

THE “ACCRA AGENDA”

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE WORLD COCOA ECONOMY

The “Accra Agenda” towards a Sustainable World Cocoa Economy was developed through a Round Table Meeting which was held at the International Conference Centre in Accra, Ghana from 3-6 October 2007 with the generous sponsorship of the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands. The ICCO facilitated the preparation and running of the Meeting together with the Ghana Cocoa Board.

There were more than 200 participants in the Round Table Meeting from 25 countries, spanning five continents. They included representatives from cocoa farmers, cooperatives, traders, exporters, processors, chocolate manufacturers, wholesalers, governmental and non-governmental organizations, financial institutions as well as donor agencies. The Round Table was conducted over four days in five plenary sessions and three focus groups, which comprised the farmers, the government and industry/civil society participants in each of the groups.

Consensus was achieved on the following priority areas for action:

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- Create and enforce adequate laws and norms amongst others on land tenure, labour laws, child labour, forced labour and trafficking, environmental legislation, and food safety;
- Develop a national cocoa development plan (supported by an inventory of cocoa resources) and align with rural transformation strategies;
- Facilitate an inventory of existing sustainability initiatives and evaluate their relevance to the mainstream cocoa sector;
- Improve access to markets for cocoa and cocoa products and facilitate trade;
- Facilitate access to affordable financial services;
- Promote investment in research and in knowledge transfer along the cocoa chain;
- Provide training for farmers and education for all in the community through extension services;
- Allow income-creation from new products and services based on available natural resources;
- Formulate and implement appropriate policies to address gender issues; and
- Develop and support an efficient market information system in producing countries.

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

- Strive for remunerative prices and increased income for cocoa farmers, including consideration of the impact of fiscal policies;
- Promote the establishment and strengthening of effective cocoa farmers' and labour organizations;
- Promote production systems that conserve biodiversity and ecosystems;
- Develop and promote Good Agricultural Practices to increase productivity and quality in a manner that respects both the environment and social standards;
- Encourage diversification into alternative sources of income;
- Provide adequate infrastructure (roads, schools, hospitals, etc);
- Reduce losses due to pests and diseases by introduction of integrated pest management;
- Promote and support local services providing improved planting materials, fertilizers, pesticides, among others and provide related training;
- Mechanize farm operations to reduce costs where possible;
- Increase labour efficiency through better management practices;
- Develop a methodology to compensate farmers for helping to reduce greenhouse gas emission and sustaining the environment by way of financial payment for ecosystem services such as carbon trade, water management, subsidies and development aid; and
- Encourage the involvement of young adults in cocoa cultivation and other related activities due to the increasing age of current cocoa farmers.

SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIALIZATION

- Develop and strengthen an efficient supply chain to increase the margin received by farmers;
- Maintain an enhanced cocoa quality through cocoa marketing systems;
- Improve and support traceability in the value chain; and
- Reduce exposure to price volatility through appropriate mechanisms.

SUSTAINABLE PROCESSING AND MANUFACTURING

- Introduce innovations in cocoa products and by-products;
- Promote further processing and manufacturing in origin countries; and
- Reduce carbon footprint and invest in energy efficient technologies.

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

- Formulate and implement strategies to meet the changing expectations of consumers;
- Inform consumers on cocoa production and cocoa farmers' concerns;
- Increase consumption in mainstream markets and develop consumption in emerging economies including in origin countries;
- Expand niche markets (certified cocoa, fine or flavour, single origin among others);
- Support research into nutritional and health benefits of cocoa and cocoa products; and
- Support research into the environmental and social benefits of cocoa.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

- Ensure compliance with international regulations and coordinate actions at national and regional levels;
- Enhance the use of a wide range of resources for the cocoa sector and consider mechanisms for financing initiatives to achieve sustainability in the cocoa economy; and
- Strive for transparency in cocoa markets through international cooperation towards a sustainable world cocoa economy.

NEXT STEPS

Participants to the Round Table would like to continue to operate in an open and participatory approach. They expressed the view that encouraging progress had been made during this first Round Table, but much remains to be done before the world cocoa economy could be considered as sustainable.

Participants strongly proposed holding a further Round Table meeting in about 12 months' time in another cocoa producing country. ICCO was invited to consider facilitating this (once agreed by ICCO Council) and to develop a concrete agenda, inviting stakeholders.

It was considered very important to maintain the momentum of this initiative in the coming months, leading toward the second Round Table Meeting on a Sustainable World Cocoa Economy.

Accra, 6 October 2007