

## **L'OCCITANE en Provence is recognised by the UN as an exemplary business for its action in Burkina Faso**

Following a study by an independent body, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has decided to recognise L'OCCITANE as an exemplary business, within the framework of its 2013 "Growing Inclusive Markets" initiative.

In the early 1980s, Olivier Baussan, founder of L'OCCITANE, met with women from Burkina Faso. They introduced him to shea butter – the multi-talented<sup>1</sup> ingredient that is now emblematic of the brand. And so it was that L'OCCITANE began working with about a hundred Burkinabé women to develop a **shea butter industry, in the spirit of sustainable development.**

**In 2012**, the economic impact of this was significant:

- L'OCCITANE purchased the record amount of **550 tons of shea butter.**
- **L'OCCITANE is the biggest importer of traditional shea butter** from Burkina Faso.

This exchange is more than just a commercial relationship. L'OCCITANE ensures that the women of Burkina Faso reap the full benefits of their work by purchasing the butter from them once it has been processed in situ. **They are paid a fair price**, which covers production, environmental and social costs, and leaves a margin for investment – in accordance with the criteria of the EFT fair trade label.\* **L'OCCITANE makes an 80% down payment on production** and helps the women's groups to improve production, export their produce and find new outlets.

In parallel, during the dry period, the **L'OCCITANE Foundation** steps in to help these women by supporting their economic emancipation and developing literacy centres and microcredit programmes.

*"Today, this recognition of our action by the UN is proof of the value<sup>2</sup> of the partnership set up with the women of Burkina Faso 30 years ago.*

*The shea tree is what binds us to these women, but it has also paved the way for their economic emancipation."*

*Olivier Baussan, founder of L'OCCITANE*

\*EFT: Ecocert Fair Trade in the spirit of solidarity and responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> Ou bien "exceptionally talented"

<sup>2</sup> Je pense que c'est le meilleur mot – il ne faut pas comprendre "valeur" dans le sens argent.