

Press Release

Thursday 1st October 2020

Campaigners deliver 300,000 signatures protesting the multinational's refusal to #KeepKitKatFairtrade

- **Public sends very strong message to Nestle questioning their move away from buying Fairtrade cocoa and sugar**
 - **Farmers lose security over future income and control of investments in their communities and cooperatives, in the middle of a global crisis.**
- **1 billion KitKats produced every year in York; Nestlé turned a profit of over \$10 billion globally last year**

Five campaigners visited Nestlé's York office today as petitions representing 300,000 people were handed in to the food giant in protest at their decision to end sourcing cocoa and sugar on Fairtrade terms.

With its slogan "Have a Break, Have a KitKat," the chocolate bar has been a flagship Fairtrade product for ten years, and the partnership has resulted in significant impact for tens of thousands of small scale farmers in Cote d'Ivoire and beyond in that time - including providing much-needed recent support for communities in response to Covid-19.

The independent FAIRTRADE Mark recognized and trusted by 9 in 10 consumers as an assurance of a better deal for farmers will no longer appear on the bars as a result of the withdrawal, and tens of thousands of extremely vulnerable cocoa farmers will no longer receive around £1.37 million of Fairtrade Premium payments every year, and will have less control over how they spend their money under the new deal they have been offered. Sugar farmers will lose over £500,000 of annual Fairtrade Premium payments. Meanwhile, Nestlé turned a profit of over \$10 billion globally last year.

The largest petition, addressed to Ulf Mark Schneider, Nestle's Global CEO, was started by Joanna Pollard, Coordinator of Fairtrade Yorkshire, when after hearing the devastating news and has been signed by an incredible [INSERT FINAL FIGURE TO NEAREST 1000].

Joanna Pollard said: *"As soon as I heard the news that KitKats would no longer be Fairtrade I knew this would be devastating for thousands of farmers. Under the Fairtrade system they have a seat at the table and make their own decisions about where their money is spent. The farmers I've spoken to feel that selling their crop on Fairtrade terms is vital for their communities. I've been overwhelmed by the support the petition has had from almost 300,000 people all over the world, and reading their reasons for signing it's clear that they want to take a stand in support of farmers."*

Joanna's petition has also received widespread support from MPs, including Rachael Maskell MP whose York Central constituency is home to the Nestle factory, Holly Lynch, Chair of the Fairtrade All Party Parliamentary Group and Labour MP for Halifax, and organisations including Scottish Fair Trade Forum, Fair Trade Wales, CAFOD, NUS, BAFTS, Fair Trade Network UK, Tearfund, Commitment for Life, National Campaigner Committee, and Fairtrade Yorkshire.

A further 20,000 people also signed a second petition started independently by The Co-operative party calling on Nestle not to break away from Fairtrade, which is also to be handed in.

Wearing Covid-19 face masks with the message #IStandWithFarmers, Joanna Pollard and four socially-distanced local campaigners visited Nestlé's York office earlier today, on 1st October to coincide with the formal end of KitKat's Fairtrade certification and hand-in the signatures.

Elsewhere, signatories and supporters of Fair Trade came together to take action online and offline to show their support for farmers and tell Nestlé #IStandWithFarmers.

Today also marks the official start of the cocoa harvest in Cote d'Ivoire, when farmers will begin to process their cocoa pods for export, this time not on Fairtrade terms.

Joanna added: *"Since launching this petition, I've had the chance to speak directly to farmers and have also managed to speak privately with Nestle representatives about how farmers are going to lose out from this decision. They haven't listened, and that's why I'm here today, to tell the company that we are going to keep standing with farmers, and call on everyone to choose chocolate with the FAIRTRADE Mark."*

Other organisations have signaled their dismay to Nestle as the company faced mounting public pressure to keep KitKat Fairtrade. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Fairtrade, backed by MPs and Peers and co-chaired by Holly Lynch MP (Labour) and Jason McCartney MP (Conservative) interrogated Nestlé representatives over the decision at a meeting in July.

Jason McCartney MP said at the time: *"Nestle's move is against the wishes of farmers who will be left with less money under their own control and without the clear commitments to future income that they have benefited from under Fairtrade. Nestle should think again. It also needs to be much more transparent about the detail of their new proposals"*.

In 2019, UK shoppers helped generate over £30 million in Premium for Fairtrade producers to boost local economies and improve community services in the Global South, and Fairtrade cocoa sales grew by 23%. This is thanks to committed companies, who have increased their sourcing of Fairtrade cocoa over the past few years, and conscious consumers who choose to buy Fairtrade chocolate.

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For more information, interviews and images, contact Fairtrade Yorkshire Tel: 01757 617143/07913548817/07886 301496, email: joanna.aztecarts@gmail.com; info@fairtradeyorkshire.org.uk