

Candidate Statement: Hans Theyer

I would like to submit my name for consideration for the board of NCBA CLUSA. I am eager to lend my extensive experience to further NCBA CLUSA's mission, in particular that of alleviating poverty through economic and social empowerment. As Executive Director of Fairtrade America, I and my team contribute directly to alleviating poverty through our work with producer cooperatives, traders and brands. The international Fairtrade network, of which we are a part, has played a major role in empowering small-scale farmers and workers around the world.

Fairtrade works with more than 1.6 million small-scale farmers and workers in 74 countries. Farmers' cooperatives represent more than 80 percent of the producers we serve. We seek to improve small farmers' livelihoods by connecting them with companies around the world fostering business relationships under fairer terms. Products carrying the FAIRTRADE Mark are now sold in more than 120 countries. We educate consumers on the positive and negative impacts of trade and how they can support farmers through their daily habits.

Though Fairtrade's market-driven development model cannot solve all of the problems small-scale farmer co-ops face, it can increase their income, strengthen their organizations and improve the livelihoods of members and their families. Personally, I appreciate how building strong co-ops enables them to negotiate fairer business terms and feel more empowered. I think that strong co-ops are vital to help farmers deal with the existential threats they regularly face, such as an over dependence on one crop, the ever-growing push for cost reductions at origin and threats from climate change. In my role with Fairtrade America, I want to contribute to helping them not only survive, but thrive.

I have been fortunate to experience a wide range of positions ranging from international business development and partner management to fundraising and nonprofit leadership. As such, I would like to contribute to NCBA CLUSA's mission, which aligns perfectly with Fairtrade. In my current and previous roles, I have reported to a board affording me a strong understanding of different governance models and the ways in which organizations operate. I also understand how management can better work with a board to relieve some of the natural tensions that at times arise. This understanding will allow me to serve NCBA CLUSA well.

Last but not least, I would like to state that I left the corporate world after more than 16 years to put my talents and experience toward supporting farming families and communities in developing countries. My heart and efforts are dedicated to helping families help themselves out of poverty and, if given the chance to join your organization, you can count on my very best effort to support our common mission.