



**FLOCERT**  
assuring fairness

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## PRESS INFORMATION

### **WhatsApp and new allegations processing to support fight against labour exploitation**

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**Bonn, 13 July 2020.** *To better support and protect farmers and workers in the Fairtrade system during this difficult time, FLOCERT opens a WhatsApp channel to submit allegations. The certification body for Fairtrade has also revised and improved its existing allegations process. Both measures respond directly to first COVID-19 projections suggesting long-standing systemic and social inequalities affecting poor and vulnerable groups disproportionately, with serious impacts on job security and labour conditions.*

#### **FLOCERT launches WhatsApp for allegations: +49 (0)228 2493230**

Today, FLOCERT launches its **multilingual WhatsApp channel** for reporting any allegation against a Fairtrade-certified organisation. This will complement the existing reporting channels, such as FLOCERT's homepage, e-mail, telephone and skype. The new service responds and processes allegations in FLOCERT's five working languages; English, Spanish, French, Portuguese and German and intends to reach out to and empower farm and factory workers. To submit an allegation, the user contacts the number via a simple „Hi“ in a first WhatsApp message and then responds to a series of prompts that support the official submission of an allegation. End-to-end encryption and FLOCERT's strict data policy ensure the highest levels of privacy and confidentiality for any allegger. The above additional channel will be complemented by new forms of allegations processing: FLOCERT is now also piloting remote unannounced audits to investigate allegations, in the hope of reducing processing time for cases which do not require a physical audit.

“Due to COVID-19 we are currently limited in our ability to send our auditors to visit organisations onsite and assess compliance against the Fairtrade Standards. To remedy, we now offer easier and faster whistle blowing mechanisms for farmers and workers,” explains Sugumar Raman, Director of Operations. “At the same time, we've revised our procedures and now will be able to investigate allegations remotely,” Raman continues. “We hope that these measures, once widely promoted, will prove useful additions in our fight against all forms of labour discrimination and exploitation.”

*FLOCERT is a leading global assurance provider. Besides providing sole certification to Fairtrade, FLOCERT also offers an array of services to support companies in sourcing on Fairtrade principles, where no Fairtrade Standard applies. Founded in 2003, FLOCERT remains mission-driven and dedicated to working with all types of organisations, from small producers to internationally recognised brands, in order to promote fairness in global trade. Our accreditation as a “Social Enterprise” demonstrates our commitment to social business values. With six international offices conducting business in over 120 countries, FLOCERT specialises in offering global reach with local expertise to its almost 6,000 customers. For more information, visit us at [www.flocert.net](http://www.flocert.net)*

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