

## The Moral Case for Purchasing a New Kind of Fair Trade

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The problems of global health are truly terrible. Millions suffer from diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria.<sup>1</sup> Fair Trade Health labeling can address these issues. The idea is to use a new rating system for pharmaceutical companies to incentivize positive change.<sup>2</sup> The best companies can be given a license for a Fair Trade Health label on their products. Companies will have an incentive to use the label to improve market-share. If consumption of Fair Trade Health goods reaches one percent of the market in generic and over-the-counter medications, alone, that will create about US \$360 million of incentives for pharmaceutical companies to become Fair Trade Health certified by expanding access to effective medicines needed by the global poor.<sup>3</sup>

One might wonder whether consumers have any moral obligation to purchase Fair Trade Health certified goods. This paper defends the following argument:

1. Pharmaceutical companies have violated, or at least failed to live up to, their obligations.
2. It is at least permissible, if not morally required, for consumers to withdraw their economic support from companies that have violated, or failed to live up to, their obligations.
- C. So it is at least permissible, if not morally required, for consumers to withdraw their economic support from pharmaceutical companies.

The paper concludes by explaining how this line of argument might be adapted to make the case for a moral obligation to purchase other kinds of Fair Trade certified goods.

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1 UNICEF. 2005. *Millennium Development Goals: Combat AIDS/HIV, Malaria, and other Diseases*. Geneva: UNICEF. Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/mdg/disease.html> [Accessed 2 Feb 2011]. Center for Disease Control (CDC). 2005. *World TB Day, March 24th 2005*. Atlanta, GA: Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, CDC. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/WorldTBDay/2005/resources\\_progress\\_elimination.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/WorldTBDay/2005/resources_progress_elimination.htm) [Accessed 2 May 2008].

2 Nicole Hassoun. 2012a. *Globalization and Global Justice: Shrinking Distance, Expanding Obligations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Nicole Hassoun. 2012b. "Global Health Impact: A Basis for Labeling and Licensing Campaigns?" *Developing World Bioethics* 12(3): 121-34. Nicole Hassoun. 2013. "Rating Efforts to Extend Access on Essential Medicines: Increasing Global Health Impact" In *Health Inequalities and Global Justice*, edited by Patti Tamara Lenard and Christine Straehle, 176-94. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

3 Ibid.