



## Media Conference

### First Fair Trade Travel Packages on the Swiss Market,

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#### **Why does SECO support the development of Fair Trade in tourism?**

For more than 80 percent of the developing countries, tourism is one of the most important export sectors. In most of the poorest countries, it is also the most important source of foreign exchange. A sustainable tourism sector contributes to economic growth and generates foreign exchange, income and employment not just for those directly involved, but also for suppliers such as farmers, transport providers, etc. These people and regions mostly belong to the poorer sections. Sustainable tourism thus contributes to poverty alleviation and to the reduction of regional disparities.

For SECO, the development of Fair Trade is a focus area of trade promotion.

Over the past few years, fairly traded agricultural products (bananas, coffee, flowers) have – also thanks to SECO's support – become well established in the market (with a market share of more than 50 percent for Fair Trade bananas, for example). With the launch of Fair Trade Travel packages, we will also see more and more disadvantaged service providers and workers in the tourism sector benefit from Fair Trade in the future. The expansion of Fair Trade to the tourism sector has a major potential for sustainable development in the partner countries of the South.

#### **What does it mean for SECO that the first Fair Trade Travel packages are made available on the Swiss market?**

The launch of the world's first Fair Trade certified travel packages is an important step towards sustainable development in the tourism sector in developing countries.

##### Fair Trade in Tourism

- visibly contributes to poverty reduction;
- serves sustainable development;
- mobilises the private sector and thus makes companies share the responsibility;
- offers a tangible, efficient approach to achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

- is an interesting and attractive market factor;
- meets the demand and the need of many consumers for socially and ecologically sustainable, but also high quality travel packages.

The increasing demand of Swiss tourists for sustainable tourism products and the openness of the Swiss tourism sector have contributed in a decisive manner to the fact that today the world's first Fair Trade Travel packages are made available on the Swiss market.

### **What future perspectives does SECO see for the FTT packages and how does SECO plan to continue supporting the development of FTT?**

For the meantime, Fair Trade Tourism Travel packages are pioneer products. However, there are many indications that the success story of Fair Trade will continue in the tourism sector. There is an increasing demand for sustainable tourism products. Fair Trade Travel packages which are certified according to Fair Trade criteria can – as "gold standard" – occupy an important market niche. Especially small tourism service providers in the South will benefit from this development.

The Fair Trade certified travel packages presented today are the result of many years of preparation. The experiences made in Fair Trade in agricultural products cannot simply be replicated in the much more complex services sector. As part of SECO's work on the development of labels and their application in developing countries, we have been accompanying and financially supporting this work for years.

More joint efforts will be needed until a globally applicable Fair Trade Tourism Standard will have evolved and will have become established on the market. The experiences of Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) will be very useful in this process. Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) will play an important role in developing Fair Trade standards in tourism.

Together with FTTSA, we are in the process of developing a new programme, which will be aimed at further expanding the FTTSA approaches in South Africa and replicating them in other countries in Southern Africa, such as Mozambique, Namibia, etc.

### **State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)**

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