



PRESS RELEASE

(Embargoed 12.00am, Sunday, February 21st)

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: MAKE THE BIG SWAP

Launch of Fairtrade Fortnight 2010 (February 22nd-March 7th)

'THE BIG SWAP' is the theme for Fairtrade Fortnight 2010, which will also highlight the continued growth in Fairtrade sales and support in Ireland.

"The Big Swap is all about encouraging people to swap some of their usual purchases – tea, coffee, chocolate and bananas for example – for a Fairtrade Certified product," says Peter Gaynor, Executive Director, Fairtrade Mark Ireland.

"Thousands of Irish consumers have already made the big swap; regularly switching some of their spending to Fairtrade products and in doing so making a real difference to the lives of producers in developing countries."

The proof of this is in retail sales of FAIRTRADE Mark products in Ireland which increased by estimated 27% in 2009 to €118million – and expected to grow further in 2010.

"We expect Fairtrade sales to grow again in 2010," says Gaynor. *"In the last few months, and again this week, some of the best known brands in Ireland have announced they are switching over to Fairtrade."*

In recent months, significant conversions to Fairtrade have been announced by **Cadbury Ireland** and **Nestlé**. And this week, Ben & Jerry Ice Cream announced that it will complete the global conversion of its entire product range to Fairtrade ingredients by 2013.

"The big manufacturers are realising that Fairtrade is also good for business," says Peter Gaynor. *"It's also important to acknowledge that Fairtrade's growth in this country is a testimony to the work of our volunteers – they believed in Fairtrade when it was perceived as a worthy but unrealistic niche business."*

Volunteers have driven the Fairtrade Towns and Schools initiatives and 45 towns and cities north and south, including Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Galway, are now certified Fairtrade Towns. Three more – Tuam, Tipperary and Carrick-on-Suir – will be Fairtrade-certified in the next fortnight. An additional 29 towns are working towards Fairtrade Town status.

These towns will be hosting their own Fairtrade Fortnight events over the next two weeks and some other Fairtrade Fortnight highlights include:

- Appearances by Fairtrade 'ambassadrice' Ms. Gerry from Holland. 'She' will personally take care that every consumer, business and organisation starts swapping to Fairtrade.
- Bewley's 'The Big Swap Wall' campaign – customers are invited to sign their support for Fairtrade on a wall at Bewley's Grafton Street shop. For each signature received, the company will donate €1 directly to a Nicaraguan coffee co-operative
- Oxfam's nationwide swap-a-cuppa campaign

Three overseas producers will also be touring the country during Fairtrade Fortnight 2010 to share their first hand experience of the difference that Fairtrade's support has made for their families and communities. They are:

- **Hella Alikuru:** Based in Nairobi, Kenya, Hella is the Africa Region Coordinator for the International Union of Food & Agricultural Workers (IUF)

- **Josephat Sylvand:** Josephat is a coffee producer and the Assistant Export Manager of Kagera Co-operative Union Ltd (KCU Ltd) in Tanzania
- **Oscar González:** Oscar is the communications director for the Coomprocom coffee co-operative in Matagalpa, Nicaragua

NOTE TO EDITORS

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The Big Swap explained: <http://www.fairtrade.ie/index.php?id=424>

FAIRTRADE MARK IRELAND – BACKGROUND

- **FAIRTRADE Mark Ireland** was established in **1992** to promote justice in trade between Irish consumers and producers and workers in developing countries. Fairtrade products are sourced directly from the producer ensuring the producer receives a fair and stable price for their products.
- The organisation is supported by all the **main development agencies** including Actionaid Ireland, Concern, Christian Aid, Comhlámh, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam Ireland, Trócaire, Amnesty International, and by the ICTU.
- **Irish Aid**, the Government's programme of overseas development assistance, is among the largest donors to Fairtrade development assistance programmes in the world. In 2009, Irish Aid approved almost €4 million in support of producers in developing countries including four countries in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia) and four countries in Central America (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala). Irish Aid has also supported the Irish Fair Trade Network's development education work since 1994.
- **Tesco, Dunnes Stores, Marks & Spencer, Lidl, Superquinn, Londis, SuperValu/Centra, and Spar all stock FAIRTRADE Mark** coffees and teas and have also extended their ranges to include new FAIRTRADE Mark products such as wine, rice, chocolate, fruit, juices, snacks and clothing.
- Other high profile nationwide chains and companies, including **Topaz** and the **Insomnia Coffee Company**, continue to expand their commitment to FAIRTRADE Mark products.
- The **first two tonnes** of Fairtrade coffee beans were imported into Ireland in **November 1996**. This increased to **over 655 tonnes in 2009**.
- An **IMS consumer survey** conducted in April 2009 found that **64%** of respondents were aware of the Fairtrade Mark compared to just 16% in 2002.
- **45 Irish towns and cities** have been awarded Fairtrade town status, they are: Athlone, Ballymun, Baltinglass, Bandon, Bantry, Belfast, Bray, Carlow, Carrick-on-Shannon, Cashel, Castlebar, Clonakilty, Cork, Downpatrick, Dublin, Dundonald, Dun Laoghaire, Ennis, Galway, Greystones, Kilkenny, Kinsale, Leighlin, Limerick, Longford, Maynooth, Midleton, Mullingar, Nenagh, Newbridge, Newry, Portlaoise, Roscommon, Roscrea, Skibbereen, Sligo, Thurles, Tubbercurry, Warrenpoint, Waterford, Westport, Wexford, Thurles, Tralee, Youghal. **An additional 29 towns are working towards Fairtrade status.**