



**Fair Trade International Symposium (FTIS), 23 – 25 September 2026.**

**University of Cologne, Germany**

**Speaker: Marike Runneboom de Peña, Interim Global CEO of Fairtrade International**

### **Keynote Abstract**

In a period shaped by economic volatility, rising inequality, and accelerating climate change, smallholder farmers are increasingly navigating the combined pressures of global markets and environmental disruption. At the same time, smallholders are working within supply chains where many of the key decisions are made far from where production takes place.

This keynote reflects how Fairtrade engages with these realities. It explores how core Fairtrade mechanisms, including the Fairtrade Minimum Price, the Fairtrade Premium, and Fairtrade's robust Standards, are contributing to more stable incomes, stronger climate resilience, and more sustainable farming systems.

At the heart of Fairtrade are producer organisations. Through cooperative governance and collective action, farmers are able to strengthen their voice, participate more actively in decision-making, and play a greater role in shaping how resources and investments are used within their communities.

The keynote will also explore the broader context in which Fairtrade operates, including ongoing imbalances in how value is shared and the challenges many producers face in accessing markets on fair terms. These realities continue to shape what change looks like in practice, and how quickly it can be achieved.

Fairtrade's experience suggests that progress is possible when producers are placed at the centre of decision-making, and supported through long-term partnerships. At the same time, Fairtrade invites continued reflection from all stakeholders on how responsibility, value, and opportunity can be shared more equitably across supply chains.