

DFID / ETI Press Release

# First Day at Ethical Trading School for UK Firms

**Embargo: Not for use before 0001 Wednesday 15 February 2006**

## **Ethical Trading Initiative launches new training programme**

Trainees from top UK firms go back to school today (Wednesday 15 February) to learn about how ethical trading can help transform their business and improve workers' conditions in their supply chains, on a new and first of its kind training course run by the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and backed by the Department for International Development (DFID).

Staff from a wide range of UK based international companies, including Tesco, suppliers Pentlands Brands plc, Wakefield-based William Lamb – one of the UK's largest footwear designers and distributors, fruit importers Windwards Bananas and Herts based salad growers and importers Stubbins Marketing, will attend the first of the four-module ETI Training Programme.

The first module, a beginners' guide to ethical trading, introduces ETI's Base Code – an internationally recognised code of practice for working conditions in company supply chains – and looks at how UK firms who outsource their production can work constructively with their suppliers to make lasting improvements to workers' conditions.

Other two day modules running in March, April and May 2006, feature advice on how firms can:

- Deal with some of the typical labour problems found in key sourcing countries and product categories
- Be aware of some of the unintended consequences of implementing ethical trade strategies, e.g. double book-keeping, and different approaches to dealing with them
- Overcome the challenges often faced when looking to engage with NGOs and pressure groups

Noting the recent launches of ETI member Marks & Spencers' new 'Look behind the label' campaign and Bono's Project Red, ETI director Dan Rees said: "Firms can see for themselves the upsurge of consumer interest in ethical issues, but how do you actually build a comprehensive ethical trade strategy for your whole business? Our new training programme helps firms build practical skills in dealing with critical issues like company buying practices such as lead times and price negotiations with suppliers and collaborating with other companies and organisations to tackle the root causes of poor working conditions."

ETI is backed by core funding from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID). International Development Minister Gareth Thomas said: "The new training programme will help move ethical trading principles further into the business mainstream. This can only benefit some of the world's poorest people whilst also helping UK firms stabilise their supply chains."

### **Notes to Editors**

1. ETI is a UK based alliance of businesses, trade unions and NGOs that aims to improve conditions for workers worldwide. Its new Training Programme is primarily designed for staff working in large retail or supplier companies that outsource some or most of their production. Rather than focusing solely on workplace audits it emphasises the need for businesses to take a more strategic approach to change. Course content has been developed by ETI members including Marks and Spencer and Levi Strauss working alongside experienced trainers from the Manchester based Co-Operative College.

2. Training Programme content descriptions (and booking information) are available at:  
<http://www.ethicaltrade.org/d/training>

3. ETI exists to promote good practice in the implementation of labour codes. Its ultimate goal is to ensure that the working conditions of employees in companies that supply goods to UK customers meet or exceed international standards.

4. ETI is part funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) who helped it set up in 1998, recognising the important opportunity ETI offers to support its poverty elimination goals.

5. Media seeking further information on the ETI Training Programme should contact ETI's Julia Hawkins on 020 7404 1463 or Jane Lyons on 0208 693 6693.

6. Media seeking further information on DFID's work on labour standards and poverty reduction should contact DFID Press Office on 0207 023 0600. DFID's 2004 policy paper 'Labour Standards & Poverty Reduction' is available at:  
<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/labourstandardsJune04.pdf>

**ENDS**