sebastian Odanga
Secretariat Nairobi

News from FFP bodies:

Secretariat – Amsterdam

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✚ Manual for observers

On March 15th 2007 the Secretariat of the Review Committee of FFP in Amsterdam had a meeting with the observers from The Netherlands to present and discuss the content of the manual for observers.

By Betsabé Lugo: b.lugo@fairflowersfairplants.com

✚ Fourth Review Committee meeting

The 4th meeting of the Review Committee was held in Arusha, Tanzania from 26 till 30 March 2007.

Points of discussion:

- Pilot projects
- Smallholder farmers in the horticulture industry
- Outsourcing & Subcontracting
- Transition period
- Protocol on applicants to Benchmark
- Manual for observers
- Complaint procedure
- Criteria on how to become a RC member

Next meeting: October in Sri Lanka.



Secretariat – Nairobi

The Secretariat of the Review Committee of FFP in Nairobi is under charge of Sebastian Odanga. P.O. box 2378 – 00100, G.P.O. Nairobi, Kenya. Telephone: +254 720 407 184, mobile: +254 720 538 855, e-mails: iuflantic@lantic.net and sirsebby@yahoo.com

Board

🚩 Board meeting in Aalsmeer, The Netherlands (March 12th, 2007)

Points of discussion:

- Benchmark document and the side letter
- Outstanding action points:
 - Networking meeting of all stakeholders within FFP
 - Action plan 2007
 - Proposal names and motivation as Advisory Forum's representatives
 - Finances: find money for translation, etc.
- Report on actual state of play of two projects
 - State of play EU project
 - State of play Min BuZa project

Next meeting: May 23rd, 2007 in the Netherlands

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

FFP office – Honselersdijk

🚩 Industry Committee skype meeting (April 13th, 2007)

Points of discussion:

- Approval of minutes of meeting 19 January 2007
- Website improvements
- Italy + Germany state of play bottleneck regarding decoration greensand certifications small growers
- State of play pilots in:
 - Germany
 - Sweden
 - France
 - U K
- State of play general EU FFP project
- Benchmarking
- Outstanding actions

Next meeting: June 29th 2007

By Regina Dinkla: r.dinkla@fairflowersfairplants.com

News from Africa:

Tanzania, Kenya y Ethiopia

No news

News from North America:

United States

🚩 Information journey for February 14th 2007

The US media was also more interested this year on Valentine's Day in reporting on labor and environmental issues related to the cut flower industry. ILRF was interviewed for a number of articles, including articles in the San Francisco

Chronicle, the Globe and Mail (Canada), abcnews.com, and Democracy Now (TV/radio). These articles are available on the "Press" page of the ILRF website, www.laborrights.org
By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

🌸 "Flower Confidential" by Amy Stewart

A new book by Amy Stewart, "Flower Confidential" was published in the US in February. It addresses all aspects of the flower production process, from the development of new rose varieties, to working conditions, to marketing. It also discusses the new Veriflora certification system.

By Nora Ferm: nora.ferm@ilrf.org

News from Latin America:

Colombia

🌸 Sindicato de Trabajadores de Flores de la Sabana, Sintrasabana

On January 13th 2007 the workers from the company C.I. Flores de la Sabana S.A. founded a trade union denominated Sindicato de Trabajadores de Flores de la Sabana, Sintrasabana. This trade union is the sixth created in the sector since 2001 and affiliated to Untraflores.

Only 6 of almost 600 flower companies have independent trade unions. These unions have a lot of obstacles to negotiate a Collective Bargaining.

Original version in Spanish by Angélica Chaparro: comunicaciones@cactus.org.co

🌸 The victims of the cold temperatures

During the night of February 3rd 2007, seventy workers went urgently to the hospital in the municipality of Tenjo, Cundinamarca, Colombia because of the inhalation of toxic steam coming from campfire in the greenhouses. The owner of the company Flores Inverpalmas S.A sat fire to wood and green waste inside the greenhouses to avoid that the cold temperatures burn the flowers. The workers of this company had to work inside the greenhouses in the middle of the smoke which contained the decomposition of the chemicals used in the flowers.

Original version in Spanish by Angélica Chaparro: comunicaciones@cactus.org.co

Ecuador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras

No news

News from Asia:

Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Vietnam

No news

News from Europe:

Netherlands

🌸 Valentine's Day (February 14th, 2007)

The Dutch Flower Council organized on Valentines Day a sector wide meeting on CSR initiatives in the ornamental sector in the Netherlands. Representatives of various NGOs, consultancies, industry and the Ministry of Agriculture were present. The discussion centred around the question if in future it would be possible that the CSR activities somehow started to cooperate, or at least not negatively interfere with each other.

During the meeting Sjef Langeveld explained the FFP initiative. The discussion centred around three questions:

- Is FFP sustainable enough?

The label will never be sustainable enough; there is always room for improvement either on the social or environmental side. But most participants agreed that FFP was a reasonable mix of social and environmental standards, difficult to achieve for producers in the south and north.

- Will FFP be robust enough to become an international standard in the world?

Robustness is a broad notion; nevertheless the industry was convinced that FFP looked stable enough in its structure.

- How to make sure that FFP will have sufficient support from national and international NGOs and trade unions?

NGOs stressed the fact that it would be wise to find a platform of NGOs in the different countries which are sympathetic to the label.

The perspective of starting to work together is there, but it will take time. How to start to work together and in which way, remains to be seen.

It also was remarkable that the Ministry of Agriculture seems very positive about the developments of FFP.

A report will be finished at the end of this month.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Labour conditions in China (March 3rd, 2007)

FNV international organised an interesting day on labour conditions in China. There was a briefing on the labour conditions from a FNV delegation visiting China and more particular Dutch enterprises in China. Mr. Han Dongfang, director of China Labour Bulletin, held a speech on labour conditions in general and three workers informed us about the bad labour conditions and situation of workers in general. During the workshops the so called poverty reduction policy and prevention initiatives of the government to stop migration from the rural areas to the wealthier coastal region was discussed. One key product for the Chinese government in both scheme's are flowers.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Environmental impact for production of roses in Kenya and the Netherlands, IIED report. (March 9th, 2007)

The production of roses in the Netherlands is more environmentally unfriendly than flying roses from Kenya to the Netherlands. The heat and lightning in the Dutch greenhouses appear to be more polluting than the emission from the cargo flights. Article only in Dutch.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Meeting with MPS (March 13th, 2007)

The Dutch Flower Coalition and the Secretariat of the Review Committee of FFP in Amsterdam had a meeting with MPS. There were some frictions with regards to the SQ audits.

It all started with a discussion if a producer was allowed to refuse a FNV observer and asked for an observer of another Dutch trade union (CNV).

We also discussed if it was necessary to send a complete audit team of observers in case of a smallholder, with less than 5 workers in the greenhouse. Other important item was the subcontracted workers. How to make sure that subcontracted workers have the same rights as regular workers? etc. We decided to start again with more frequent meetings, because for no reason the old schedule of regular meetings did not function anymore.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Meeting with members of the Third Chamber (March 16th 2007)

Nathalie and Kees had a meeting with members of the Third Chamber. This is an initiative of the Dutch governments. Appointed persons visit on behalf of some

Dutch Ministries several CSR or more commercial activities. This way they try to get a clear picture of what is going on, what kind of barriers do encounter organisations when trying to comply with their objectives. What can the Dutch government do to help initiatives forward? Later this year the members of the Third Chamber will write down their experiences and what they heard and will present this to MPS.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Activity from the VBA (Dutch auction) (March 19th, 2007)

From April 17th till October 5th it will be possible to visit the auction to the so called historical garden in Aalsmeer and make a trip on a nearby lake for 12 Euro per person.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

Meeting with Peuple Solidaire, French NGO (April 2nd, 2007)

At the OLAA office Marcelo and Kees had a brief meeting with a French NGO called Peuple Solidaire. FENACLE knows this NGO from their campaign on bananas. They indicated they are interested in flower production as well. We will send some additional information and Nathalie and Kees will visit the organisation if they continue to show interest in the flower campaign. The purpose of the visit will be to see if we can find a good partner in France for the flower campaign.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

A day on flowers organised by ADFU (April 4th, 2007)

The ADFU (Association for the Development of Friendship and Understanding) organised a day on flowers. The delegation including some representatives from Embassies, visited the auctions, wholesalers, KLM cargo etc. Both ENDS and OLAA were the only participants from NGO or civil society. Kees Hoek explained whether or not a CSR initiative is feasible in the international flower trade. After the presentation, rather positive comments from many participants were received. Most of the participants were pleased to hear that a CSR initiative is possible, but not easy.

By Kees Hoek: keeshoek@olaa.nl

UK

World Flowers and GMB (April 4th, 2007)

World Flowers and GMB agreed to build a constructive working relationship to the mutual benefit of all concerned: World Flowers/GMB Memorandum of Understanding.

In compliance with the ETI Base Code, World Flowers agrees to the right of the workforce to be represented by the GMB and will issue a joint statement to this effect.

Source: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/Templates/PressItems.asp?NodeID=95344>

"Growing Pains. The human cost of cut flowers in British supermarkets", Report of War on Want

This report forms part of War on Want's ongoing campaign for corporate accountability. It presents the results of research and consultation with workers in Colombia and Kenya who grow the cut flowers sold by the major supermarkets in the UK. This research reveals the true human cost of the flowers sold to consumers in the UK. While this report focuses on Colombia and Kenya specifically, the problems highlighted are systemic and can be found throughout the cut flowers industry.

Source: <http://www.waronwant.org/Growing+Pains+14183.twl>

Italy

FIORI E DIRITTI, International Conference. Towards a social & environmental certification for local flowers (May 11th, 2007)

The conference is organised by "Associazione La Bottega Solidale Onlus – Centro Fiori e Diritti" inside activities shared with Distretto Floricolo del Ponente Ligure and the agreement of Regione Liguria (Regional Government) and Istituto Regionale Floricoltura, with the aim to develop a social certification in flowers sector to guarantee consumers and to support local producers.

The aim of the conference is to deepen why (opportunity) and how to develop social certification for local producers in order to value their CSR and to offer to consumers a product with a perception of more add value on it.

Inside the conference international experts will supply a general framework about global certification process and criteria that had been taken as reference on the basis of ICC for a sustainable production. Technical information will be provided to understand how to apply for certification.

In the Conference will be hold also the first "multistakeholders forum", with speakers from producers, traders, civil society organisations, public institutions.

By Chistiano Calvi from La Bottega Solidale: cristiano.calvi@bottegasolidale.it

Rose & Lavoro (Roses & work) book by Pietro Raitano and Cristiano Calvi

A new book entitled "Rose & Lavoro" will be available from 11th of May in bookshops and fair trade shops in Italy. It describes the "global trip for roses" with a focus on Kenyan production but also a detailed situation in Italian production and trade.

Authors:

- Pietro Raitano, journalist, Altraeconomia magazine

- Cristiano Calvi, director of Fiori e Diritti (www.fioriediritti.org)

Editor: Cartarmata edizioni

By Chistiano Calvi from La Bottega Solidale: cristiano.calvi@bottegasolidale.it

Fiori e Diritti visit Ecuador in May 2007

Fiori e Diritti is planning a mission to Ecuador for end may 2007. Certified producers, trade unions, human rights organisations will be visited during this mission. www.fioriediritti.org

By Chistiano Calvi from La Bottega Solidale: cristiano.calvi@bottegasolidale.it

Germany, Switzerland, Belgium

No news

Dear Writers:

The next deadline to send your news is on **June 4th, 2007**. Don't forget it, this newsletter is for you!!

Thanks,
Betsabé Lugo
Editors