

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Avocats Sans Frontières awarded the « Law and Sustainability » prize from the Association of Flemish Jurists for its initiative « Fair Trade and Public Procurement »**

**Brussels, December 7th, 2009** - On the 4<sup>th</sup> December, Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) was awarded the “Law and Sustainability” prize from the Association of Flemish Jurists (Vlaamse Juristen Vereniging) for its initiative “**Fair Trade and Public Procurement**” (Regelrecht voor Fair Trade). By awarding the prize, the Association pays homage to the many different initiatives carried out to contribute to a sustainable society and laws promoting sustainability. This prize also constitutes a due recognition of ASF’s Globalization and Justice Program; which is aimed at promoting the social responsibility of lawyers within our globalised world.

ASF’s project “Regelrecht voor Fair Trade” has given many NGOs who support Fair Trade the opportunity to collaborate with lawyers on this subject in order to reinforce their organisation’s legal expertise. NGOs involved include: *Îles de Paix*, Max Havelaar, *11.11.11*, Oxfam Shops, Public Affairs, the “Fair Trade Communities” (Fair Trade Gemeenten) Campaign. The initiative also aims to provide local entities (towns and municipalities) with the necessary expertise for the introduction of Fair Trade practices in their purchase policies.

Fair Trade is “trade not aid”, in other words it is a development model that ensures that producers in developing countries receive reasonable remuneration for the sale of goods produced in an environmentally and socially responsible way. There is no other model that can better respond to the concept of sustainability.

The question arises as to how local entities can introduce the concept of Fair Trade in their public tenders whilst complying with administrative requirements. Both national and European regulations in respect to open competition and public tenders are very complex and uncertain, especially when the different regulations overlap. Many local entities that want to buy sustainable products are discouraged from doing so due to the risk of exposing themselves to prosecution for failing to comply with established procedures.

Avocats Sans Frontières plans to create a “Fair Trade Legal Team” by mobilising a dynamic group of pro-bono lawyers and jurists working to clarify questions linked to Fair Trade and providing legal support on matters related to public tenders.

“The prize has come at an excellent moment, in the context of the global financial crisis, consumers and public entities demonstrate their willingness on a daily basis to build our future in a sustainable way. It is also a recognition of the cooperative efforts of NGOs and a strong signal for lawyers to continue to play a leading role in promoting ethical values in a globalized society”, says Hafida Talhaoui, President of ASF.

**Contact:** Indra Van Gisbergen, Coordinator Globalisation & Justice Programme  
[ivangisbergen@asf.be](mailto:ivangisbergen@asf.be) - Tél + 32 2 223 37 82 - GSM + 32 474 87 88 93

Avocats Sans Frontières (ASF) is an NGO whose mission is to independently contribute to the creation of fair and equitable societies through the promotion of access to justice, in which the law and its institutions serve society’s most vulnerable groups. ASF is active in 9 countries. By way of its “Globalisation and Justice” programme, the organisation fights for the improvement of social and economic rights and social corporate responsibility. For more information, go to [www.asf.be](http://www.asf.be)