

# **Standards Committee Minutes**

## **Extraordinary meeting 93: 19 October 2020 Teleconference meeting**

SC members: Martin Boon, Jos Harmsen, Martin de la Harpe, Uwe Hoelzer, Richard Kwarteng, Marike de Peña, Iresha Sanjeevanie, Emilie Sarrazin (Chair).

Fairtrade International S&P: Alina Amador, Oksana Forkutsa, Eleonora Gutwein, Ana Jordan Rosas.

Contributing observers: Melanie Dürr, Max Havelaar Switzerland - Senior Business Development Manager Flowers, Molly Harriss Olson, FANZ - CEO, Martin Schüller, FI - Interim Senior Advisor Climate& Environment.

Observers: Meg Jones, FANZ Strategic Partnerships, John Loughridge, FI CVO, Patricia Magana-Spiegel, FI Brand Manager, Clive Marriott, FANZ Commercial Partnerships, John Young, OC Chair.

### **Disclaimer:**

The Fairtrade International Standards Committee (SC) aims to reach consensus, but decisions may not always reflect the opinions of all people.

The section to introduce the topic (background information) has been written by the Standards & Pricing and may not have been discussed by the SC in full. Sections listing action points are an outcome of discussions of the SC but are not part of the decisions made.

### **Abbreviations:**

<b>AOB</b>	Any other business
<b>AUNZ</b>	Australia and New Zealand
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CVO</b>	Chief Value Officer
<b>FI</b>	Fairtrade International
<b>FT</b>	Fairtrade
<b>FANZ</b>	Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand
<b>HML</b>	Hazardous Material List
<b>MB</b>	Methyl Bromide
<b>OC</b>	Oversight Committee
<b>S&amp;P</b>	Standards and Pricing Unit
<b>SC</b>	Standards Committee
<b>SPM</b>	Senior Project Manager
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

### **Item 1 – Opening**

**Agenda:** The agenda was approved and ground rules read. No additional points were highlighted for the AOB session.

**Declaration of conflict of interests:** No conflict of interest was identified.

## **Item 2 – Methyl Bromide use on cut flowers**

S&P SPM clarified the aim of the session was to objectively present the recommendations based on the scope of Fairtrade standards (Trader Standard and Hazardous Materials List (HML)) and to provide space to discussion in order to move forward. The Fairtrade HML, red list of prohibited materials includes Methyl Bromide (MB) due to its hazard type „conventions “, i.e. the material is listed in the Montreal Protocol as one of the Ozone depleting substances that are hazardous for environment and health. In the Montreal Protocol, Australia falls under an exemption for critical use of MB and allows MB for use on some commodities, including flowers in pre-shipment treatments which have to be carried out in country of origin.

The FANZ CEO, as contributing observer, explained that protecting the environment is one of their priorities. But due to the characteristics of Australia’s flora, it is not legal to import flowers to the country without following the government regulations in relation to biosecurity. For this reason, FANZ requests to the SC a time bound exception that would enable FANZ to work on market opportunities with traders interested by Fairtrade enabling workers to benefit from Fairtrade Premium, in a project alongside the WTO, and at the same time engaging with the Australian government to explore new technologies (such as flower radiation) that may be able to remediate/avoid the use of MB

The following concerns were presented to the SC for consideration by the S&P and the Senior Advisor Climate & Environment of FI:

- The credibility of the Fairtrade mark
- Environmental risks
- Scope and applicability of HML
- Existing alternative options that include a systematic approach

Unclear ownership of the flowers at the moment of fumigation

The current FT Strategy strives to protect the environment and MB is very detrimental, therefore FT already agreed to ban its use. Making an exception for AUSNZ could contradict the new FT strategy. Any detrimental action towards the Ozone layer should be avoided as well as any gas emissions caused by transporting that is not being compensated.

Lastly, the Senior Advisor suggested to make a decision on the requested exception and to consider measures to decrease the carbon footprint.

Discussion:

The SC members discussed the importance of considering use of alternative materials and strategies. SC members considered allowing the use of MB only under very strict conditions and a limited time frame. The SC was invited to vote on the following two decisions:

### **DECISION**

Decision 1:

Do you agree to NOT allow the use of Methyl Bromide a Red List material as a fumigant for cut flowers in producing countries for import to Australia?

The SC voted against the proposal (2 in favour and 5 against)

Decision 2:

Do you agree to allow the use of MB, a Red List Material, as fumigant in the country of origin or Australia, for quarantine and pre-shipment purposes, for a maximum period of 2 years under the strict conditions set for traders to work during this period on replacing MB use with alternative materials and on reducing the carbon footprint of those importations (including Fairtrade Carbon Credits)?

The SC voted in favour of the proposal (5 in favour and 2 abstentions)

Next steps:

- By early 2021, the SC members are updated on concrete plans from FANZ in relation to finding alternatives to the use of Methyl Bromide.
- The final wording of the decision is to be finalized by the Head of Standards. For the SC is important to emphasize that the use of Methyl Bromine is allowed only under specific conditions and with the prerequisite of investigating solutions to stop for good the use of this chemical as soon as possible and engaging in efforts to mitigate the carbon footprint.

### **Item 3 – AOB**

**Next meeting date:** 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**The meeting was formally closed.**