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PRESS RELEASE

The Ecuadorian Banana and Plantain Producers and Exporters Cluster - formed by AEBE, ACORBANEC, AGROBAN, ASOEXPLA, the Chamber of Agriculture of Zone II and the Small Producers' Association Committee -, the Banana Association of Colombia AUGURA, the Association of Banana Producers of Magdalena and La Guajira ASBAMA, the Association of Independent Banana Producers APIB, the Dominican Association of Banana Producers ADOBANANO and the Banana Cluster of Peru:

In our participation in the Fourth Global Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s World Banana Forum in March 2024; in representation of banana producers and exporters to the European market from Ecuador, Colombia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and Peru; we brought forward to European supermarkets and discount stores the main challenges of the banana industry caused by the internal policies of supermarkets and discount stores to impose additional burdens on production and omit their role within the framework of shared responsibility in the supply chain.

As of the date of signing this declaration, supermarkets and discount stores continue with practices that seriously harm the present and future sustainability of the banana sector:

- Supermarkets and discount stores have not yet adopted FairTrade's price calculation methodology that considers sustainability efforts in environmental and labor matters. Instead, they have continued with predatory pricing practices, such as in the cases of Kaufland (GER) and Eurospin (ITA) which have been denounced by the guilds that subscribe to this communication. These practices demonstrate that there is no real commitment from supermarkets and discount stores to improve the current conditions of the industry to achieve sustainability, but rather, in any case, it is a matter of mere statements without content that seek to distract from their main objective which is to continue offering a banana of the highest quality at very low prices, creating an endless cycle in which banana producers and exporters continue to be affected in the long term by low prices and high levels of requirements that are imposed unilaterally and assumed solely by the Latin American industry.



- Without clear actions to improve the sustainability of the sector, adopting a fair pricing policy that considers FairTrade's price calculation methodology as the center of their actions, retailers continue developing a series of projects in the different banana-producing countries of the region in which common characteristics are observed: 1) Lack of inclusion of producers in the preparation of projects, definition of strategies; consultation sessions are characterized by being simple presentations of the project without the possibility of modifying its central objectives; this projects are only adopting retailer's unilateral vision; 2) Lack of transcendent results for the sustainability of the industry, the approaches of these projects focus on the development of tools and other schemes that do not solve the main problem of the sector, which is the lack of shared responsibility of supermarkets and discount stores reflected in the price of the product; and 3) A clear lack of knowledge of each country's internal mechanisms - such as their legislation and procedures -. For example, the mechanisms for achieving a living wage in each country may vary, being that this objective can be achieved through public policies, collective bargaining or other valid mechanisms established in accordance with the Constitution and the law of the countries where bananas are produced; This projects currently are a clear interference in the internal affairs of the countries.

In the face of the lack of shared responsibility - from supermarkets and discount stores - and of a real commitment to improve the sustainability of the industry, we once again put this situation forth and urge supermarkets and discount stores to adopt urgent measures to demonstrate that their commitment to the banana industry is real and that sustainability is not a mere discourse to attract European consumers, omitting the true efforts; under the high quality standards of supermarkets, discount stores and the European Union; assumed by producers.