

EU Ambassador to India His Excellency Ugo Astuto, commends Forca Goa Foundation for being the 1st organisation in India to take an action towards UN SDG 12 through Fairtrade footballs

His Excellency Ugo Astuto, the European Union Ambassador to India was in Goa and scheduled a visit to recognise the impact of the collaboration between Forca Goa and Fairtrade India. The dialogue was all about – Football, Fairtrade, Women Empowerment and Global Goals! The Forca Goa Foundation focuses on transforming Goa, one football field at a time. The Foundation has one of the most engaging and systematic programmes that has been focusing on nutrition, waste management, responsible consumption and gender equality.

They are the first organisation in India to make an institutional commitment to only sourcing and stocking Fairtrade footballs. By sourcing sustainable and ethically made Fairtrade Footballs, the Forca Goa Foundation has empowered a community of workers who hand stitch footballs. The foundation has sourced 1800 Fairtrade Footballs between 2018 - 2020 from a Fairtrade certified factory in Jalandhar that complies with social, economic and environmental Fairtrade standards.

These commitments saw them win the 'Best Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals' at the Global Goals World Cup held in New York during the UN General assembly week. They even took their commitment a step further by wearing Fairtrade certified No Nasties t-shirts to the event. Through the Fairtrade certified footballs, the team, coaches and children are increasingly aware of the journey of the products that they consume. This is a crucial step in creating a sustainable world - one of the most urgent issues facing the football industry today.

During his visit, Ambassador Ugo Astuto commended Forca Goa Foundation for its sustainability initiative, earning it the title of being the **'1st organisation in India to make an action towards UN SGD 12 through Fairtrade footballs'**. Besides handling Forca Goa a certificate for their efforts, he also scored a goal with a Fairtrade football on the field.

Speaking on the occasion of the event, H.E. Ugo Astuto said, "Environment, energy, resource efficiency and circular economy are some of the key issues that the EU works on. In this context, the activities being implemented by Fairtrade India through an EU funded project, are commendable. Meeting the young women athletes today reinforces my belief that the problem we face today on climate change, on depletion of resources and on environmental degradation, seeps through to all generations and is truly a global challenge. The commitment of Forca Goa and the football team to sustainable consumption and production sets a good example that every initiative counts and I hope they will continue on this journey with the same enthusiasm that I have witnessed today."

Akshay Tandon, Non-executive Chairman of the Forca Goa Foundation and President FC Goa was co-hosting the Ambassador and Ms. Henriette Faergemman visit with Devina Singh from Fairtrade India. The event was attended by the Forca Goa Foundation team of Shivangini Tandon, Ishita Godhino, Nathaniel D'costa who joined the conversation. Some of the girls who represented Forca Goa at the Global Goals World Cup, Yadnya Pawar, Simone Lalwani, Sneha Fernandes with the help of professional referee and grassroots coach, Josline DSouza made a pitch at the venue for His excellency to score a 'global goal' with them.

At the event the Ambassador also dedicated time to understand the problems in agricultural supply chains and the need to make trade more circular and sustainable. He was amazed to learn that Fairtrade farmers from Kerala are saving 63 varieties of chillies and thereby

contributing to protecting the world's biodiversity. The event included a photo exhibition of the stories from Fairtrade farms and a discussion about the Fairtrade food and fashion products available in India. The Ambassador rightfully spotted the European Union organic logo on Makaibari tea and wanted to know where he could find Pascati chocolates in Delhi. Fairtrade India gifted him sustainable Fairtrade Fashion including a shirt from the new Goenchi collection of Goa based No Nasties and a pair of socks from Balenzia - Asia's only Fairtrade socks range.

Devina Singh, Communications Manager of Fairtrade India said, "We were honoured to have the opportunity to host His Excellency and share our passion to build a responsible consumption movement in India. The project co-funded by the European Union program raises awareness amongst urban consumers about the power they have to vote for a fairer world through their everyday choices. It was really encouraging to see his keen interest in understanding the work that Fairtrade India does and the impact made across the journey from farm to fork and seed to stitch."

He visited the project to emphasise the idea that sports has the power and potential to generate real economic, social and environmental change. During the dialogue he admired Forca Goa Foundation's commitment to use Fairtrade footballs for all their matches.

Akshay Tandon, Non-executive Chairman of the Forca Goa Foundation and President FC Goa Club says, "We hope to champion the power of football and sports in transforming communities and lives. The EU is known to recognize and promote sustainability through sports and football in a big way. I hope we can learn from them and work together in the near future."

His scoring a goal on the field with a Fairtrade football represents the power of scoring a global goal through responsible consumption. His acknowledgement of Forca Goa taking an action towards SDG 12 through Fairtrade footballs reflects the many ways in which we can all play for a better world. With the goal he recognises the impact of the Forca Goa and Fairtrade India project by scoring a goal for Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Responsible Consumption (SDG 12).

Funded by the European Union Switch Asia Program, Fairtrade India aims to build collaborations with other football clubs in the country to promote UN SDGs and is really proud of the commitment the Foundation has displayed to raise awareness about the challenges in the football manufacturing industry and the need to make it fairer.

For media related queries, high resolution photos or telephone interviews please feel free to reach out to us:

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