

## Alternative Trade Mandate – time for a new vision

*The present world's corporate trade model is failing people, communities, and the environment*



**Transparency** should be at the heart of all Trade policies. In addition to a genuine and continuous participation process as Brexit approaches, the UK government must assess the impacts of its actions and make the results public, so that citizens can make informed choices.

Organisations representing farmers, trade unions, human rights activists, environmentalists, trade networks and development workers have come together to develop the **Alternative Trade Mandate**. This calls for an overhaul of the trade regime – one that leads to real workable alternatives, where trade works for everyone, and the environment. Unlike current trade negotiations – held behind closed doors with privileged access for multinational corporations – consultations for this mandate have been participatory and transparent, and have highlighted areas of trade in need of reform.

**Trade should be about exchange**, with ecologically and culturally distinct regions equitably sharing their products, skills and creativity. In recent decades, TRADE has become less about exchange of goods and more about eliminating social and environmental safeguards in pursuit of corporate profit. This ever-quickenning race to the bottom has destroyed lives, livelihoods acommunities. TRADE is being used as a system of control by the powerful, and to promote the specific interests and wealth of the few.

### **Food and how we produce it**

Our globalised food system is failing our farmers, our health, and the environment. Moreover, mass food production by powerful corporations has failed to eliminate hunger for millions of people. Liberalised trade and lack of market regulation have led to farmers worldwide selling at prices below the cost of production, making farm livelihoods unsustainable.

### **To bring about change our UK government and EU legislators need to:**

- respect the right to food and ‘food sovereignty’, meaning that people in Europe and the Global South have the right to define and control their own local food systems, choose what they eat, and make sure their community’s food is healthy and accessible to everyone.
- move away from multilateral and bilateral free trade rules that distort prices for farmers and lead to unequal access to natural resources,
- allow trading partners in developing countries to impose tariffs and quotas on imports, especially where they are designed to protect food security and farmers’ livelihoods and support safeguard measures to protect local markets.
- ensure greater self-sufficiency in products that can be produced in Europe, especially protein and oil crops as alternatives for imports of (GMO)

soybeans, palm oil and biofuels (these commodities have particularly devastating impacts on small farmers and the environment in developing countries).

- eliminate imports of biofuels to the EU and abandon its biofuels directive replacing it with other measures, such as “renewables”, designed to reduce demand for fossil fuels in Europe
- review policies on imported food products that cannot be produced in the EU (e.g. coffee and cocoa). Policies must ensure they are sustainably produced and that a fair price is paid to producers.
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- review policy on imported food products that cannot be produced in the EU (e.g. coffee and cocoa). It must ensure they are sustainably produced and that a fair price is paid to producers. It needs to increase the use of “aid” budgets to help developing countries implement high environmental and social exports standards, ensuring local livelihoods and food security are not compromised.
- bring investment in food production and purchase of farmland in developing countries, (Land Grabbing), which has hugely damaging impacts on food production, livelihoods and the environment in those countries, under new, binding investment agreements with human rights obligations.