**Sainsbury’s response to Oxfam’s Behind the Barcodes Campaign**

As a company with the vision to be the most trusted retailer, we know the importance of running our business in an honest, ethical and sustainable way. This remains as true today as it was 150 years ago when we opened our very first store.

We have engaged with Oxfam for both years of their campaign, providing feedback on their scorecard indicators and fully participating. We welcome the greater focus on transparency and whilst we acknowledge there is still a long way to go, we have increased our score this year, and are recognised as one of the retailers with the strongest performance on workers’ rights. The indicators on human rights are stretching targets to reach, and although it is difficult to demonstrate impactful change in just one year when dealing with systemic industry challenges as highlighted by Oxfam, we have carefully reviewed the recommendations and are considering which we are able to implement in an appropriate time frame. With regards to supply chain transparency, we have already published a list of our clothing and footwear manufacturing sites, and are working on a plan to expand this across other products.

**Assam tea**

As the Oxfam report highlights, 80% of tea produced in Assam is bought and consumed domestically in India and the UK imports less than 2.5% of the Assam region’s total production. We therefore recognise the challenge in driving significant change with such a small part of the market, though we take our responsibilities seriously with regards to driving up standards in our supply chains. We always aim to work with our suppliers to support continuous improvement.

All our tea sourcing from Assam in India is either Rainforest Alliance or Fairtrade accredited. We would need more information from Oxfam to investigate the tea estates highlighted in their report. As the Oxfam research highlights, there are inconsistencies across the region on how to calculate in-kind benefits provided to workers as part of the Plantations Labour Act (PLA) of 1951, thus causing inconsistencies in wages. Our suppliers support actions that allow a living wage, recognising that this requires a collaborative effort from different stakeholders across the industry. They promote the PLA reform and thus support producers in achieving a living wage and decent working conditions.

**Brazilian tropical fruit**

One of the Brazilian companies mentioned in the Oxfam report is an indirect supplier to us. They are noted for their good practices but some unacceptable working conditions are mentioned regarding one of their farms, which we do not source from. Nevertheless, we are following up with the supplier on the allegations. We acknowledge the difficulties with sourcing from Brazil with the current political landscape and we are working to support our suppliers.

We pride ourselves on having good supplier relationships and work with them to support our goals to ensure our high standards are met. Ethical trading is a key part of this relationship. We require all our suppliers to meet the Sainsbury’s Code of Conduct for Ethical Trade which is based on the Ethical Trading Initiative Base Code for ethical sourcing. Our code covers 12 key principles, including safe and hygienic working conditions, payment of a fair wage and freedom of association. We are also part of, and lead, many collaborative initiatives with our competitors and other stakeholders such as unions and NGOs to drive improvements in human rights across various sectors and countries.

As we work on our new sustainability strategy, we will be taking the Oxfam recommendations into account and work to understand where we can have the greatest impact for positive change in our value chains.