

Statement by Children & Youth (4 May 2006)

Thank you Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Youth and Children caucus, I'd like to comment on sustainable consumption and production.

It's been a long day - how many of you are craving for the coffee at Vienna Cafe? Have you ever thought of where your daily coffee comes from?

Many small coffee farmers receive prices for their coffee that are less than the costs of production, forcing them into a cycle of poverty and debt. So far, the global focus of industrial development has been on sustainable production rather than sustainable consumption.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan in the United States, an innovative business partnership called Brewing Hope was started by students. The partnership sells organic fair trade coffee from a specific cooperative in Mexico while promoting an exchange program between farmers and consumers. Members of the cooperative travel to give lectures at the University of Michigan and host events in coffee shops where their product was sold. Students travel to the producing cooperative to see first hand the effects of the sustainable certifications on the community.

This very successful youth-led initiative is a good example of how young people in the United States and worldwide are working on fair trade.

Sustainable certifications are an innovative, profitable market-based approach to entrepreneurship.

Fair trade provides farmers with technical training that improves the yields of their crops and reduces the farm's ecological footprint.

Fair trade guarantees that the producers get paid for their work, human rights are respected and that no child labor is used.

Although this is a successful story, the obstacles and constraints is the lack of information. What consumers need is information and education on sustainable consumption. We have to know where the products are being produced and how so that we can make sustainable choices.

Fair trade means community development, health, education and environmental stewardship.

And that is what we are all here for.

Thank you.