

Mugged: Poverty In Your Coffee Cup

(NAPSA)—Over the past five years, the price of coffee has fallen almost 70 percent from a high in 1997, to a 30-year low, forcing many coffee farming families out of business. In many countries coffee farmers have to sell their beans for less than they cost to produce.

Fortunately, a new campaign by Oxfam may help save these endangered farmers.

“There’s a bitter aftertaste in America’s cup of coffee. It’s the daily poverty and misery faced by millions of desperate coffee farmers and their families,” said Liam Brody, coffee program coordinator at Oxfam America. “This worldwide humanitarian crisis requires an immediate and powerful response from governments, corporations and consumers.”

Oxfam’s focus on the coffee crisis is part of its overall “Make Trade Fair” campaign, which works to change the rules of trade that benefit the wealthy and deepen poverty.

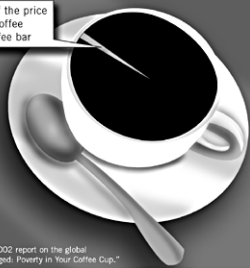
“Americans can help end the coffee crisis by insisting on Fair Trade coffee wherever they buy or drink coffee,” said Brody. “Fair Trade coffee is available in stores and restaurants all over the country. They can also join Oxfam’s efforts to get coffee roasters to support the Coffee Rescue Plan.”

As part of the Coffee Rescue Plan, Oxfam urges major coffee roasting companies to pay farmers a decent price (above their costs of

A FAIR SHARE?

Percentage of retail prices coffee farmers receive for their products:

1% or less of the price of a cup of coffee sold in a coffee bar



SOURCE: Oxfam 2002 report on the global coffee crisis. “Mugged: Poverty in Your Coffee Cup.”



Your next cup of coffee may taste even better if you know that the farmers who grow and harvest your coffee beans are earning a decent living.

production), purchase beans that meet International Coffee Organization (ICO) quality standards, and increase the amount of coffee they buy under Fair Trade conditions. Fair Trade certification ensures that small coffee farmers are paid a basic price that in a time of crisis keeps farming families from starving.

The Coffee Rescue Plan aims to bring supply back in line with demand and to support rural economic development.

Information on the crisis and where to find Fair Trade coffee is available on the Oxfam America Web site at www.oxfamamerica.org/coffee or by calling 1-800-77-OXFAM. To join the campaign, visit www.oxfamamerica.org or www.maketradefair.com.