



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Canaan Fair Trade farmers recognized by the International Labour Organization

Canaan farmer union is a model of rural development through decent and productive work

Madison, Wisconsin. 28 March 2014. Canaan Fair Trade, a mission based company that seeks to sustain the livelihood of Palestinian farming communities caught in the midst of conflict, has been recognized as a model of rural transformation by the International Labour Organization (ILO). Their farmers union, the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA), was a case study for world development in the '[Learning from Catalyst of Rural Transformation](#)' publication of the ILO.

The key message in the publication is that the determination and creativity of people, especially rural men and women, young people, and native populations, can overcome innumerable challenges and transform rural economies and societies. [8 case studies](#) from around the world were presented for the valuable lessons from their accomplishments. The PFTA succeeded in directly improving the living and working conditions of its members. PFTA also improved the communities by paying a social premium which was generally reinvested by the cooperatives and producers in community projects in their villages.

Dr. Nasser Abufarha, PFTA Founder and Canaan Director, says "This is a great testimony to the work that Canaan and the PFTA have accomplished on the ground, where the farmers' organization and their trading partners, under challenging political conditions and military occupation, have produced a model for rural development and work generation for the world to follow."

[Palestine Fair Trade Association](#) (PFTA) is the largest fair trade producers' union in Palestine, with over 1700 small Palestinian farmers and 200 women producers joined in 50 village based fair trade cooperatives. They empower their members economically and socially through fair trade and organic farming, capacity building, and certification, enabling small and marginalized producers to overcome some of the challenges of military occupation by giving them access to international markets.

[International Labour Organization](#) (ILO) was founded in 1919, in the wake of a destructive war, to pursue a vision based on the premise that universal, lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice. The ILO became the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. The main aims of the ILO are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

[Canaan Fair Trade](#), a Palestinian company with a social mission, was founded in 2004 to produce and distribute the organic, Fair trade and Extra Virgin olive oil and traditional foods of the PFTA cooperatives. Canaan products are sold in 18 countries around the world. Canaan gives back to its farming community through programs that plant olive trees, extend micro-loans to women's collectives, support organic education with scholarships and mentoring, and convert tractors to run on used falafel oil.

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