

The World Banana Forum (WBF)

Working together for sustainable banana production and trade

Report of the Twenty-First Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC21)

Attended by the Steering Committee members and Working Group coordinators

17-18 November 2021

Online sessions

Wednesday, 17 November 2021

1. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat

Mr Pascal Liu, FAO Team Leader on Responsible Global Value Chains, began the session by welcoming all participants to the Twenty-First Meeting of the Steering Committee (SC21). He informed attendees that, due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it was once again not possible to hold the SC21 in person. He congratulated members for the forthcoming 12th anniversary of the WBF, as well as for the progress that has been made towards a more sustainable banana industry. He then provided an overview of the current context and challenges for the banana sector, including the decline in global exports, as well as increased freight costs and inflation, which have resulted in greater pressure on producers and wages of workers. He further stressed the need for continued collaboration amongst supply chain actors to share the costs associated with ongoing price increases, in order to ensure a fair distribution of value along the chain.

Mr Liu then mentioned additional challenges faced by the industry, such as the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe, the TR4 outbreak in Latin America, impacts of climate change, and the increasing shift towards mandatory social and environmental due diligence requirements. He concluded by highlighting the opportunities presented by the SC meeting for discussing the recent activities of the working groups (WGs), as well as defining the next steps under the WGs and SC priority areas. Mr Prada introduced presenters and facilitated the sessions.

2. Welcome by the SC/AB co-chair and presentation of expected outputs and objectives

Ms Christelle Lasme (Compagnie Fruitière), co-chair of the WBF SC and Advisory Board (AB), began her intervention by thanking the members of the Secretariat for their dedication and ongoing support to WBF activities, especially during this difficult period caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. She then presented the expected outputs and objectives of the first day of the meeting and concluded by encouraging WBF members to actively participate in the session.

3. Overview of recent activities of the WBF's Working Groups and Overview of Thematic Sessions

Working Group 01 (WG01) on Sustainable Production Systems and Environmental Impact

- **TR4-related activities**

Mr Matheus Lima (FAO) provided a brief overview of TR4-related activities conducted by the WBF Secretariat since the SC20, which has included support to FAO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC) on the development of a concept note for the regional project in the Andean Community of Nations (CAN), in response to the recent outbreak in Peru. The inputs provided to the document were based on the WBF's Global Proposal on TR4 and tailored for the Andean context.

In addition, following the decisions taken in previous SC meeting to postpone the WBF Global Conference and instead conduct a series of technical webinars on relevant topics for the industry, the WBF Secretariat – together with RLC and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) – organized a series of technical webinars on TR4, which took place in July 2021.

The first technical webinar, held on 20 July, was focused on [Addressing the Global Knowledge gap on Diagnostic tools, Protocols and their applications for Fusarium Wilt of Musa Tropical Race 4](#). The event aimed to provide clarity on a number of issues and challenges faced during the diagnosis of TR4, as well as highlight opportunities for the enhancement of early detection systems. The event counted on the participation of global TR4 experts from various research institutes worldwide.

The second event was a three-day online conference from 27-29 July titled: [FAO Conference - Capacity Building and Awareness Raising in Response to the Threat of Fusarium Wilt of Banana Tropical Race 4](#). The sessions counted on a global audience, and covered a variety of topics related to the disease, including: how to estimate the economic impact of an incursion; surveillance techniques; biosecurity measures; public awareness and communication; promising resistant/tolerant varieties; remote sensing technologies; mobile applications; and, procedures for the safe introduction of banana germplasm.



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Certificates of attendance were delivered, and the reports and recordings will be available soon.

Mr Lima then mentioned that the Secretariat has also uploaded a series of multimedia materials prepared by National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs) and members of the task force on the TR4 Global Network ([TR4GN](#)) website. He then announced that, due to the high demand for updated information regarding tolerant and resistant varieties to TR4, the Secretariat is planning to organize another webinar, with the tentative title: *Tolerant and Resistant Banana Varieties - From Selection to Market Demand*.

He concluded by providing a summary of additional TR4-related activities presented during the WG01 Thematic Session that was held on 26 October.

- **Agroecology**

Mr Lima then presented a short summary of the WBF's work on agroecological practices. This has included a series of bilateral calls and discussions with the FAO Global Soil Partnership (GSP), with the goal of discovering common interests and synergies. He then provided an overview of the GSP initiative, as presented during the WG01 Thematic Session.

- **Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF) Project**

Mr Lima provided an overview of the different phases of the project since its inception, including the milestones and achievements of the project, and announced the expected activities to be carried out during its third phase. The third phase of the CWF project will focus on expanding the outreach of the tool by providing more trainings and capacity building sessions on the use of the tool, as well as updates and improvements to its design.

Mr Lima announced that the Secretariat has finalized the hiring process of Mr Marco Colangeli, a consultant with extensive experience in agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting. Mr Colangeli has worked on the revision of the tool's functionalities, comparing it to other tools available on the market, and preparing a roadmap for the implementation of improvements on the design of the tool and on the training materials. The recommended modifications were based on user input received during the validation sessions as well as desk research.

For more information on the discussions held during the Thematic Session of the WG01 regarding TR4, agroecology and the CWF project, refer to the dedicated sections below, as well as the Summary Report of the WG01 Thematic Session.

Working Group 02 (WG02) on Distribution of Value

- **Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production and Distribution of Value**

Ms Carolina Dawson (CIRAD) briefly presented the main goal of the *Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production and Distribution of Value in the Export Banana Industry*, namely to enable the understanding, comparison and analysis of modelled estimates for the distribution of value, costs, taxes and margins at the different stages of the export banana value chains.

The project is conceptualized in five stages with the *Exploratory Phase* (Stages 1 and 2) currently being financed by the French Ministry of Agriculture and FAO. The first stage consists in creating the basis of the Observatory —by developing the concept and methodology in partnership with the Observatory Committee (OC)— while the second stage consists in applying the methodology in a pilot study consisting of four countries (2 producing countries and 2 consumer countries).

The process carried out for the development of the methodology consisted in four main steps, namely: 1) identification of sources of information; 2) definition of perimeter and sub-perimeters; 3) building estimations; 4) display of results. Ms Dawson provided a detailed description of the activities conducted under each of the steps. For the data collection process, CIRAD and BASIC have identified public data sources, conducted interviews with key experts to confirm or deny the reliability of the sources, and counter-verified the obtained data through bilateral interviews with key experts and professionals.

The perimeter of the study covers four countries: Colombia and Ecuador, which represent the upstream end of banana value chains, and France and Germany, which constitute the downstream end. As per the decisions taken by the OC, the Observatory will: cover every stage from production up to retail, but will only consider exported fresh bananas in conventional production systems – with or without Rainforest Alliance certification – that are sold in the retail sector in France and Germany.



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Ms Marion Feige-Muller (BASIC) presented the detailed composition of the costs, taxes and margins from production to retail that were considered in the pilot study and announced that they will be made public once validated by the OC. Regarding the display of results, Ms Feige-Muller provided an example of expected results, considering the French banana market, but stressed that the actual results are still to be validated by the OC at the end of November. She presented the figures for the French market highlighting the different origins of fresh bananas commercialized in the country and underscoring the importance of Ecuador and Colombia as responsible for 18% of overall supplies (before re-export).

Ms Feige-Muller presented the different categories of bananas identified for the French retail market, including low range, mid-range, French origin and certified (organic and or Fairtrade). According to the literature and consultations with key stakeholders throughout the study, bananas from Ecuador and Colombia are sold in the low-range and mid-range categories. She then presented a visualization of the intermediary results considering the distribution of value along the chain for the bananas sold in the mid-range segment in an aggregated manner.

Ms Feige-Muller provided an overview of the detailed segmentation of costs, margins and taxes, considering an ideal case for bananas produced in Latin America. She highlighted that, for many reasons, it has been difficult to obtain information with the level of detail required to build dynamic estimations for production and export. She then presented the different cases that were analyzed. The cases in France considered low- and mid-range bananas, while in Germany, the cases considered were low-, mid- and premium range bananas. She highlighted that for the low-range bananas, there were cases where the price was so low that there were no margins for exporters and retailers, and other cases where there was a margin for the importer coupled with a promotional strategy resulting in a negative margin for the retailer.

She then discussed the differences in market strategies used by the consumer countries considered in the pilot study, and concluded by restating the difficulties faced to access key information, particularly for the upstream part of the value chain.

Mr Victor Prada (FAO) then informed the audience that the other activities conducted under the Working Group 02, such as the declaration on living wages, would be presented and discussed during the second day of the SC21.

Working Group 03 (WG03) on Labour Rights and Other Workplace Issues

- **Occupational health and safety (OHS)**

Ms Camila Reinhardt Hurtado (FAO) presented a brief overview of the main activities conducted on occupational health and safety, which was a main component of the discussions that took place during the Thematic Session of the WG03, particularly with regards to the revision of the Banana Occupational Health and Safety Initiative (BOHESI) manual for Cameroon.

BOHESI activities in Ghana

On 28 and 29 July 2021, the Banana Producers' Association (BPA) in Ghana facilitated a two-day BOHESI workshop, with support from FAO and Fairtrade Africa. The workshop aimed to provide a clear understanding on the health and safety issues in the banana industry in Ghana, including gender-related OHS issues, as well as develop a gender-responsive action plan on OHS.

The topics discussed during the workshop included: the impacts of COVID-19 on BPA members, the Ghana Occupational Safety and Health Bill, violence and harassment in the world of work, COVID-19 in the context of risk assessment and risk management, and health and safety activities conducted by BPA members post BOHESI manual launch. The workshop concluded with the development of an OHS action plan and stakeholder commitments to ensure the continuity of BOHESI activities in the country.

Revision of the BOHESI Cameroon manual

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado reminded participants of the efforts undertaken by IUF and Banana Link, with support from Mr Peter Hurst, ex-ILO health and safety specialist, to review and propose improvements to the BOHESI health and safety manual for Cameroon, which was produced under the coordination of Banana Link. The latest version of the revised manual was shared with WG03 members in early October for their review, and a detailed summary of the improvements suggested were presented by IUF and Banana Link during the Thematic Session of the WG03. The proposed amendments were well received by WG03 members, and were further presented in more detail to SC members during the second day of the SC21, for final endorsement by the WBF (for more details, refer to Day 2 below).



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Ms Reinhardt Hurtado highlighted that, in line with the objectives of the BOHESI initiative, BOHESI activities and manuals should be tailored to country-specific contexts and further entail multi-stakeholder engagement of local industry actors, particularly in the review and adoption of the manual. Thus, while WBF members can endorse the revisions made to the BOHESI Cameroon manual, it is important to facilitate discussions with local industry stakeholders for the approval and adoption of the manual, which should be taken into account when defining the next steps for BOHESI Cameroon activities.

- **Gender Equity Task Force (GE-TF) activities and priority areas**

- Activities on gender equity in Ghana and Colombia

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado presented a summary of ongoing activities on gender equity in Ghana and Colombia following an amendment made to the Letter of Agreement (LoA) between FAO and Fairtrade Germany, due to the need to postpone the International Meeting on Gender Equity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new activities under the LoA amendment entail a transfer of learnings from the GE-TF webinar series to local contexts, with two main components: 1) the organization and facilitation of a series of training and awareness raising activities for the three main banana producing companies in Ghana on issues of women's health and safety, maternity rights, violence and harassment, as well as female leadership, and (2) a program on the gender pay gap in the banana sector in Colombia, with the objective to deepen understanding on the extent, causes and possible solutions to gender pay gap in banana hired labour settings.

- Overview of GE-TF webinar series

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado then provided an overview of the GE-TF webinar series, which has been coordinated together with Fairtrade Germany through the LoA. The first two webinars focused on the topics: "[Fostering Women's employment opportunities through empowerment](#)" and "[Violence and Harassment in the World of Work – Tools and Approaches for Addressing Key Challenges in the Banana Industry](#)". The reports for both webinars are available [online](#) in English, French and Spanish. The third and final webinar of the 2021 series will focus on the topic, "[Bananas, Business and Gender - Making company risk-based due diligence work for women in the banana supply chain](#)", and will be held on 23 November.

- Guidelines on healthy and safe employment of women workers in Latin America

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided a brief update on the work done together with Banana Link under an LoA signed in 2020, where FAO commissioned the adaptation of the BOHESI gender guidelines — originally in Ghana— to the Latin American context. The document has had to go through a long process of revisions, and given the recommendations and suggestions provided for the BOHESI manual in Cameroon, a final review of the guidelines, to be done by an OHS specialist, is currently being explored. Due to the delays, it is expected that the guidelines will be published in early 2022.

- **Labour rights and other workplace issues**

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided a summary of the presentation that was provided by representatives of the OECD Global Deal initiative during the Thematic Session of the WG03, which highlighted a series of online resources developed by the Global Deal – together with the ILO – including e-learning toolkits on how to strengthen social dialogue and sound industrial relations.

4. Session on Climate Change and the WBF

Mr Lima provided an overview of the activities carried out by the WBF under the carbon and water footprint (CWF) project, highlighting the importance of these achievements and innovations for the future of the industry, particularly with regards to improving efficiency in the use of natural resources, as well as for the adaptation of producers to the forthcoming due diligence legislations in Europe. He then briefly mentioned the next steps under the third phase of the project.

- Project on Carbon and Water Footprint (CWF) in the Banana Industry

Mr Marco Colangeli (FAO) outlined the work that has been done in preparation for the project's third phase. A thorough examination of the tool, as well as the related training materials, has been conducted. This assessment included a study and evaluation of CWF methodology for calculations and training materials, as well as of the tool's accuracy and comprehensiveness through a comparison with similar tools. It also consisted of the compilation of lessons learned.

He emphasized that the trainings were comprehensive, well-planned and executed, and well-received by the practitioners.



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As a consequence of the successful results of the capacity-building sessions, it was decided to expand the trainings to include other countries and conduct more validation sessions. Mr Colangeli further mentioned the addition of collaborative group work activities and trainings on land-use changes and announced that the project's third phase will produce stand-alone video courses that can be used by members to learn how to use the tool independently.

Mr Colangeli then presented the findings of the CWF tool's evaluation and comparison to other tools available on the market. This investigation revealed the CWF tool's capabilities while also identifying areas to be improved in its future phase. Additional types of results visualization, such as histograms and interactive graphs, will be incorporated in the user interface, and the data downloading process will be simplified. In terms of GHG calculations, the new phase will allow for the addition of new inputs and materials (such as pesticides and fertilizers), as well as the inclusion of a land-use change model among potential emissions sources. It will also integrate other enhancements suggested by participants during trainings and validation sessions. The tool and training materials will also be translated into English.

Mr Colangeli then presented the results of real-world case studies on carbon footprint measurements in banana plantations, which revealed that nitrogen-based fertilizers, as well as stationary and equipment combustion (derived from aerial fumigation), were the primary sources of GHG emissions. In efforts to reduce emissions, a number of potential actions were identified, including optimizing nitrogen (N) application rates and timings, as well as application techniques (e.g. the use of inhibitors and slow-release fertilizers). Other actions included the use of small electric-powered drones, solar panels, and wastewater system installation, among others.

Mr Miguel Vallejo (Gestarse) presented the milestones achieved since the project inception in 2017, as well as the roadmap for the implementation of the third phase of the project which will be launched in January 2022. The initiative, led by the World Banana Forum with continued support from Gestarse, will entail four main activities: 1) expansion and translation of the automated tool; 2) development of new capacity building materials (videos) and update of manuals; 3) online training sessions in eight countries (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Panama, Belize and Caribbean Islands); and 4) online validation with countries that participated in the training sessions.

Mr Prada then invited members of the SC and WGs to indicate if they would like to participate in capacity building sessions, with the aim of learning how to use the tool in their farms.

Mr Luud Clercx (Agrofair) mentioned that there are many standards for carbon neutral certification and suggested that FAO assess to which extent the tool complies with the different standards.

Mr Vallejo mentioned that the technical sources used in the development of the CWF methodology and the tool was based on the most recognized norms and standards used worldwide. For the development of the GHG emissions inventory, ISO 14064 and the GHG Protocol were used. During the validation process, the tool results were compared to those of the San Pablo farm (part of COORBANA), that has been certified as carbon neutral for many years.

Mr Prada acknowledged the positive impact of the CWF project on WBF member activities and highlighted the increased interest of several stakeholders with regards to this work, including FAO, which is providing subsidies for the third phase of the project. Due to this success and increased interest, FAO is also considering to replicate the initiative for other commodities.

Mr Liu acknowledged the diversity in methodologies and standards for measuring and reducing carbon emissions, as well as achieving carbon neutrality. He mentioned that the commitments made by governments before and during the COP26 Summit are insufficient to avoid a rise of temperature below +1.5 C by the end of the century and revert a climate catastrophe, and further highlighted the importance of the agri-food sector with regards to global carbon emissions, accounting for one third of total emissions worldwide. He thus stressed the need for having voluntary initiatives or 'coalitions of the willing' to complement the commitments made by governments. He recognized the increased awareness among food companies and their pledges for carbon neutrality in the sector, but also highlighted the issues associated with such pledges, particularly regarding the difficulties in monitoring Scope 3 emissions¹ along complex supply chains. He then highlighted the lack of a dedicated multi-stakeholder platform focused on reducing emissions for the agri-food sector, and emphasized the need for such collaboration mechanism.

¹ Scope 3 includes all indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain (excluding electricity and heat use).



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In this regard, Mr Liu announced that FAO is currently discussing the establishment of such a platform, which would aim to, *inter alia*: coordinate efforts and facilitate collaboration among various stakeholder groups along dedicated value chains to create synergies and maximize the efficiency of initiatives; facilitate access of operators to reliable technical and scientific expertise; facilitate access to finance; support investments for the required transitions; and build consensus on the appropriate strategies, good practices and methodologies to be adopted by the operators of global supply chains. He concluded by mentioning that the idea would be to start with industries where collaboration already exists and mentioned that the banana industry could be one of the first to be included in the proposed platform.

Mr Clercx supported the concerns raised by Mr Liu, emphasizing the opportunities provided by the WBF to work together and give the message that moving towards carbon neutrality is possible. He then proposed that the WBF Secretariat produce a concept note in this direction, to be presented during the SC22.

Mr Liu welcomed the proposal and mentioned that, if there is interest from the other WBF members, this plan could be included in the proposals for the creation of this multi-stakeholder platform.

Agroecology

Mr Lima presented a brief summary of the activities carried out by the Secretariat on the topic of agroecology. He mentioned that agroecology practices can support the transition to more sustainable farms and the achievement of carbon neutrality in field operations. He then briefly summarized the presentation carried out by the Global Soil Partnership during the Thematic Session of the WG01, and highlighted the series of biological, physical and chemical indicators developed by the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) and the Secretariat of the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) to support decision-makers in assessing the sustainability of agricultural soils and adapting agricultural practices.

Mr Lima then presented a proposal for conducting a case study — together with GSP — on the potential of carbon sequestration of banana soils. The objective would be to merge the recent information on soils provided by FAO geospatial databases, such as the Global Soil Organic Sequestration Potential Map (GSOCseq), with the Map of Global Distribution of Banana Plantations developed under the BananEx initiative. He then provided an overview of other potential activities related to agroecology, including the sustainable management of fertilizers and biodiversity management for pest suppression. He concluded by announcing that the XII International Symposium on Banana, focused on celebrating banana organic production, will take place in August 2022, and will count on the participation of several WBF members. Mr Nicolas Roux (Bioversity International – CIAT) announced that the deadline for submissions of abstracts for the event has been extended and thus invited members interested in participating to send their abstracts before 20 December.

Mr Paul Lievens (Banana Link) then provided a summary of the activities Banana Link aims to implement in the field of agroecology. He mentioned the discussions held with the Center of Agroecology, Water and Resilience of the Coventry University, focused on developing a baseline study of agroecological production in the banana export sector. The study would provide an overview of the current nature and extent of agroecological banana production, as well as identify current initiatives in different geographical regions and climate zones. This information would be useful to support the debate on how the sector can move towards a more sustainable future. Mr Peter Hurst (IUF) mentioned that IUF is interested in cooperating with different stakeholders in order to gather information and support agroecology at scale.

Mr Clercx mentioned that there is a series of recent and relevant publications and literature regarding agroecological practices in banana plantations, which he has also shared with the Secretariat. He suggested for members to analyze this material carefully in order to prioritize activities on agroecology and decide on the next steps. Mr Prada acknowledged the support of Mr Clercx and suggested to make the agroecological publications available for all the members by updating the agroecological webpage on the WBF website.

Decisions:

- Analyze recent literature on agroecological practices in banana plantations in order to prioritize activities and next steps under this area of work.
- Prepare a concept note to create a multi-stakeholder platform focused on reducing GHG emissions for the agri-food sector, with banana being one of the first commodities concerned.

5. Conclusions of Day 1

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Mr Liu concluded the session, outlining the main discussions held and decisions taken. He then delivered the closing remarks, thanking all of those involved in the session, including the attendees, interpreters, technicians and WBF Secretariat staff, and invited participants to actively participate during the subsequent sessions on Day 2 of the SC21.

Thursday, 18 November 2021

6. Welcome by the WBF Secretariat

Mr Pascal Liu (FAO) began the session by welcoming all participants to the second day of the SC21. He then presented the housekeeping rules of the session.

7. Welcome by the SC/AB co-chair and presentation of expected outputs and objectives

Mr Andrew Biles, SC and AB co-chair, also welcomed members to the session. He then presented an overview of the current global situation in the banana industry, highlighting the difficulties faced and the challenges ahead. He mentioned the hardships caused by COVID-19, inflationary costs, and the potential increased interest rates and instability caused by polarized politics.

Mr Biles then pointed out that climate change and population growth — despite being global challenges — also bring opportunities for the banana industry. He mentioned that the banana market and industry are currently functioning under good conditions with global supply matching the export demand. There is stability in imported volumes in North America and Europe and an increase in imports in newest markets where the population is growing faster. Mr Biles also emphasized the risks posed by TR4 and highlighted the need to find solutions to tackle aggressive plant diseases such as Black Sigatoka and Bunchy Top Virus, in order to reduce the use of pesticides and minimize worker exposure to chemicals, but also abide to forthcoming regulations. He then concluded by presenting the objectives, expected outcomes and the agenda of the session, and encouraged members to participate actively during the meeting.

8. Potential Fourth Global Conference of the WBF and WBF Thematic Webinars

Potential Fourth Global Conference of the WBF

Mr Liu highlighted the value of having an in-person conference, stressing the importance of such events in enabling an environment for both formal and informal discussions – also during coffee breaks and between sessions – where new ideas that can benefit the sector can emerge. He acknowledged the long road ahead regarding the sanitary situation worldwide and the forthcoming fourth wave of COVID-19 in Europe.

He informed participants that Germany is still interested to host the conference. However, if the sanitary situation continues to worsen, it will not be feasible to hold an in-person international event. Mr Liu then mentioned that recent epidemiological studies and expert forecasts indicate that the pandemic could potentially be brought under control by spring of next year. This would mean that, if no further outbreaks of vaccine-resistant variants emerge, the global conference could be held starting in the summer of next year, at the earliest. He stressed, however, the uncertainty regarding the situation in the near-future and proposed to continue monitoring the situation very closely — as decided in previous SC meetings — and tentatively plan to hold the global conference in November 2022.

Mr Biles suggested that the global conference could be planned in order to coincide with the Fruit Attraction Fair, which is expected to be held in Madrid, Spain, from 4-6 October 2022. Mr Liu welcomed the suggestion and stated that this option could be considered in order to explore synergies between the two events. However, he also reminded members that when it was proposed the past to hold the WBF global conference back-to-back with Fruit Logistica, several private sector members raised concerns regarding the significant time requirements this would impose and the difficulties of being able to participate in both events. Mr Victor Prada (FAO) then suggested the possibility of having a WBF panel during the Fruit Attraction Fair, as was done in Fruit Logistica, in case there is interest from members and the health situation has improved.

Mr Jennie Coleman (Equifruit) also suggested to explore the possibility of having a virtual conference in case the situation is not under control by May 2022.

Technical Webinars of the World Banana Forum

Mr Prada presented an overview of the webinars organized by the World Banana Forum throughout 2021 until November. A



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total of 7 online events were held, including three sessions on gender-related issues, four sessions on TR4, and two sessions on the Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production. He highlighted the experience accumulated by the Secretariat in organizing online events and underlined the success of the webinars, especially on TR4 where the sessions counted on more than 1,200 registered participants. As a result of the high number of registrations, the Secretariat had to update its Zoom license to allow more than 500 simultaneous participants in the meeting, as well as enable live streaming via Youtube.

Mr Prada then presented a list of potential WBF webinars to be organized in 2022, including: 1) TR4-Resistant Banana Varieties; 2) Plastic Disposal and Alternatives; 3) Webinars on Gender; 4) Carbon and Water Footprint in the Banana Industry; 5) Digital Innovation in the Banana Industry; 6) Observatory on Costs of Sustainable Production; 7) MRL- EU Regulations, new molecules in banana production and support to producers, and 8) Farm-to-Fork Strategy/Green Deal and impacts on producers.

Mr Mariano Jimenez (CORBANA) commended the efforts of the WBF Secretariat. He further mentioned that CORBANA is in agreement with the proposed topics and eager to support the realization of the webinars. Mr Jimenez suggested to include presentations regarding TR4-Resistant Bananas obtained by CRISPR/CAS9 and gene-editing techniques, as well as to enable discussions on the distribution of value across the global value chain.

Mr Prada welcomed the suggestions provided and mentioned that the topic will be included in the webinar on resistant varieties. He also acknowledged the proposal related to discussions on the distribution of value, and mentioned that this could be presented together with the Webinar on the Observatory.

Mr Leonardo Ferrer (GLOBALG.A.P.) highlighted the importance of mainstreaming biosecurity measures at farm level in order to contain the spread of TR4, especially with small producers.

Ms Jennie Coleman (Equifruit) proposed a webinar to publicize and discuss the WBF's Declaration on Living Wages, with the objective of engaging a broader audience and non-members of the World Banana Forum, particular from North America.

Ms Esther Peralta (FAO) commended the efforts of FAO/RLC and the WBF in holding the FAO Conference on TR4 and encouraged this continued partnership. She added that biosecurity and risk management are still high on the agendas of producing countries and that there is a need to increase the resilience of producers, together with other value chain actors. Mr Prada informed that the activities of the Observatory aim to shed light on the costs associated with the implementation of biosecurity measures in farms.

Decisions:

- Continue monitoring the sanitary situation and tentatively plan to organize the global conference in November 2022, to be confirmed during the SC22.
- Proceed with the organization of proposed webinars in 2022.
- Continue the partnership with FAO/RLC when organizing webinars of the TR4GN.

9. Special session on Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4

Mr Ricardo Solano Morales (SENASA) presented an overview of the phytosanitary state of *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *cubense* Tropical race 4 (Foc TR4) in Peru

The pest was detected in the northern part of the country, near the Chira River basin located, which is located close the Ecuadorian border. The specific challenges related to the potential spread of the disease include: 1) the extensive use of banana vegetative materials in the preparation of traditional dishes, which implies an extensive transport of banana leaves across the country; 2) the location of the outbreak, which was detected under an irrigation area with shared canals; 3) the movement of animals, including insects, which are frequent in the affected area; 4) the scattered dispersion of small plots; 5) the shared harvest systems; and 6) the deeply rooted customs, such as the use of horses for transport across farms.

He mentioned that experts consider that the outbreak in Peru was independent of the outbreak that occurred in Colombia in 2019. However, Peru has decreed a phytosanitary alert in the country since the presence of TR4 was detected in Colombia, and after the confirmation of the presence of the disease in Peru, the Ministry of Agriculture has decreed an emergency alert.

Mr Morales stated that Piura, the region where Foc TR4 was detected, is the area dedicated to the production of bananas for the international market and further stressed that the spread of the disease could affect the food security of the country since the banana is one of the most important sources of carbohydrates for the Amazonian communities.

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A timeline of activities carried out by SENASA since the suspicion of TR4 in the country in March 2021 and later its confirmation in April was then presented. SENASA has carried out detections of the disease and genome sequencing. The outbreak was detected in 7 sectors of the Chira basin and comprised 26 farmers with a total affected area of 74.80 ha. The zone is classified as coast desert, which has benefits for the containment of the disease and the implementation of quarantine methods. Containment activities carried out in the affected areas include: elimination of the crop, implementation of a treated plastic cover, isolation of the area, establishment of biosecurity protocols, capacity building of banana producers, and signalization of the area. The quarantine control was established at national level with inspection points and disinfection rings. When banana vegetative materials are found, they are seized and destroyed.

He then presented the efforts carried out by SENASA regarding communication and awareness raising, as well as its efforts to participate in and support joint activities at international, national and local level related to TR4. He concluded by sharing the results of a simulation of the potential dispersion of FoC in the region, highlighting the high-risk zones in the country, as well as presenting the forthcoming research projects to be carried out by SENASA and its partners.

Mr Edgar Monge (Tesco) asked if there is any official directive regarding the authorization of banana export for the affected areas. Mr Morales replied that, since the fruits cannot spread the disease, the exports were not affected. Mr Jimenez then asked if SENASA was able to identify the origin of the outbreak and the first farm affected. Mr Morales replied that studies indicate that the outbreak did not have any links to the outbreak Colombia and that all affected areas were mapped and georeferenced. Mr Jimenez then asked if there are controls on the incoming containers from Asia, to which Mr Morales replied that the affected region does not have big imports but rather acts more as an exporting region.

Ms Sabine Altendorf (FAO) asked if there is any study available regarding the economic impacts of different scenarios related to the potential spread of the disease. Mr Morales replied that the simulations were developed based on the movement of products and persons and modelled with data from the agricultural census and SENASA databases. He then added that depending on the level of the spread, the impact would not only economic but also social, due to many families depend on bananas for their subsistence.

Ms Esther Peralta (FAO) then shared the latest TR4 developments and initiatives in Latin America that have been carried out by FAO RLC. Various regional workshops and webinars have been held by FAO in Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with the WBF, IPPC, RPPO, and other partner organizations. In addition, technical exchanges between the NPPOs of five countries have been organized, which have focused on exchanging experiences, processes and protocols on TR4. She praised the efforts taken to generate a set of publications and outreach materials, such as an e-learning course on phytosanitary risk and management, which is scheduled to be launched in November 2021. Ms Peralta also highlighted RLC's work in assisting nations in the delivery of diagnostic and biosecurity kits, as well as the formulation of National Action Plans for the disease.

She then provided an overview of the technical project proposal developed for the Andean region by RLC, the WBF Secretariat, Bioersity International-CIAT, and the Andean countries. The proposal is divided in five components which together aim to: 1) enhance comprehensive risk management capabilities; 2) leverage investments in infrastructure, technology, and research; 3) strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable actors; 4) promote stakeholder trust, concurrence, and technical/financial collaboration; and 5) provide supranational and subnational coordination.

Ms Peralta concluded by presenting the expected outputs and activities of each component, emphasizing the proposal's adaptability to diverse countries in the region, and ultimately sharing an updated project formulation roadmap, including the timelines for each step.

Mr Luud Clerx (Agrofair) provided an overview of the mapping project carried out in Peru by a group of private sector actors. The initiative aims to develop a digital aerial photogrammetry-based map of the affected area in the Chira basin order to provide accurate information on, *inter alia*, the spatial distribution of the banana fields, roads, accesses, infrastructure, packing houses, irrigation channels, and communities, to support the development of a risk analysis and contingency plan with a territorial focus. The work is being conducted under a partnership between banana producing companies, importers, producer organizations and research institutes. Mr Clerx presented the initial results of the project and the priorities set for the next steps of the initiative.

10. Joint Declaration on Living wages

Mr Prada provided a brief summary of the process undertaken within the WG02 to draft and jointly approve the Joint

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Declaration on Living Wages. He acknowledged the challenges faced in ensuring that all stakeholder views were represented, and thus in ultimately achieving consensus on its contents. Mr Prada informed SC members that the document was approved by WG02 members during the Thematic Session of the WG02. He then presented the full declaration and opened the floor for SC and WBF members to provide final suggestions and/or objections to the text presented.

Mr Jeroen Kroezen (Solidaridad) mentioned that he supports the declaration but raised concerns regarding the lack of distinction between export-oriented and locally-oriented banana production systems. He mentioned that covering all production system types could be too ambitious, and that the declaration could therefore focus on export bananas.

Mr Biles replied that a living wage should be an aspiration for the whole sector, including locally-oriented production. This can be achieved through a trickle down manner, starting with retailer requirements that will affect the whole chain, reaching down to local producers.

Mr Prada then commended all the efforts carried out in the last two years in preparing and summarizing the declaration. He suggested to have a unanimous approval of the declaration, stating that the declaration could be revised in the future, if needed. SC members agreed with the suggestion and approval of the document.

Decisions:

- Proceed with the publication of the Joint Declaration on Living Wages, which has been approved by the SC.
- Review the declaration in coming months to address new comments or amendments suggested, to be discussed during the SC22, if needed.

11. Activities on occupational health and safety in Cameroon in the banana industry

Ms Reinhardt Hurtado provided an overview of the revision process undertaken by IUF and Banana Link with regards to the BOHESI manual in Cameroon. The proposed improvements were presented during the Thematic Session of the WG03, with a general endorsement by WG03 members of the proposed changes.

Mr Peter Hurst, on behalf of IUF and Banana Link, then presented a brief overview of the main improvements suggested in the revised manual for Cameroon. He emphasized the important health and safety risks that agricultural workers are exposed to and further highlighted the need to include references to international standards and conventions on the duties, rights and responsibilities of employers and workers. Mr Hurst also highlighted the importance of adding information on worker Staff Representatives, including the need to develop and strengthen their role for improving levels of work protection on plantations, as well as the importance of reviving the labour inspectorate, amongst other changes.

Mr Medi MOUNGUI (Permanent Representation of Cameroon to FAO) asked about the level of national stakeholder engagement to discuss the manual at country level. Ms Reinhardt Hurtado responded that, despite the endorsement of the amendments proposed by members of the WBF, the review and adoption process must indeed involve local industry stakeholders, including government, private sector, and worker representatives. As such, if no objections are raised by SC members, the next steps will entail a multi-stakeholder consultation process at national level. No objections were raised, and Mr Hurst expressed his interest to support this process.

Decisions:

- Initiate the multi-stakeholder consultation process in Cameroon for the review and adoption of the BOHESI manual, following the endorsement of proposed amendments by WBF SC members.

12. Discussion of roles and responsibilities of Working Group coordinators

Mr Paul Lievens (Banana Link) raised concerns regarding the lack of clarity on the defined roles and responsibilities of WG coordinators, and thus suggested that the SC work to better define these roles in future meetings. Mr Prada thanked Mr Lievens for the suggestion and informed that the proposal was well-noted by the Secretariat and will be included in future discussion of the SC.

13. Exploring the possible use of stress-testing methods to assess the resistance of banana supply chains to external shocks such as pandemics and natural disasters

Mr Liu mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has had negative impacts on agricultural supply chains at various levels and put them under stress. He highlighted the importance of learning from such experiences in order to be better prepared for

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future shocks. He underlined the importance and potential of applying stress-testing methods in agricultural supply chain analyses in order to comprehend the different drivers and influences affecting different levels of the supply chain, as well as to identify entry points for shocks and how these shocks are propagated or attenuated through the chain. He then asked SC members whether they could be interested in participating in a pilot study to explore the feasibility of applying stress-testing in banana supply chains and the value-added to be gained from modelling.

Mr Xavier Roussel (Dole) mentioned that members are continuously exchanging information on how their systems have been tested by COVID, climate and financial shocks. He thus raised concerns regarding how a theoretical study or approach would contribute something new or different to what has already been experienced in practical and real-life cases. Mr Liu thanked Mr Roussel for the comments and acknowledged the practical exchanges of information carried out by WBF members. He then stressed the qualitative nature of such exchanges, which may lack of quantitative data to support and measure the conclusions made. Such quantitative data could help to build preparedness and increase the resilience of the global supply chain.

Mr Biles (Chiquita) supported Mr Roussel's comments and added that the banana sector is already a resilient industry. He mentioned the recurrent challenges faced due to hurricanes, floods, diseases, and droughts, and highlighted the adaptability of the supply chain to those events. He then mentioned that the WBF already has a lot of ongoing initiatives and raised the question of how this new activity would add value to the work of the WBF. He suggested that the available resources instead be allocated to furthering the work of ongoing initiatives.

Mr Liu concluded by acknowledging members' suggestions to not proceed with the proposal at this stage, and thus proposed to perhaps revisit this idea in the future.

14. Administrative matters

Mr Liu presented the results of the fee collection campaign for 2021 on behalf of Mr Giuseppe Bonavita (FAO), who was unable to attend the meeting. He then presented the financial forecast and expected expenditures for 2021, followed by a budget proposal for 2022. He highlighted the increased expenses foreseen, due to the possible realization of the Global Conference of the WBF.

Mr Liu then explained the administrative process regarding multi-donor trust fund projects at FAO. In this regard, the WBF project currently has an expiration date of December 2022. For this reason, he asked SC members if they would like to formally extend the project to 31 December 2024, adding that such an agreement would not entail immediate financial commitments by WBF members. SC members supported the proposal to extend the project.

Decision:

- Extend the WBF trust-fund project to 31 December 2024

15. Next meeting of the Steering Committee in 2022 (SC22)

As was previously decided by the SC, biannual meetings of the SC shall be organized every year, with the first taking place during the third week of May and the second during third week of November. Mr Liu therefore asked SC members if there was any objection to holding the SC22 during the third week of May and the SC23 for the third week of November. He then proposed the dates of 17-18 May or 18-19 May. There were no objections on the proposed dates for the next SC meeting.

16. Conclusions of Day 2

Mr Pascal Liu concluded the meeting by providing an overview of the discussions held and thanking all of those involved in the session, including the speakers, participants, interpreters, technicians and the WBF Secretariat staff.

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Annex 1. List of Participants

Twenty-First Meeting of the WBF Steering Committee (SC21)

17-18 November 2021

List of participants and observers of SC21

#	Organization / Organización / Organisation	Name / Nombre / Nom	Surname / Apellido / Nom	Participation/ Participación / Participation
1	AEBE	Otto	Delgado	SC member
2	AEBE	Jose	Hidalgo	SC member
3	AFRUIBANA	Albertine	Yange	Observer
4	Agroamerica	Javier	Aguirre	SC member
5	Agrocalidad	Juan	Granda	SC member
6	Agrofair	Luud	Clercx	SC member
7	Aldi North	Molla	Meher Nawroz	Observer
8	Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT	Nicolas	Roux	SC member
9	Anflocor	Benny	Corlocon	Observer
10	Asbama	Julio	Reales	SC member
11	Asbama	José Francisco	Zuniga	SC member
12	Augura	Marco	Calvo	Observer
13	Augura	Emerson	Aguirre	Observer
14	Atrevia	Ana Maria	Martin	Observer
15	Atrevia	Mateo	Gonzalez	Observer
16	Atrevia	Rosario	Marquez de Prado	Observer
17	Banafair	Helge	Fischer	Observer
18	Banana Link	Paul	Lievens	SC member
19	Banana Link	Holly	Woodward-Davey	SC member
20	Banelino	Gustavo	Gandini	SC member
21	BASIC	Marion	Feige-Muller	Observer
22	Chiquita Brands International Inc.	Andrew	Biles	SC member
23	Chiquita Brands International Inc.	Carlos	Crespo	SC member
24	CIRAD	Carolina	Dawson	Observer
25	CIRAD	Christian	Chabrier	Observer
26	CIRAD	Yolande	Chilin-Charles	Observer
27	CIRAD	Thierry	Lescot	Observer
28	COLEACP	Morag	Webb	SC member
29	Colombian Ministry of Agriculture	Carlos	Berben	Observer
30	Compagnie Frutiére	Christelle	Lasme	SC member
31	Compagnie Frutiére	Lilian Yvonne	Karikari	SC member
32	COOBANA	Chito	Quintero	Observer



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33	CORBANA	Mariano	Jimenez	SC member
34	CORBANA	Omar	Sanchez	SC member
35	CORBANA	Jorge	Sandoval	SC member
36	Del Monte Fresh Produce Inc.	Ronald	Romero	Observer
37	Dole	Patricio	Gutierrez	SC member
38	Dole	Xavier	Roussel	SC member
39	Dominican Republic	Maria	Laureano	SC member
40	Dominican Republic	Patricia	Rodriguez	SC member
41	Equifruit	Jennie	Coleman	Observer
42	Fairtrade International	Nicolas	Leger	SC member
43	Fairtrade International	Wilbert	Flinterman	SC member
44	Fyffes	Jon	Tugwell	SC member
45	Fyffes	Stella	Davis	SC member
46	Fyffes	Eimear	Lynch	SC member
47	Gestarse	Miguel	Vallejo	Observer
48	GIZ / ABNB	Andrea	Bruestle	SC member
49	GIZ / ABNB	Daniel	May	SC member
50	Golden Exotics	George	Kporye	SC member
51	Global GAP	Leonardo	Ferrer	SC member
52	Hofer	Stephan	Jermendy	SC member
53	IICA	Gabriel	Rodriguez	Observer
54	IDH	Ronald	Sanabria	Observer
55	ILO	Elvis	Beytulla	Observer
56	IUF	Peter	Hurst	Observer
57	Max Havelaar	Alice	Doumengine	Observer
58	Permanent Representation of Cameroon to FAO	Médi	Moungui	SC member
59	Rainforest Alliance	Leonie	Haakshorst	SC member
60	Rewe Group	Florian	Schaefer	SC member
61	Reybanpanpac	Paulo	Mello	SC member
62	SAVID	Geranis	Ferreira	Observer
63	Solidaridad	Jeroen	Kroezen	SC member
64	Solidaridad	Diego	Balarezo	SC member
65	SENASA	Ricardo	Solanes Morales	Observer
66	Tesco	Tania	Moodley	SC member
67	Tesco	Edgar	Monge	SC member
68	Wageningen University and Research	Gert	Kema	SC member
69	UNCTAD	Leonela	Santana Boada	SC member
70	FAO/SLM	Raixa	Llauger	FAO
71	FAO/SLM	Esther	Peralta	FAO



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72	FAO/NSP	Maged	Elkahky	FAO
73	FAO/EST	Giuseppe	Bonavita	FAO
74	FAO/EST	Pascal	Liu	FAO
75	FAO/EST	Sabine	Altendorf	FAO
76	FAO/EST	Victor	Prada	FAO
77	FAO/EST	Matheus	Lima	FAO
78	FAO/EST	Marlo	Rankin	FAO
79	FAO/EST	Camila	Reinhardt	FAO
80	FAO/EST	Valentina	Perez-Mardones	FAO