

# The Scottish Parliament

## Cross Party Group on Fair Trade

Convenor: Colin Smyth MSP

Vice Convenor: Gordon Lindhurst MSP

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 6 March 2019

Room: TG 20-21, Scottish Parliament,

1. Minutes from the meetings held on 7 November 2018 were approved as accurate.
2. In attendance: Colin Smyth MSP, Gordon Lindhurst MSP, Martin Rhodes (SFTF), Ciaran McDonald (Andy Wightman MSP's office), Darren Cormack (Gordon Lindhurst MSP's office), Anne Walsh (Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Fair Trade Group), Hazel Oakley (SFTF), Ross Isdale (SFTF), Colleen Tait (SFTF), Graeme Clark (SFTF), Mara Fehling (SFTF), Khader Khader (Palestinian Fair Trade Association), Taysir Arbasi (Zaytoun), Aimable Nshimiye (Sholi Cooperative), Russel Salton (Edinburgh Fair Trade Group), Carol Morton (Hadeel), Kirsty Connell (ScotMid).  
Apologies: Jackie Baillie MSP, Shirley Brown, Angela Oakley (East Dunbartonshire Fair Trade Group), Martin Meteyard, Karena Jarvie (Perth and Kinross Fair Trade Group).
3. Guest Speaker: Aimable Nshimiye represented the Sholi Cooperative in Rwanda, which is part of the Rwandan Coffee Project funded by the Scottish Government and run by [Challenges Worldwide](#), [Twin](#), Scottish Fair Trade Forum and [Enactus](#). He spoke about the history of the cooperative, which was founded by 30 women in 2008 and now has 374 members. Through becoming Fairtrade certified, investments have been made to improve infrastructure and help the community. For example, a medical centre was built that is accessible to everyone in the community, a coffee washing station and coffee cupping facilities are to ensure the high quality of their product. The sales of the cooperative have increased to 7 containers sold last year, one of them to Matthew Algie in Scotland. Aimable is traveling across the UK to promote Rwandan Coffee and especially the Sholi Cooperative coffee, to increase awareness of the high quality Rwandan coffee available, hoping to increase market access for producers. Lack of market access, climate change, sustainability and basic infrastructure are the key challenges facing the Sholi Cooperative.
4. Guest Speakers: Khader Khader, from the Palestine Fair Trade Association and Taysir Arbasi from Zaytoun spoke about their experience with Fair Trade and challenges facing Palestinian farmers today. Khader explained that the cooperative he works with has been able to invest in community projects, specifically supporting women farmers. In particular, changes in rainfall patterns and access to water make farming more difficult. The cooperative also has to trade through Israel and pay local businesses for transport and logistics, these extra costs negatively impact the competitiveness of their products. Khader and Taysir welcome the recent signing of the trade continuity agreement between the UK and Palestinian Authority.
5. Any other business: No other business.
6. The meeting closed at 2 pm