Protecting the Diversity of Cocoa
Prospects for Ensuring Sustainable Production and Diversified Markets
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Protecting the Diversity of Cocoa

• The problem and top priority
• Why is cocoa genetic diversity so important?
• Why the urgency?
• How is genetic diversity of cocoa to be protected?
• How can diversity contribute to niche markets and impact mainstream cocoa production?
• How can producer countries meet cocoa demand?
The problem and top priority

• The chocolate industry faces multiple threats to the supply of its key ingredient, cocoa, even while demand for cocoa increases by 3 percent on average annually.

• Good quality, locally adapted planting materials are continuously required whatever country, region or farming system.

CocoaAction:

Development and access to improved planting materials to farmers for farm rehabilitation and productivity increases.

The first work stream:

Substantially scale-up effective and delivery of improved planting material to farmers.
Why is cocoa genetic diversity so important?

The need for improved, diverse varieties is urgent:

• Pest and disease pressure
• Environmental pressure
• Markets
• Smallholder production
• Quality
• Flavours

We need to keep all our options open for the future.
Why the urgency?

Threats to genetic diversity:

• Spread of pests and diseases
• Habitat loss due to natural disasters, extreme weather, and deforestation.
• Loss of traditional varieties grown.
• Climate change causing shifts in production.

Threats to conserved materials:

• Collections in developing countries are at risk.
• Lack of funding for adequate management of \textit{ex situ} collections.
• Few collections have safety duplication of unique materials.
How is cocoa genetic diversity to be protected?

- Only 2 international collections:
  - Cocoa Research Centre (CRC) Trinidad and Tobago
  - Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) in Costa Rica.
- International Cocoa Quarantine Centre at the University of Reading, (ICQCR), allows for the safe transfer of germplasm around the world.
- *In situ* and on farm conservation
- Support the growing, robust system to conserve and use genetic diversity to support breeding programs in producing countries in West Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia.
- *Global Strategy for the Conservation and Use of Cocoa Genetic Resources.*
How can diversity contribute to niche markets and impact mainstream cocoa production?

• Access to greater genetic diversity is critical to a sustainable cocoa sector and improves farmers’ incomes, quality of life and secure the future of cocoa.

• Diversity of cocoa flavors from all growing regions provides opportunities for an increasing differentiation of cocoa into higher-valued and diverse qualities and flavors.
How can producer countries meet cocoa demand?

- Investing in genetic resource preservation.
- All countries are highly dependent on genes and varieties conserved and evaluated in other countries and regions.
- The efforts necessary can only be achieved and carried out through international (inter-regional) collaboration and by bringing together players in public and private sectors.
Thank you

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