



World Fair Trade Day 2024 – Saturday 11 May

The following resource is for congregations looking to include something about World Fair Trade Day in their worship or other activities.

Nine ideas for Faith Groups to celebrate World Fair Trade Day (WFTD) 2024

Every second Saturday of May, is World Fair Trade Day which aims to shine a spotlight on the transformative power of the Fair Trade business model and its positive impact on people's lives and communities. The annual celebration serves as a global platform to raise awareness about Fair Trade principles and practices, promoting social and economic justice.

Fair Trade is an area where we have direct control. By purchasing Fair Trade products, we believe that those who grew and manufactured what we purchased were paid a fair wage, worked in a safe and healthy location with no slave or child labour under environmentally sustainable conditions.

Why nine ideas? The World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) created the ten principles of Fair Trade to which by businesses which produce Fair Trade products must adhere.

Principle Nine is all about advocacy - not promoting your product or business but advocating for the Fair Trade system as a better and more equitable way to 'do trade' generally.

Thus, in recognition of the importance of principle nine - advocating for a fairer business world - we bring you nine ways to celebrate World Fair Trade Day on Saturday 11 May 2024.

1. Include references to WFTD on Sunday 5 or 12 May, perhaps using the resources of the [Fair Trade Association](https://www.fta.org.au/resources) (<https://www.fta.org.au/resources>) and [Fairtrade Australia and NZ](#) and prayers for a more equitable trade system, or perhaps a suggestion that individuals can make a difference every week with their purchasing decisions.
2. Hand out Fairtrade chocolates to everyone at church in celebration of WFTD.
3. Invite a local fair-trade business to come and speak at a service or Bible study group about what fair trade is. (Ask us for contacts if you don't know any).
4. Invite a local fair-trade business to hold a small stall at the conclusion of the service.
5. Play a short video explaining what fair-trade is, or highlighting how fair-trade positively impacts on producer communities' lives during a service.
6. Hold a Fairtrade coffee tasting before/after the service. Make it fun, have a voting system!
7. If you are not already a Fair Trade Association recognised Fair Trade Faith Group, check out the requirements and consider whether you could show your support for the movement by becoming one (<https://www.fta.org.au/faith-groups>).
8. Share World Fair Trade Organisation and Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand social media posts about WFTD on the church's social media. Or make your own post! (Tag us, Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand, and WFTO)
9. Talk about WFTD in your church newsletter.

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Prayers for Fair Trade

Let us bring the needs of producers and families around the world to our loving God.

Respond with: Lord hear our prayer

For farmers struggling because of unfair trade rules.

Lord hear our prayer

For children around the world who are unable to receive a proper education.

Lord hear our prayer

For all who have the power to change world trade for the better.

Lord hear our prayer

For the part we play in making trade fair.

Lord hear our prayer

Lord, thank you that you hear all our prayers, in the name of Jesus.

Amen



Source:

<https://www.archmil.org/ArchMil/Resources/WMM/MissionEducators/FairTradeLessonDoc-20120321-EC.pdf>

Lord God,

We thank you that you lead us from the darkness of unbelief into the light of belief in Jesus, for once we were darkness, but now in the Lord we are light.

Help us to live as children of light, bearing the fruit of the light that is good and right and true.

Help us to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Thank you for the Fair Trade movement seeking to turn from unfruitful works of darkness, and expose hidden and exploitive work and manufacturing processes.

We pray for the modern anti-slavery movement exposing shameful practices.

Through Jesus Christ, the light of the World.

Amen

Source: <https://www.fta.org.au/resources>

Activity for Children

The Fairtrade Foundation has produced a Breaks & Ladders board game. The game is an adaptation of the classic Snakes & Ladders puts you in the shoes of a farmer and the risks facing farmers daily. Travel up the ladders and slip down the bananas and see who is the first to the finish! - <https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/teaching-resources/breaks-ladders-board-game/>



Getting rid of special privileges for the wealthy and corporations in trade agreements

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Mark 9:33-35

In the Gospels, Jesus makes it clear the selfish pursuit of material wealth is a barrier to a relationship with God and does harm to other people.

A mechanism that allows wealthy individuals and corporations to seek to enrich themselves at the expense of ordinary people are Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions in trade agreements. The ISDS provisions allow super-rich foreign investors to sue governments in special tribunals for billions of dollars if they can argue that a change in law or policy had reduced their future profits, they were not consulted fairly about the change or it did not meet their expectations of the legal environment at the time they made the investment.

ISDS tribunals do not have independent judges but are ad hoc panels of part-time arbitrators who are permitted to have conflicts of interest. The tribunals operate with a high degree of secrecy, are expensive, have no appeal mechanism and make inconsistent decisions. They accept claims for future lost profits which are unacceptable in World Bank accounting practice. Thus, ISDS cases can undermine the decisions of democratically elected governments that are in the public interest.

In July 2023, the number of ISDS cases reported was 1,303. Cases are brought by super-rich investors against public health measures like tobacco control, environmental protections, First People land rights, regulation of the minimum wage and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The 12 largest pay-outs awarded by ISDS tribunals have totalled \$148 billion. There are 64 known cases where ISDS tribunals have awarded more than \$150 million.

There are now speculator third parties that fund ISDS cases in return for a share of any payments then obtained.

The Australian Government has 15 bilateral investment treaties and ten out of 17 broader trade agreements which include ISDS provisions. More recent agreements with the UK, India and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) with 14 Asia-Pacific countries, have excluded ISDS.

ISDS harm to developing countries

ISDS provisions have negative impacts on developing countries. For example, the Peruvian Government was ordered to pay Canadian mining company Bear Creek \$18.2 million in compensation and \$6 million in legal costs by an ISDS tribunal. The Government of Peru had cancelled the corporation's mining license after they failed to obtain free, prior and informed consent from First People's landowners about the mine. Peru is a party to the ILO Convention on Indigenous Peoples and has national laws which require such consent.

ISDS holding back action on climate change

ISDS cases are being pursued by fossil fuel corporations to try and prevent governments from reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For example, US corporation Ruby River Capital filed an ISDS claim against the Canadian Government after its gas project was rejected



because of concerns about greenhouse gas emissions. It is seeking \$30 billion from the Canadian Government in the case, despite having only spent \$190 million on the project.

A 2023 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment found “overwhelming evidence that ISDS is a major barrier to addressing climate change and is incompatible with the urgent action needed to transform the global energy system.”

ISDS cases brought by Clive Palmer corporations

Billionaire Clive Palmer is using the ISDS provisions in the 2012 ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement and the amended 2017 Singapore-Australia Free Trade Agreement to try and claim \$410 billion from the Australian people. Through his corporation Zeph Investments, a mining company registered in Singapore, he has two cases suing the Australian Government for \$110 billion after the corporation’s Queensland coal exploration permits were refused for environmental reasons, including climate impacts.



Mr Palmer’s other case under the ISDS provisions is for \$300 billion in which he alleges that the Commonwealth is responsible for a Western Australian law that prevented him from seeking damages for a rejected mining project.¹ His claim has already been rejected by the Australian High Court, but the ISDS allows him to have another shot by arguing his investment is made from a Singapore corporation.

Australian Government policy on ISDS

The current Labor Government has a policy to exclude ISDS provisions from new trade agreements and review it in existing agreements. It is important that we show our support for the policy and urge that the review of existing agreements proceed urgently.

What you can do:

Write polite and respectful letters to:

Senator the Hon. Don Farrell
Minister for Trade and Tourism
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senator the Hon. Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letters:

- Express concern that Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions in trade agreements undermine democracy and give wealthy individuals and corporations special avenues to undermine the public interest.
- Thank their government for its commitment to exclude ISDS from new trade agreements and to review ISDS provisions in existing agreements.
- Point out that the Clive Palmer cases show the urgent need for these reviews of ISDS in trade agreements to proceed as soon as possible.

Acknowledgement: The JIM Cluster thanks the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) for the background material in ISDS. Their petition on the issue can be signed at <https://aftinet.org.au/petition-trade-minister>

¹ <https://www.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/news/2023/04/what-you-need-to-know-about-clive-palmer-s--300bn-lawsuit-against>