**Fair Trade in Korea**

Asia Fair Trade Network

CEO, Lee Kang Baek

My name is Kang Baek Lee and I’m a CEO of a Fair Trade organization called ‘Asia Fair trade Network’. I’m going to talk about the Fair Trade in Korea.

1. I believe Seoul is the only city in the world that has a Fair Trade shop inside the City Hall. It is called ‘Villages of the World’. Every month, each Fair Trade organization takes turn and operate Fair Trade workshops and galleries about their own products or producers they are working with. It loved by many citizens and visitors to Seoul. We have nine hundred customers every day, and it generated annual sales of approximately six hundred thousand US dollars last year.
2. Both nationally and internationally people have shown so much expectations and interests in Seoul, city of ten million people, about it becoming the largest fair trade city in the world, if it becomes a Fair Trade city. So, we tried our best to promote Fair Trade through various events.
3. We also ran ‘Fair Trade Beyond 2015’ campaign last year. Many of local leaders have followed. Many other campaigns were also conducted to raise awareness in the Fair Trade.
4. Thanks to the explosion of interest, we have organized Fair Trade educational program in schools and libraries for students. For a larger audience, we have held Fair Trade conference and international symposium as well. We have developed educational materials and have researched and studied to improve Fair Trade business in Korea.
5. Seongbuk is the first district in Seoul which announced to become a Fair Trade district. It enacted Fair Trade ordinance for the legal ground and organized the steering committee. A book cafe in the Seongbuk district office now sells Fair Trade coffee only. Many fairs were very successful. We work with network of sixty grassroot organizations in the area.
6. University students were very eager to promote the Fair Trade and organized various fun campaigns as well.
7. To spread the Fair Trade in our community, it is very important to encourage religious groups to join the campaign. Last year, Jogye Temple has announced to become the first Fair Trade temple in the world.
8. During the Fair Trade Week, we organized various events such as Korean Fair Traders campaign, film festival, photo gallery, international symposium and World Fair Trade day festival in Korea. So, 2013 was a big year for the Fair Trade in Korea.
9. KFTO is the national network of Korean Fair Trade organizations and we now have eleven members. Korean Fair Trade movement started in 2002 when BeautifulStore was established. Mr. WonSoon Park, the current mayor of Seoul, was the founder, and I was the managing director back then. Since then, some of the civic organizations started to participate in the Fair Trade. In 2011, an early form of national network was organized and became a legal entity in 2012.
10. This graph shows the growth of annual Fair Trade sales in Korea. It has been growing rapidly
11. Seoul is the capital of Korea and it has a population of 10 million. Incheon is the city of 3 million people and the third largest city in Korea. Those two cities are in the process of making themselves Fair Trade cities. What makes Seoul, which is trying to become a Fair Trade city so special is not just that it could be the biggest Fair Trade city in the world, but it could also be the best example of ‘Public-Private Partnership’ for Fair Trade Town movement. Many of the FTOs in Korea started as a part of major civil social organizations, meaning the strong grassroots movement. And Seoul metropolitan government is making both financial and administrative supports.
12. We are planning to make half of districts in Seoul a Fair Trade district by 2016 and announce that / Seoul has achieved a Fair Trade city status.

1. Next, I’m going to share our future plans with you.
2. On the World Fair Trade Day, we plan to engage fifty thousand people in the event nationally and operate the Korean style Fair Traders called BOBU. But the events were canceled due to the tragic accident of Sewol ferry disaster.
3. Fair Trade should go with the good education. KFTO members operate education programs for diverse audiences such as students and government officials. For example, AFN with Fair Trade academy, iCOOP and Dure APNet with Fair Trade supporters, BeautifulCoffee with Fair Trade ambassadors. IFTO, Incheon council of Fair Trade Organizations, are doing well in terms of education. IFTO operated 2 Fair Trade campaign programs with 80 people and there are 20 standing Fair Trade lecturers who went to schools to teach Fair Trade to more than 2,000 students. Incheon also organized the Fair Trade promotion booth during 2014 Asian Games. There will be a air Trade cinema talk in November as well, so go and find out more details with IFTO.
4. The main idea of Fair Trade All Day is that ‘Today, I’m going to have a cup of Fair Trade coffee in the morning, have a cup of Fair Trade tea in the afternoon, buy a Fair Trade gift for my friend, enjoy Fair Trade snacks and wear Fair Trade clothes.’ We hope to engage 20,000 people in this event and spend the whole day using Fair Trade products.
5. We plan to make as many Fair Trade churches, cathedrals and temples as possible.
6. Here, we are all gathered for WFTO ASIA Seoul conference. It is the first time that WFTO ASIA conference is held in the consumer country. Seoul Declaration will be announced during the conference and it will be a great chance to raise awareness on the Fair Trade in Korea.
7. In cooperation with Korea Fair Trade Town Steering Committee, we are going to make more cities to join the Fair Trade town movement.
8. We are planning to work with citizens to start asking for the Fair Trade products in cafes and shops in their communities.
9. In order to expand the Fair Trade market, it is very important to work with Social Economy and to build a concrete ecosystem for Social Economy. Now, policy making for Social Economy is actively discussed between both the ruling and the opposition parties. There are competitive activities among many parties: the ruling Saenuri party, the opposition New Politics Alliance for Democracy, the minor opposition Justice partis, and they are all trying to enact the basic framework act for social economy. Seoul metropolitan government stands out in building an ecosystem for the Social Economy. The main principles are to establish an infrastructure for a cooperative economy, to have a good Public-Private Partnership and to establish a common property in community. Seoul spent approximately 48 million US dollars (507억원) last year to purchase the Social Economy products through public procurement. Also, Seoul is pushing for ordinance amendment for public procurement which can reflect social values rather than the price. As of the end of January this year, there were 1,871 social economy organizations in Seoul and about 300,000 people involved in the business.
10. Fair Trade organizations need to be innovative, so that it can be competitive in the market and to be able to change the market. We need to prove that the fair business can also be successful. For that, we are going to establish the strategy in a national level.
11. Fair Trade is a global movement. Starting from a small number of activists and entrepreneurs in 1940s, it became a movement deeply trusted by producers and consumers together. The global Fair Trade volume exceed 8 trillion Won and the consumers’ trust in the system is getting stronger. In the past, the initiative was seen only in major Western countries, but now as we are witnessing today, Fair Trade is now getting stronger in Asia.

Fair Trade not only organizes farmers and producers, it also empowers the the consumers. Fair Trade town movement, started in 2000 in a small community called Garstang in North West England, amplified the voices of conscious consumers by organizing them to take small actions together. Now, decision makers in local governments and business leaders are listening to the voices of Fair Trade activists demanding changes to make our world fairer.

Role of Korea in Asia is getting important in Asia’s economy. Trading relationships between the Asian countries is increasing and some businesses move their production site to other Asian countries. Consumers’ role to demand fair practices of these businesses are crucial in sharing the prosperity. By prioritizing the products of business who respect the rights of workers and producers, consumers can prevent farmers from suffering from unfair rules of the game. By choosing the Fair Trade, consumers are taking small part in changing big pictures.

If Seoul becomes the Fair Trade city as announced in 2012 by Mr. Park, it will be the biggest Fair Trade city not only in Asia, but in the world. It will not only influence the decision makers to make fairer rules for everyone, but inspire business leaders to share the prosperity rather than maximizing profit.

It is very inspiring that Fair Trade town movement has been both top-down and bottom-up in Seoul. It makes Fair Trade campaign even stronger. We appreciate the opportunity we have been given and try our best to realize the ‘business that changes business’, ‘business that changes the market’. Thank you so much for listening.