

- **The Secretary General Ministry of Trade,**
- **The Governor of the Littoral Region,**
- **The Senior Divisional Officer for Wouri Division,**
- **The Executive Director of the International Cocoa Organization,**
- **The Secretary General of Cocoa Producers' Alliance,**
- **The Representative of the United Nations Forum for Sustainable Standards,**
- **General Managers, Managing Directors of the Cocoa Fraternity,**
- **All other protocol duely respected,**
- **Representative of Farmers and Farmers Organisations,**
- **Distinguished Invitees,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

In my dual capacity as Vice Chair of the International Cocoa Council for 2012-2013 and as Chair of the national organising committee of the ICCO/Cameroon Government sponsored International Workshop on Cocoa Certification, it is indeed my honour and privilege to welcome all of you to this beautiful setting of Hotel Sawa here in Douala.

Permit me, first of all to address my sincere gratitude to the Head of State, President Paul BIYA, for authorising the hosting of this workshop in Douala. Likewise, my gratitude is extended to the Prime Minister, Head of Government and the Minister of Trade who facilitated the process and provided the necessary logistic support for this important event.

I can not of course forget the Executive Director of the International Cocoa Organisation for having proposed in the first place, the hosting of this event in Cameroon.

Distinguished personalities, Invitees, Ladies and Gentlemen,

These last days were not easy for us of the national organising committee as well as for the ICCO Secretariat in London. I am sure we all had some sleepless nights worrying over when the final decision to relocate to Douala would be announced. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused by the change of venue and promise to make it up to you over the next few days.

Douala city has a lot to offer in terms of touristic niceties. Use your free hours, to unwind and enjoy the legendary hospitality of this bustling metropolis.

Distinguished personalities, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This opening ceremony is chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade in the name of the Minister who for obvious reasons is unavoidably absent. He shall be here on Thursday at the closing ceremony.

I should like to acknowledge the presence of the Governor of the Littoral Region and his entourage who have gracefully accepted to participate at this ceremony despite their busy schedules.

Distinguished personalities, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me at this juncture to also acknowledge the presence of the following dignitaries. As chair of the International Cocoa Council for 2012/2013, I owe them that.

- Mr YAPO Robert of the Conseil du Cacao et Café de Côte d'Ivoire,
- Mr ALY TOURE, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire in London in charge of commodities,
- Mr EDEM AMEGASHIE DURON of Ghana Cocoa Board,
- Dr IYAMA of the Cocoa Association of Nigeria,
- The Directeur Général of la Caistab du Gabon, current Chair of COPAL General Assembly.

To complet this list, I have the spokes person for Consumers Countries Dr OHST RUEDIGER of Gemany and the spokes person for Producers Counstries, Mr ETOA ABENA Pierre Marie Théodore of Cameroon.

As Chair of the national committee, I cannot forget my brothers

- HOPE SONA EBAI, Chief of Party African Cocoa Innitiative and
- Jonas MVA MVA of the Dutch Sustainable Trade Innitiative, two Cameroonians working for two important Cocoa Organisations.

Permit me to single two other important partners,

- Mme KATE TOMETIO FOTSO, General Manager of TELKAR COCOA local partner of CARGILL,
- .....  
General Manager of SIC CACAO, local partner of BARRY CALLIBAULT, both have been very supportive in the Certification Process in Cameroon at this stage of the game.

The very last but the most important, the representatives of the thousands of farmers on whose backs we all have been having a more or less free ride.

Ladies and Gentlemen, accept our hearty welcome.

The workshop is captioned the ICCO International Workshop on Cocoa Certification. We all know how complex and controversial the subject matter is. I will not venture into any conjecture at this point but simply quote from the ICCO notice which outlines the objectives of this workshop as follows. "To bring together all stakeholders involved in cocoa certification and other standards with a view to building consensus on the definition of the concept, the model and the best approach to supplement and improve upon existing certification schemes".

That is the business of the three following days.

Permit me however to recall that under the patronage of the Ministry of Trade, the National Cocoa and Coffee Board back in April 2011 organised a national workshop on cocoa certification in Cameroon. Four major resolutions were arrived at

- Setting up a national working group on certification,
- Intensifying farmer training in good agricultural and post harvest practices,
- Establishing a mechanism for rewarding quality through the entire value chain,
- And intensifying communication within and without the cocoa value chain.

Certification is not entirely new to our landscape. Up to date, some initiatives undertaken by industry are encouraged and supervised by the State through the National Cocoa and Coffee Board. Results are perceptible on the ground and the volume of certified cocoa is on the increase despite the controversies I mentioned.

Distinguished personalities, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are looking forward to the outcome of this workshop hoping that answers shall be found for the numerous questions pending. It is on this note that I end my introductory remarks. Once more thank you for coming in your numbers and I wish you fruitful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Cameroun.