

Guest Profile



Name: Mrs. Hella Alikuru

Title: IUF Africa Region, Regional Coordinator

Organisation: International Union of Food & Agricultural Workers (IUF)

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

(office Location, but she works all over East Africa)



“Fairtrade principles would act as a regulatory system to ensure that the working conditions and wages improve, as the national laws do not really protect the workers rights in the international trading system. This could be done by ensuring that those companies supplying goods under the scheme would respect workers platform through trade unions and ensure that Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining is practiced.

With the unique scheme of premium funds would assist to build the capacity of the workers through their trade unions to effectively participate in the process of implementing fair-trade schemes, contribute to the improvement of the operations of the scheme, as they will be involved in the auditing, verification and evaluation of the principles of the scheme. With workers improved knowledge on the Fairtrade scheme, the workers would make better decisions on the utilization of the funds as they participate in the joint bodies and also contribute to improving the functioning of the joint bodies to benefit all.

*The process would contribute to industrial democracy as the sourcing of the produce would be from companies that respect the role of the workers as a partner in business.” **Hella Alikuru***

About Hella Alikuru

Hella, a Ugandan, is involved in Fairtrade activities as an IUF representative for the African region. She advises the trade unions/workers on their participation and their rights within the Fairtrade system. In East Africa, Fairtrade has mainly been involved in flowers, coffee and tea, on large plantations.

Although Fairtrade schemes have existed for years on some farms, the challenge has been how to use the premium funds to benefit the workers and enhance their participation in joint employer/worker bodies as they have little or no knowledge at all of the Fairtrade scheme. As a result the workers/trade unions have little control of the use of the premium funds as the management always chair the bodies.

In Tanzania, the workers have formed Savings and Credit Schemes (SACCOs) and the workers borrow the funds with no interest charged. In Kenya, using Fairtrade premium funds, some farms have purchased vehicles for the transportation of workers and set up computer training facilities, and in Uganda the funds are mainly used for infrastructure development.

Organisational Profile

International Union of Food & Agricultural Workers (IUF) www.iuf.org

location: It is an International Organization, but Hella Alikuru is their representative in Africa

Established: 1920

The IUF - Building Global Solidarity

The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) is an international federation of trade unions representing workers employed mainly in agriculture and plantations. The IUF is currently composed of 336 trade unions in 120 countries representing a combined membership of over 12 million workers. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

From its founding in 1920, international labour solidarity has been the IUF's guiding principle. This principle is implemented through:

- building solidarity at every stage of the food chain
- international organizing within transnational companies (TNCs)
- global action to defend human, democratic, and trade union rights

Strengthening Affiliates

The IUF exists to strengthen member unions through mutual support. It does this through:

- assisting affiliates in organizing drives and in conflicts with employers and governments
- coordinating and implementing solidarity and support actions
- sector-wide organizing
- research and publications
- promoting women's equality at the workplace, in society and in the trade union movement
- trade union education programs to help build the strength and independence of affiliated unions

International Recognition and Collective Bargaining

From the planting of seeds through the sowing of crops, the processing and manufacture of food and beverages products through to the catering and tourism sectors, no worker in the IUF sectors is unaffected by globalization. The process is being driven by the transnational companies which increasingly dominate world production, trade and investment and set the international social and political agenda. The IUF seeks to create an international union counterweight to the power of the TNCs. We fight for union recognition at every level, including international level. We have won international agreements on global respect for trade union rights with leading companies within the IUF sectors. In our struggle for recognition of the IUF and its affiliates at international level, we are working to extend these agreements to other TNCs. In today's global economy our goal must be internationally negotiated rights and standards within global companies.

Defending Human, Democratic and Trade Union Rights

For the IUF, the active defence of trade union, human and democratic rights is not an adjunct to our industrial work but an essential part of our ongoing activity. For the trade union movement, defending these rights is a fundamental class issue for the simple reason that workers cannot organize in defence of their interests, nor maintain the gains they have achieved, in an anti-democratic environment.

The IUF gives active support to movements everywhere struggling against oppression. We respond internationally to every attack on our affiliates and on the labour movement. We are committed to building alliances with human rights, environmental, consumer and other organizations in civil society who share our objectives.

Strong Unions – Safe Work – Good Food

The IUF rules lay down the basic principles of IUF food policy, above all our commitment to ensure an adequate supply of safe, affordable food for all. As a global union federation, we believe that there is a direct link between union strength, consumer safety and public health and the environment. Where workers are denied the right to form a trade union and exercise oversight over health and safety, there can be no guarantees of safe food for consumers. Building trade union power in the workplace and in society is thus an indispensable precondition for reforming the way in which food is produced and consumed. We are committed to a dignified life for those who plant, harvest, process, prepare and serve the food we all depend on for life. The IUF and its affiliates are therefore active at international and national level on food policy issues including food safety and quality, food security and international trade and investment.

Regions

Regional Organizations of the IUF exist in Africa, Asia/Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and North America. The regions are autonomous, and pursue independent activities in close collaboration with the IUF and its governing bodies. In addition to the statutory regional organizations, sub-regional bodies exist to coordinate activity at that level.

Kenyan Facts

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| Full Name: | Republic of Kenya |
| Population: | 39,002,772 (<i>CIA World Factbook</i>) |
| Capital City: | Nairobi |
| Languages: | English (official), Kiswahili (official), numerous indigenous languages |
| Currency: | Kenyan Shilling (KSH) |
| Major agricultural exports: | Tea, coffee, green beans, pineapples |
| Life expectancy: | 53 years |
| Adult Literacy Rate: | 74% |
| HDI Ranking: | 144 out of 177 (<i>UNDP Human Development Report 2007</i>) |



Did you know?

- Tea is presently Kenya's leading export earner, accounting for nearly 20% of total export earnings
- At 5,199m, Mount Kenya is the second highest peak in Africa

