



## Declaration of Principles and Values

*Small Producers' Symbol*

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### *INDEX*

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.	SCOPE.....	3
3.	DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION.....	3
4.	ECONOMY.....	5
5.	ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH.....	7



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The official language for all documents associated with the *Small Producers' Symbol* is Spanish. In the case of any doubt arising from a translated version, the Spanish document shall be used as the only valid version.
- 1.2. This document cancels and replaces:  

Declaration of Principles and Values  
*Small Producers' Symbol*  
Version 1. 05-NOV-2010  
Translation 17-DEC-2010
- 1.3. If you would like to see the changes between this edition and the previous one, please consult the chart listing the changes, presented at the end of this document.
- 1.4. The Declaration of Principles and Values of the *Small Producers' Symbol* contains the collective philosophical and socio-political foundations of the Symbol. It is based on the principles and values of the small producers' organizations that made the creation of this symbol possible.
- 1.5. These Principles and Values were generated, developed, respected and promoted by a myriad of organizations of small producers – small farmers, indigenous people and rural artisans - in Latin America, the Caribbean and other continents over the last decades. These organizations are not only economic-oriented organizations, such as production and marketing cooperatives, but in essence, they are social organizations that seek to effectively and efficiently dignify the lives of the affiliated producers, their families, and their communities.
- 1.6. By means of this document, the small producers' organizations that founded the *Small Producers' Symbol* describe and promote their vision not only of small farmers' organizations, but also of society and the economy in general.
- 1.7. The Declaration of Principles and Values also allows these small producers' organizations to distance themselves from the principles, values, and practices that prevail in the current dominant global economic system and that are not inclusive or sustainable, in economic, environmental or social terms.
- 1.8. The principles, values, and concepts included in the Declaration of Principles and Values are the foundations for the different elements in the *Small Producers' Symbol* system. These elements include:
  - I. General Standard of the *Small Producers' Symbol*
  - II. Code of Conduct of the *Small Producers' Symbol*
  - III. Certification Procedures for Small Producers' Organizations



**1.9.** Each principle or value reflected in this document is presented in two parts. The first part describes the principle or value itself. The second part (b) mentions the principles and values considered to be contrary to the principle or value in question.

**1.10.** The principles and values are divided in to three sections:

- i. Organization
- ii. Economy
- iii. Environment and Health

## 2. SCOPE

**2.1** This declaration is based on the General Standard, Code of Conduct, Certification and Registration system and use of the *Small Producers' Symbol*. Therefore, all regulatory documents, codes, certification procedures, registration procedures and rules concerning the use of the *Small Producers' Symbol* are, and should at all times be, a practical reflection of this Declaration of Principles and Values

**2.2** This Declaration of Principles and Values reflects an ideal situation, not necessarily the current situation. It should therefore be considered as a guide for achieving a goal in the future, a path to follow, and not as a reality already totally achieved

**2.3** This Declaration is a reflection of the principles and values of the Small Producers' Organizations involved in the *Small Producers' Symbol*. It should not be considered at any time as a regulatory document for evaluation, certification or registration, or as a Code of Conduct

**2.4** This Declaration of Principles and Values is subject to review, under the supervision of the Board of Directors of the *Small Producers' Symbol (SPP Global)*

**2.5** Suggestions regarding modifications to this Declaration should be sent to: [certificacion@tusimbolo.org](mailto:certificacion@tusimbolo.org)

## 3. DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION

### 3.1 PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY

- a. Democratic organization should be at the center of the foundation of global society. First of all, democratic organization is based on the horizontal organization of individuals with the intention of attaining a collective asset. Within a democratic organization there must be mechanisms for equal, ongoing participation by all members and sectors of the organization. A democratic organization must operate at all times in line with consensus generated among its members, and collective interests.
- b. Democratic organization is contrary to individualism and personal interests as a means of achieving development. It is also contrary to authoritarianism, exclusion and false democracy (democracy based solely and exclusively on the periodic voting of representatives, without mechanisms for ongoing control, participation, and accountability).



### **3.2 SELF-MANAGEMENT**

- a. Each social group has the right to seek its own well-being and guide its own development process in search of a dignified life, and according to its own vision and culture. Self-management also involves the processes of developing productive, technical and commercial capacities; defending and promoting rights and interests through active citizen participation; and influencing public and private policies. Self-management is a form of self-determination for the organization's members, in relation to their present and their future.
- b. A self-managed organization fights against the interference, manipulation and imposition of outside interests and ideas that are contrary to its principles and values. Self-management is contrary to authoritarian centralism.

### **3.3 COLLECTIVITY**

- a. The principle of collectivity is based on the idea that an individual can only make real progress if he/she does so in a collective manner, while taking into consideration the collective good.
- b. Collectivity is contrary to individualism and selfishness, which always favor personal interests over the common good.

### **3.4 SOLIDARITY**

- a. Solidarity between persons and between organizations should be the foundation for any social organization. Solidarity between persons, organizations, and societies is based on the conviction that shared problems require joint solutions designed for all.
- b. Solidarity is contrary to selfishness and indifference, and to individual or partial solutions to shared problems that disregard whether or not the problems of other members of an organization or society will be resolved.

### **3.5 JUSTICE**

- a. In order to have justice, there must first be clear rules and transparent, efficient mechanisms to enforce them. These rules and mechanisms must be agreed upon democratically. The rules must also be fair, i.e., they must be based on the rights and obligations of individuals and groups, and on respect for them.
- b. There is no justice when rules are defined authoritatively; when they are discriminatory or exclusive, or when there is impunity or discretion in the way they are applied.

### **3.6 EQUITY**

- a. Equity implies the promotion of equitable participation by different segments of the population (for example, men and women) in decision-making entities and processes. The principle of equality should also prevail in relations between organizations and societies. This means interactions should take place between them without any abuse based on the weaknesses or strengths of one or the other, while seeking equal participation in decision making.



- b. Equity is contrary to discrimination and discretionary practices, and also to unfair competition between unequal parties.

### **3.7 TRANSPARENCY**

- a. Transparency is an essential part of democratic organization. Transparency implies clarity in rules, actions, decision making, and the presentation of results by representative and operational entities to the members of an organization or society.
- b. Lack of transparency in an organization exposes its lack of a true commitment to its own members as well as to its partners, and to the society to which it belongs.

### **3.8 TRUST**

- a. Social and economic relations should be built primarily on the basis of trust. Trust is a principle that commits the members of an organization or society (or the interactions between parties) to always act in good faith, responsibly and with a shared commitment. Trust makes it possible to create long-term social relationships and exchanges characterized by open dialogue and negotiation, without the need for intervention by authorities. The principle of trust cannot be separated from the principle of transparency
- b. Trust, as a value, is contrary to opportunism and deceitful practices aimed at personal, short-term benefit.

### **3.9 PLURALITY**

- a. Plurality implies respect for the rights of all human beings, independent of sex, ethnic or geographic origin, age, religion, political orientation, social status, sexual preference, capacities, etc.
- b. The principle of respect for plurality is violated when individuals are underestimated or discriminated against for any reason.

### **3.10 RESPECT FOR LOCAL CULTURES**

- a. The cultures, uses and customs, languages and idiosyncrasies of the communities in which families of small producers live must be respected.
- b. Respect for cultures is contrary to the imposition of cultures, religions, languages or forms of social organization.

## **4. ECONOMY**

### **4.1 DIGNIFIED LIVING**

- a. In order to have a dignified life, it is necessary to have enough healthy food and nutrition, adequate health and hygiene conditions, housing that offers the necessary protection, a complete, adequate education, sources of employment that generate sufficient income, and also access to communication media, to active social and democratic participation, to justice, and to cultural and leisure opportunities.
- b. The principle of a dignified life is contrary to a concept of development that is focused exclusively on generating economic growth, the accumulation of material property,



consumerism, the consumption of non-renewable natural resources and environmental destruction, without genuinely contributing to the physical and psychological well-being of people.

#### **4.2 SMALL-SCALE PRODUCTION**

- a. Small-scale production and trade currently generate greater social and ecological benefits for the global economy and in particular for local economies. On the one hand, they generate the most jobs in both rural and urban sectors. On the other hand, they are better adapted to the social, organizational, cultural, educational, environmental, climatic and local economic conditions. A high percentage of the revenue generated by small scale labor is reinvested in the local economy, thereby making it stronger.
- b. Small-scale production and trade are contrary to large-scale, transnational corporations that cause massive unemployment rates due to unfair competition; the destruction of local productive capacities; the generation of large flows of temporary and permanent migration; and social decay. Large-scale production and trade activities have led to environmental destruction and the destruction of small and medium-sized enterprises, generating economic nucleuses of such magnitude that they concentrate economic and political power. The benefits of large-scale production and trade activities are not generally reinvested in local areas, but rather become part of free capital that normally does not generate profits for the producers or consumers that made these activities possible.

#### **4.3 DIRECT TRADING**

- a. In order to generate more local assets and strengthen family economies, priority should be given to trade relations that are as direct as possible between producers and consumers.
- b. Direct trading contrasts greatly with excessive or abusive intermediation. Here, "excessive" refers to the intervention by many actors in commercial chains, increasing the prices of products and affecting the interests of both producers and consumers. "Abusive" intermediation occurs when the objective is to buy products as cheaply as possible, to then sell for the highest prices possible, instead of respecting the principle of assuring decent remuneration for the work invested.

#### **4.4 QUALITY**

- a. The products offered by an organization must always comply with the minimum requirements for the quality guaranteed to final consumers. The quality of a product should always be clearly agreed upon, or communicated between the involved parties. The quality of a product is a reflection of the efforts and production costs invested, and therefore product quality must be economically recognized on the market.
- b. Product quality is not usually recognized on the market. Prices are based on market fluctuations, and even respond to factors such as speculation and hoarding.



#### **4.5 SUSTAINABLE PRICES**

- a. The prices of products on the market should cover the real costs involved in their production and trade. Production costs should include decent remuneration for the labor force, and should recognize the value of efforts made by producers and organizations offering the products to take care of the environment and fulfill social responsibilities. In addition, product prices should allow for generating a margin of profit for making investments and assuring the economical sustainability and competitiveness of small producers and their organizations.
- b. The concept of sustainable prices is contrary to a system of prices defined by the ups and downs of the market and systems of premiums based on "charity" objectives.

#### **4.6 LOCAL ECONOMY**

- a. Local economies must be strengthened in order to achieve a dignified future for rural populations and society as a whole. Local opportunities for work must be created, in order to allow the population to generate an income that will make a dignified life possible. The production and exchange of products for local markets and local consumption should be promoted. This will serve to expand sources of local employment, reduce product costs, and increase the competitiveness of local products. Furthermore, it will reduce the "ecological footprint" of products by decreasing energy consumption for transportation. Also, production for local consumption is more beneficial for the food sufficiency and autonomy of local economy.
- b. Promoting local economies is contrary to promoting a global economy or a so-called "free market" that is dominated by large multinational companies and that causes economic, social and ecological imbalances. The free market generates a situation in which goods are exchanged worldwide without considering the negative economic and ecological impacts of their production and transportation, thus contributing to the destruction of local productive capacities, impoverishment of the population, social inequality, pollution and therefore, an increase in the greenhouse effect and climate change.

#### **4.7 LOCAL ADDED VALUE**

- a. To create strong local markets and a dignified future for producers, it is important that added value is generated as near as possible to the process and place of production, generating more benefits for these producers and local economies. In this way a larger part of the final value of the product remains in the region of its origin. This also allows producers to become more active players in the market, with stronger bargaining power.
- b. Failing to promote the principle of generating added value at the point of the product's origin is to limit producers to remain as merely suppliers of raw materials, with no added value, and leaving the main benefits of the product outside the area of its original production



## **5. ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH**

### **5.1 RESPECT FOR MOTHER NATURE**

- a. Caring for the environment, the flora and fauna, ecological balance, and simply "Mother Nature" or "Mother Earth" must be a basic part of any society or organization. Natural resources must be used in such a way as to not cause any harm to ecological balance. It is necessary to protect the environment and restore ecological balance where possible for the sake of future generations
- b. "Mother Nature" is not respected where there is indiscriminate use of toxic, polluting products or environmentally harmful methods in the production, processing or trading of products.

### **5.2 RESPECT FOR HEALTH**

- a. The cultivation and processing of products should not affect the health of those involved because of the use of toxic substances or working methods which entail a high risk to their health. Production processes should also avoid affecting the health of wild and domestic animals. Consumer products should not have chemical residues or other contaminants that threaten the health of consumers.
- b. The principle of caring for health is contrary to the production or use of genetically modified organisms or other toxic and pollutant products that are harmful to the health of producers and consumers