



Over 225,000 people descended on Edinburgh to make poverty history on July 2nd. They marched around the city to form the symbolic white band of the campaign.

The event was a grand show of solidarity, and a spirited call for justice.

Several members of the Canterbury Fairtrade Network travelled to Edinburgh for the Make Poverty History event in July. They found one another amongst the throng of supporters.

One member cycled from Canterbury joining a group of other cyclists to Edinburgh for the two week ride to Auld Reekie.

En route they had arranged opportunities to raise awareness of the issues underlying the Make Poverty History campaign. They also talked to others who were attracted by the billowing pennants attached to their bikes and the rickshaw which accompanied them.

The communiqué at the end of the summit won't stop starvation or destitution but it was a good start.

Poverty, especially in Africa, was pushed to the top of the agenda at the G8 meeting for the first time. The government leaders promised to help with aid and debt cancellation and said they "welcomed the growing market for fair trade"

The richest 8 countries in the world pledged \$48 billion in aid by 2010, \$25 of which is to be spent on Africa.

The poorest 18 countries in Africa will have their debts wiped out as part of the aid package.

Unfortunately for the child who dies from extreme poverty every 3 seconds, there was little firm commitment to changing unfair trade rules which are making poor countries depend on us for aid in the first place.

The next WTO meeting in Hong Kong in December could be the time to implement the G8 promise to establish a credible end date to eliminate export subsidies.

But world leaders are already reneging on the commitments they made in Scotland.

How Fairtrade is saving the livelihoods of Windward Island farmers.

Simeon Greene is the Relationship Director of the Windward Island Banana Development and Exporting Company and a Fairtrade enthusiast.

The eloquent speaker from St Vincent and Grenadines told a packed hall in the Friends Meeting House on Tuesday 6th September about the plight of banana farmers in the Caribbean islands.

As ex colonies of the British Empire, the farmers were historically protected by a quota system which meant half of the bananas bought in the UK came from these islands.

Incredibly, bananas are the third most popular product in the UK. No prizes for guessing that petrol is the most popular.

The Windwards have been growing bananas for 50 years and they are the countries main exports.

The Windward Islands are privileged because the workers have always been paid a minimum wage. Recently the farmers have felt the effects of larger banana companies taking over their share



Simeon Greene MBE

of the market and selling bananas far too cheaply. They also face losing their quota which will be replaced by a tariff system that may not afford the same protection for their small businesses.

Fairtrade has helped because people pay a fair price for Fairtrade goods which includes a social premium. This is used for community projects. A sewing class was set up so that the islanders can make crafts to sell to tourists, a school was built and different crops have been grown by the rivers and on the slopes. Fairtrade bananas are increasingly popular which is good for producers

Bruce Crowther, Fairtrade Coordinator of the Fairtrade Foundation, also gave an interesting talk about Fairtrade towns. Find out more in the next issue!