

## **Fair Trade and the Organic Production as Alternative to the Coffee-Growing in Mexico**

### **Adrián González Romo**

Ph.D. in Strategies for Regional Agricultural Development  
The College of Postgraduates Campus Puebla  
Professor Researcher  
The Institute of Economic-Administrative-Foreign Trade  
Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo, Mexico

### **Yolanda Sánchez Torres**

Ph.D. In Economic Sciences by the Postgraduate College  
Research Professor  
The Foreign Trade Area-Institute of Economic and Administrative  
Sciences-Autonomous University  
Hidalgo. Mexico.

### **Mario Cruz Cruz**

Doctor in Political Sciences with orientation  
International Relations  
The National Autonomous University of Mexico  
Research Professor  
The Foreign Trade Area-Institute of Economic and Administrative  
Sciences-Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo. Mexico

### **Abstract**

*Fair trade is a movement which looks after bring empower to the coffee-grow producers through the improvement of their incomes. The organic activity in the coffee is an alternative which demands better quality and sustainable care of Mexicanland. Through this product, grown by a natural production process, with chemical absence, alouds to reach to the each time more demanding consumers from the developed countries, which look after quality and are willing to pay for it. Coffee is one of the products which has been benefited with the Fair Trade Seal, which has become in the promotion instrument that alouds small scale producers entering to the international market in more equitable and uniform conditions, favouring in this way been able to maintain the activity under the clime and market adversities. The production volume in Mexico has been falling due to factors such as decapitalization, the limited supports from the state institutions and the existent disorganization.*

**Keywords:** organic coffee, fair trade, coffee exportations

### **1.Introduction**

Organic coffee has become an alternative to improve mexican producers income whose are dedicated to this activity. The paradigm change in the nineties related to the strategic search of nourishing self sufficiency to the markets release and with that the cancellation of the state participation in the economy, favored producers quited using products like fertilizer-pesticides, giving origin to the manage of their cultives in natural form, which after that was considered like organic or biological coffee by its shadow (forest natural cover they use) and its manage. While in the developed countries more demanding consumers emerged, willing to take care of their health, without bringing importance to the price of the product, this propitiated the creation of certificating organizations related to this activity

In Mexico the activity has extended throughout the diverse states dedicated to this activity, but mainly among the indigenous farmers from poor, marginated regions from Chiapas, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Puebla and Hidalgo in minor measure. The standards are demanded by the certification organizations and producers accomplish such process, caring their farm practices be free from chemicals and pesticides. Organic coffee production in Mexico is supported on the arabic coffee-tree growing, this being the one with the best quality and under the largest demand in the international market, because its low caffeine content, which in certain way helps to protect their health, when ingesting a free chemicals residue free product. Agribusiness have expanded their strategies with the objective to gain a larger market, through products standardization new ideas, by its differentiation, quality, and respect displays to different tastes. Building new consume commercial alternatives, is indubitable it favours the new consume coffee niches like gourmet, origin denominations, organic, the solidary or Fair Trade one, among others. "From the more than 100 million bags of 60 kilos of green coffee annually produced, Brazil and Colombia bring around the 40 per cent; followed by Vietnam, Indonesia and Mexico. From this five, Brasil is the one who produces the most, but its grains are not washed arabic, which rests value to it; Colombia produces less but better, due its aromatics are washed and soft arabic; the once from Indonesia and Vietnam have the worst cotization, due their varieties are robust; while Mexico produces washed, soft arabic, almost as good as the Colombian one. So regarding to volume and qualities, Mexico is located in good position" (Bartra, 2001).

For Waridel (2001), fair trade is an exchange alternative system which objective is to achieve more equitable commercial relations among countries, consumers and producers by eliminating the intermediaries. Allowing small producers to receive a better price for their coffee while supporting the sustainable development in the health subject, education and environmental protection. The emergence of this movement is considered since the scope of who is going to export and who is going to validate it with the denomination registered, to ensure the consumer about what is been offered. Even when we have information since the beginning of the eighties about the Guatemala cooperatives, is also well known that is until the end of the nineties in the Netherlands that the first fair trade brand was introduced, under the name "Max Havelaar", in this way the first seals for certificating quality and procedence were established, under the norms of this type of certifications. In the face of these experiences the mexican coffee producers step by step have looked after incorporate the production and gathering of farm organizations to this movement of the different coffee growing regions, looking for the validation of the certifier organisations. This essay revolve around the search for different alternatives to the development in the rural environment knowing fair trade is a movement with social relevance since in its principles is located the social improvement of the producer communities, under the direct participation of the people involved, with the goal to transform their difficult reality through the expansion of new commercialisation alternatives, because in this buy-sell operation the most benefit for producers, importers and final consumers is expected, achieving this way transparent transactions. The expected objective with this essay is analyzing the importance of alternatives generated by coffee producers in order to improve their incomes, provided from this activity, showing the advantages or fair trade certification.

## ***2. Fair trade, new paradigm in the development or marked reattach***

Aguirre (2005) points out that the dynamic in the development of the world commerce has been performed in fact around the cities markets, that's why the colonized regions had produced for more than four centuries that the potential consumers demand. The advance of this interchange produced that in countries from America Latina, Asia and Africa were specializing in the production of basic products (raw material-commodities) in order to supply the developed markets. According to Renard (1999), the structure of the traditional trade is characterized by three factors: the products and services interrelation in a serie of activities with added value; the space and organizational configuration, so as the territorial from the enterprises which form the productions and marketing web; the power relation or the governability structure which determines the location of the resources in the production chain. The Fair Trade Seal International Organization defines in a very definite way this movement like: "A commercial relation system between small producers and commercialization enterprises, industrial and consumers, which allow small producers to obtain a worthy and stable income; favors as well its own economical, social, cultural and ecologically sustainable procedures development" (Comercio Justo México, 2008). Is because of this that this commerce alternative denominated fair trade emerges, in which the producers obtain a worthy and stable income that propels their own economical, social, and cultural procedures development, also denominated alternative commerce, is an international movement formed by developed countries and countries in development.

With the double objective to improve the access of the most disadvantaged countries to the market and that consumers receive a certified high quality product, elaborated with respect to health and nature care. There have been different points of view from the specialists in the matter of fair trade development and implementation causes; there are different theories about the fair trade origin and implementation causes as an alternative to the precarious conditions of the coffee-growers. Near half century has passed by since the denomination Fair Trade emerged, alternative trade, or no conventional/traditional, concretely in the 60's. This organization emergence comes from a serie of movements at the beginning of the XX century under the fairness demand from the foreign trade. This new movement according to Barratt (1998) was originated in 1973, when the first fair trade coffee appeared, imported from cooperatives from Guatemala. However was until 1988 that the first fair trade brand was introduced in the Netherlands, with the name Max Havelaar, this way the first seal to certificate the quality and precedence of products under the norms related to this type of commerce were established.

This also confirms that the international trade relationships have not but to increase world poverty, inequality among rich and poor countries and environmental decline. To the economic collapse that this situation foresees, a new economic order has to be builded under new forms of democratic cooperation and ecologically sustainable. Fair trade can help to favor the direct interchanges in the world markets and the collaboration among the South producers and the North consumers. This matches of course with Waridel (2001:64) who points out that the TransFair, Max Havelaar and The Fair Trade Foundation conformation as international organizations, is with the purpose that certify the fair trade processes, through their seal use on the food commercialised products in a fair way, such as coffee, tea, cacao, bananas, honey and sugar. This way enterprises have to pay to the certifying organization a fee for license which is from 0.18 to 0.29 american dollars for a kilo of coffee. This money finances the supervision and monitoring process. These initiatives are grouped in the Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FLO), which coordinates the certification process on international scale. Without any doubt these fair trade elements entail to a territories empowering, and specially the one of the farmer organizations who fights to improve life conditions, which for a long time have been under the intermediary dependency. López and Caamal (2009), brings an important apportation when analyzing the organic coffee from Chiapas state production costs and the fair price on the international market, remarking that for the year 2007, costs to maintain conventional coffee without applying fertilizers were around \$6,205.70 for hectare, while benefits were 235 pesos for hectare (income/cost relation, minor to 1 with fertilization and 1.04, allotment without and with fertilizers respectively). Maintaining an organic allotment rises the cost to 44%, but the market price plus the fair trade compensation brings a benefit/cost relation of 1.16, which means a profit of \$1630.9 pesos for hectare, benefit cost relation which includes the workforce cost, even when this has been family, for both kinds of allotments. Otero (2006), points out the fair trade relevance as an important form of social and economic innovation, where he argues the Fair Trade birth in México responds to the convergence of various events independent to its origins, such as: I) The agricultural crisis, in the intern area; II) the coffee prices crisis and the large transnationals increasing power whose control the market, on the external area; III) The social rural capital consolidation thanks to the alliances with external participants; IV) and to the creation of a ideological base which answers as well to the small producers expectatives and ideas as to their organization form in certain zones. Undoubtedly the indicated elements coincide with the rupture on the year 1989 of the established clauses in the Coffee International Convenium (CIC) signed on 1962, which performed as a regulation mechanism on the aromatic market through the negotiation with members and main producers and which turns back to what was before this period: the free market. Price and coffee production were leave without control, which has been occasioning overproduction problems and the prices fell down, due ofert has grown up above the demand.

### **3. The organic agriculture, in search for the Fair Trade**

The organic coffee records date from 54 years ago (1963) with the experience from *La Finca Irlanda* on 1967, with the coffee-growing crisis from 1989-1994, it is retaken to national level, above all in the south part of the country and there it receives the importance it represents to the producers. Nowadays the main organic coffee productive organizations are in their majority organized groups from Chiapas communities, Oaxaca, Veracruz and Puebla, which export directly to the specialized market. Among the most successful organizations in Mexico we find: Indígenas de la Sierra Madre de Motozintla-ISMAM, Unión de Ejidos y Comunidades de Cafeticultores del Beneficio *Majomut*, La Selva, Federación Indígena Ecológica. *Tiemelonlá Nich Klum* in Chiapas, Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo-UCIRI, Coordinadora Estatal de Productores de Café de Oaxaca-CEPCO, Yeni Navan/Michiza1 S.P.R. de R.L.

in Oaxaca, *Tosepan Titataniske* in Puebla, Red Nacional de Organizaciones Cafetaleras Sustentables A.C.-REDCAFES and Unión Regional de Huatusco, Veracruz (López y Caamal, 2009). On May 1999 the seal Fair Trade Mexico, A.C. started operating, few time after, this organization stimulated the constitution of a fair trade certifying authority under the name Sello Mexicano de Comercio Justo, A.C., which guarantees products with the logotype Mexico's Fair Trade Guarantee Stampobey this organizational norms. The interest for the organics production in Mexico has increased considerably along the last ten years, since 33 thousand 587 to 169 thousand 570 certified producers. The organics surface farming stepped from 85 thousand 676 hectares to 351 thousand 904 hectares (from 2003 - 2013). 85 % of the organic production in our country is destined to exportation, mainly to the European markets (Germany, France), and the American one. Even when the national market also registered an increase of 10% yearly on the demand of this kind of certified foodstuff, which were supported by campaigns carried on in collaboration with the Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural y Pesca (SAGARPA). The main organic products grown in Mexico are coffee, which produces in about 50 percent of the area destined for organic; aromatic and medicinal herbs, with 10.31 percent; vegetable gardens 8.45 percent; cacao 5.92 percent, and wild grape with 4.11 percent. With respect to organics sells, particularly in the self service stores, these have increased 20 percent yearly and in the case of specialized stores, sells increased 10 percent (SAGARPA, 2013). While the National Council of Organic Production (2014)<sup>1</sup>, pointed out that same year that income in foreign currency for the exportation of these kind of products are around 400 millions of dollarson yearly average, which goes to the producer states Chiapas, Oaxaca, Michoacán, Querétaro and Guerrero whose concentrate the 77% the total volume of national organic production. Facing such importance hold by the organic agriculture, on 2006 the Organic Products Law-LPO was send Official Diary, 2006) and on April 2010 the regulations with the purpose to homogenize the production, processing, elaboration, preparation, refurbishment, storage, identification, packing, labelled, distribution, transport, commercialization, verification and organic product certification systems, which contribute to the market and international organic products from Mexico as well in importations as exportations.

Without a doubt one of the most important examples is represented by La Unión de Comunidades de la Región of the Istmo (UCIRI), which is considered the most antique coffee organization of the Oaxaca state, founded on 1982, with 17 communities interested in improving the farmer well-being, through the production and coffee selling activities. Assembling together 2,600 members from 56 communities; zapotecs and mixes from the Istmo center and north, cholantals from the south, Chatinos from the Cost and Mixes from the high and middle parts and count with the help from the Tehuantepec diocese and from the european ONGs (<http://www.uciri.com>). UCIRI manages the denominated "Small Producers' Symbol(SPP)", which purpose is to offer a high quality certified product to improve the wellbeing of the participants through the collective work and co-responsible among the small producers, consumers and other participants in the market and society through the fair trade denomination. The North American organization "Equal Exchange" is an important organization which is committed with the Fair Trade denomination and since 1989 has been buying organic coffee to UCIRI. Also have commercial relations with the State Coordinator of Coffee Producers of Oaxaca (CEPCO), Unión Majomut, Indigenous Communities of the Simojovel de Allende Region (CIRSA) and Sierra de Motozintla, organizations from south Mexico. In the case of Sociedad de Solidaridad Social Indígenas de la Madre de Motozintla (ISMAM) in the Soconusco region in the Chiapas state, is an organizations that begins the organic coffee production in 1986, with the support from UCIRI and is a strong Fair Trade promoter. They count with nearly one thousand 300 partner producers and have received also the Naturland certification from Germany and the IMOCControl from Switzerland. In Chiapas exists also the Unión de Ejidos organization de la Selva, who began the organic production in the year of 1991. Nowadays counts with one thousand 200 associated partners. They have implemented a serie of initiatives among the ones is the coffee makers installation in Mexico City, in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas and in Cataluña España whose expend coffee directly from the producer. They are certified by Naturland and IMO-Control, as well as by CERTIMEX, besides they count with other projects like, store and commercialization, technical assessment and dry coffee benefit (Gutierrez, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup>SAGARPA installed formally the National Council of Organic Production (CNPO) on September 2007. The CNPO is a consult organization from SAGARPA with including and representative character for the producers and agents from the society in the subject of organic products.

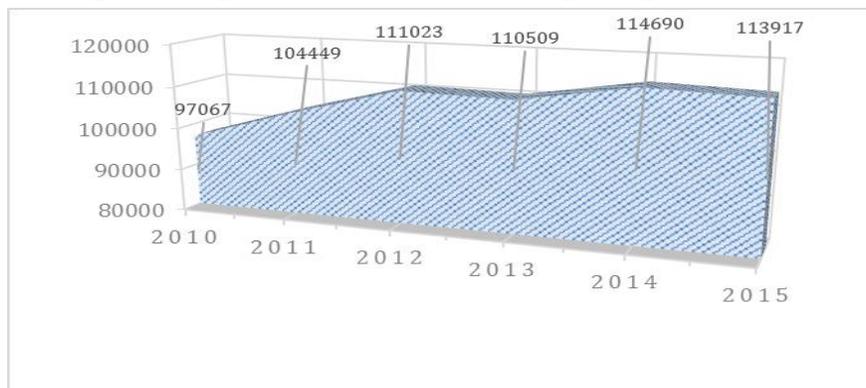
The Tosepan Titataniske in the region of Cuetzalan Puebla has probed in the last thirty years the importance of the organic production of their products, join to their products diversification (coffee, pepper and garden center plants production) and to their strengthening activities for the women culture and development, saving and credit (Tosepantomin), organization and capacitation, home improvement (Toyektanemililis), a health services cooperative (Tosepan Pajti) and an ecological hotel (Tosepankali). Counts with 17,000 associates in an influence area of 66 communities, located in the municipalities of Cuetzalan, Jonotla, Hueytamalco, Tlatlauquitepec, Tuzamapan and Zoquiapan, its origin dates since 1974, still is until the year 2018 when it constitutes itself legally like “*Sociedad Cooperativa Agropecuaria Regional Tosepan Titataniske*”, with partners with common interests.

The Cooperative has dabbles in the Organic and Fair Trade markets. Its organic coffee is known and appreciated in Japan, Germany and Holland, “The coffee and pepper associated producers are happy to see their faces on the coffee packagings covered with kanjis (Japanese letters) and to know that its them who with their hands and efforts have achieved to get to far away places to share a revitalizing drink with the smell of their Kuojtakiloyan-coffee gardens” (<http://www.tosepan.com/>). The organization dedicated to the organic coffee production in the Hidalgo state, mainly referring to the Otomí-Tepehua region and especially in the Tenango de Doria case, has not bring the expected fruits. In the year 2008 through a project denominated “*Certification of production groups for organic coffee in the Sierra Otomí-Tepehua in the State of Hidalgo, Mexico*” founded by the National Council of Science and Technology in Mexico, achieved the wanted certification, which it kept for some years but which lose for the lack of the respective membership payments (González, Duana & González, 2016). Very recently in 2015 the National Union of Agricultural Workers (UNTA) in the state of Oaxaca determined to become a social enterprise to make the maquila and pack organic coffee produced by its members, mainly indigenous and marginalized communities. With the acquisition of a dry profit certified as organic and high technology machinery, with own resources and government financing, they have been able to break the barriers of the commercialization and now they export the grain directly with their marks to United States, Canada, Japan, Kingdom United Kingdom and some other European countries (<http://www.nvinoticias.com/nota/23927/rompen-cacicazgo-caficultor>).

#### 4. Coffee international commercialization mechanisms

Coffee is one of the most important agricultural farming in exportation volume terms, is with any doubt one of the most consumed commodities at worldwide level and exported mainly for 20 countries dedicated to this activity. Accordingly to the Coffee International Organization (2017) the main country who exports this product (on 2015) is without any doubt Brazil, with 60 kilos 37 million sacks, followed by Vietnam with 2.07, Colombia with 12.7 million exported sacks, representing these countries the 62% of worldwide exportations (see figure 1\*). In relation to the production levels we observe that Mexico has fallen until the 11th place (when thirty years ago it occupied the third place in production and importance in the coffee making activity), contributing 2%, while the big producers like Brazil, Vietnam and Colombia, bring the 36.3 %, 16.8 % and 9.6% respectively and in altogether with the 11 countries sum the 90% worldwide production (frame 1).

#### 5. Table and Figures Graphic 1. Coffee worldwide exporting (in thousand sacks60 kgs)\*



Source: International Coffee Organization, 2016 in [http://www.ico.org/es/new\\_historical\\_c.asp](http://www.ico.org/es/new_historical_c.asp)

\*Unit-of-measure nomenclature used by the *International Coffee Organization*

According to the frame 1, since 2011 Brazil has been consolidating like the world leader on the denominated non washed Arabic coffee main producer and robust coffee in minor quantities (both of minor quality than the soft washed Arabic produced in Mexico), keeping an average above 50 millions sack, until get to the 55 millions for the year 2016/2017, highly above his main competitor which is Vietnam who produces 50% less than Brazil. Brazil is the biggest green coffee exporter and worldwide producer and leader in instantaneous coffee sellings. On 2016 produced a record of 49 millions 600 thousand Arabic sacks, but the robust output fell down 25 percent in comparison with 2015 due to a drought. Brazil is also the main instantaneous exporter and for that the variety of robust is required, that is why during the year 2016 opened its frontiers to importing where a bought of one million sacks of 60 kilograms was expected until the end of May 2017, with a limit of 250 thousand sacks by month, with an duty of 2%. Vietnam is the biggest robust coffee cultivator and the second worldwide exporter after Brazil. The Indochinese country exported one million 790 thousand coffee tonnes in 2016, for an income of three thousand 360 million dollars (Vietnam Magazine, 20/02/2017).

**Table1. Leading coffee producers worldwide (in a thousand sacks of 60 kg)**

Position	Producing countries	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
1°	Brasil	50,592	55,420	54,698	52,299	50,376	55,000
2°	Vietnam	26,500	23,402	27,610	26,500	28,737	25,500
3°	Colombia	7,652	9,927	12,163	13,339	14,009	14,500
4°	Indonesia	10,644	11,519	11,265	11,418	12,317	10,000
5°	Etiopia	6,798	6,233	6,527	6,625	6,714	6,600
6°	Honduras	5,887	4,686	4,578	5,258	5,766	5,934
7°	India	5,233	5,303	5,075	5,450	5,800	5,333
8°	Uganda	3,115	3,914	3,633	3,744	3,650	3,800
9°	Perú	5,373	4,453	4,338	2,883	3,301	3,800
10°	Guatemala	3,850	3,763	3,189	3,310	3,420	3,500
11°	México	4,563	4,327	3,916	3,591	2,800	3,100
<b>40 countries</b>	<b>World total</b>	<b>147,904</b>	<b>149,740</b>	<b>152,130</b>	<b>148,724</b>	<b>151,438</b>	<b>151,624</b>

Source: International Coffee Organization, 2016 in [http://www.ico.org/es/new\\_historical\\_c.asp](http://www.ico.org/es/new_historical_c.asp)

According to the statistical data from the Coffee International Organization (2016), consume in the importer countries increased 8% from 2006 to 2016, (corresponding to a 0.8% yearly), while in the last year changed just the 0.5% (2014 to 2015). Regarding the per capita consume by year, with the data from the same organization but for the year 2015, we have Mexico consume an average of 1.13 kg yearly (just in this case Last updated was in 08/02/2016), while in the developed countries the consume is many times superior like, Sweden with 10.1, Norway 8.68, Canada who consumes 6.67, United States of North America 4.5 kg/person, among some of the main consumers. Brazil is not just a great coffee producer and exporter, it also has an important consume of 5.9 kg/person yearly, this allows it to keep an important intern consume of 20.3 million sacks of 60 kg yearly. While the world demand for coffee on 2000-2009, registered a yearly increase of 2.6% and passing from 104 million to 132 million sacks of 60 kilos. In the 2011 period the world consume of aromatic increased at an inferior rithm 1.7% until 137,9 million sacks. According to the world coffee consume, to the statistics published by different communication media specialized in the subject, and to the performed researches, the world demand for this aromatic beverage is concentrated in the non producer countries from the developed world.

The main buyers are in the European Union in its in combination (Germany, France and Italy) United States and Japan like it was shown previously, which in combination represent the 70% of worldwide demand (Table 2). The principal change is without a doubt represented by Tunisia with an important change in importations (33.5) and Turkey with 18.7% and in minor measure USA with 5.7%

**Table2. Main coffee importer countries on the world (in thousand sacks of 60kgs)**

	October-February		%
	2015/2016	2016/2017	
EuropeanUnion	31 877	32 956	3.4
USA	11 250	11895	5.7
Japan	3 125	3116	-0.3
RussianFederation	2 186	2 306	5.5
Switzerland	1 198	1 226	2.3
Norway	317	332	4.6
Turkey	543	644	18.7
Tunisia	159	212	33.5
Total	50 654	52 686	4.0

Source: International Coffee Organization, 2016 in [http://www.ico.org/es/new\\_historical\\_c.asp](http://www.ico.org/es/new_historical_c.asp)

### **6. Coffee production and commercialization in Mexico**

Mexico went from occupying the 9<sup>o</sup> place as green coffee producer to the 11<sup>o</sup> from 2011 to 2016, contributing with the 3% to 2% in this period in relation to the world volume, with the participation of 500 thousand producers who grow in 761 hectares, which plantations are among 12 country entities, where the Chiapas and Veracruz states concentrate the 70% of the national production. The organic coffee represents the 50% of the organic products in the country, for which reason is the main organic food at national level and of the most relevance for the income derived from there. With a strong presence abroad, in 2011 the green coffee exportations reached a yearly value of 900 million dollars. The mexican aromatic is exported to 45 countries from the five continents, being United States, Belgium and Germany our main clients (<https://amecafe.org.mx/>). The national coffee culture is a socially needed activity, due around three million employments depend of it and important for the national income of mexican economy for the volume of its exportations, even when not necessarily represents the best distribution of its income. From the 12 producer states, 4 represent the most of it: Chiapas, Veracruz, Puebla and Oaxaca. Chiapas is the main producer the same way is one of the main certified coffee producers on the world.

The same way it happens with the most of agriculture and livestock Mexican products, the main destiny for the coffee exporting is the United States of North America, which at the same time becomes or main coffee provider, above all the soluble one. Even when our productions volumes are not to the level of big producers like Brazil, Vietnam and Colombia, it is important to point out that our country produces excellent quality coffee, due its typography, high, weather and soils allows cultivating and producing varieties classified among the best of the world.

### **7. Conclusion**

Coffee production is an activity with the most relevance for Mexican farmers, mainly indigenous from the center-south of the country, because of the family's number which depends on it, the diversity and richness from its ecosystems, the contribution to the Mexican economy (PIB), etc. There is international recognition to the adverse life conditions, marginalization and exists poverty and to the contradiction itself which is to be the aromatic producers better esteemed by the developed countries. Fair Trade is the most important existent organization structure which can help to balance the production and the consume, becoming into an option which offers advantages to producers through the organizations who wish to participate in the international market, achieving favorable prices and conditions to improve their incomes. The organic products demand by the developed countries consumers, mainly the European ones and United States, have opened commercialization opportunities for the small producers and therefore for countries in development. Because of its small-scale farming and production volume the exportation market is build for the collective work through the building of organizations.

Due it represents very high costs in the certification subject and it requires investments in such a form it wouldn't be possible in individual form. Mexican producers experience is positive in most of the cases due their income improvement; the partner's number who participate and the organizations that conform it.

It is important to take advantage coffee culture offers to penetrate the organic market specialized niches demanded by the developed countries consumers.

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