REPORT OF THE SECOND ROUNDTABLE FOR A SUSTAINABLE COCOA ECONOMY (RSCE2)

Note by the Secretariat:

This report has been prepared by the Secretariat for the RSCE2 web site. It provides an overview and the outcome of the roundtable, the preparations, including the preparatory meeting in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, culminating in the actual hosting of the RSCE2 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

RSCE2 is sponsored by:

- Côte d’Ivoire
- Germany
- The Netherlands
- Switzerland
- Trinidad and Tobago
- International Cocoa Organization
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INTRODUCTION

1. The ICCO Secretariat acknowledged with great appreciation the kind sponsorship generously provided by the Governments of Côte d’Ivoire, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Trinidad and Tobago, without which the preparations and the hosting of the RSCE2 would not have been possible.

THE RSCE2 WORKING GROUP

2. For the preparations, an independent RSCE2 Working Group with members representing major stakeholder groups was formed and tasked with the mandate to undertake the necessary preparations for the RSCE2 including the preparatory meeting in Abidjan. A Coordination office was set up in the ICCO Secretariat staffed by a Roundtable Coordinator and assisted by a part time assistant. A dedicated Roundtable website was also launched to generate wider publicity and to act as a platform for engaging public discussions/contributions. The Working Group established six Experts Working Groups to prepare the working documents for deliberations at the RSCE2. A local organizing Committee was also formed by the Ministry of Agriculture of Trinidad and Tobago. To facilitate coordination and preparations, a number of telephone conferences were conducted between the Secretariat and the local organizing Committee.

3. Together with the Roundtable Coordinator and facilitated by the Secretariat of the ICCO, the Working Group made all necessary preparations for the RSCE2 including preparation of background documents, agenda, logistics and publicity. The RSCE2 Working Group, chaired by two Co-Chairs, Mme. Amouan Acquah (Côte d’Ivoire) and Mr. Tony Lass (United Kingdom), met seven times in total, starting with the first meeting on 6 March 2008 and ending with the seventh meeting on 28 May 2009. All the meetings took place in London at offices of ICCO, except for one in Berlin. The reports of all WG meetings were published on the Roundtable website. An average of 20 members or alternate members participated in each meeting and engaged actively in the discussions. Group members also contributed to the documents developed by the Working Group. The Group discussed and finalized the programme and the Background Documents, including the list of invited speakers, presenters, and the chair persons of the sessions.

RSCE2 PREPARATORY MEETING IN ABIDJAN

4. The RSCE2 Preparatory Meeting was held in Abidjan from 10-12 February 2009 to enable participants who could not attend the Roundtable meeting in Trinidad and Tobago to take on board their inputs for consideration at the second Roundtable proper. Côte d’Ivoire kindly hosted the meeting and contributed greatly to the success of the meeting. Over 200 participants and key stakeholders, mainly from the major cocoa producing region West Africa convened and constructively discussed in the framework issues of the sustainable production and consumption of cocoa. Côte d’Ivoire provided rapporteurs / a scientific committee to report on all the sessions. This committee summarized the sessions and drafted a summary report of the conclusions and recommendations from the meeting. The final report of the meeting in Abidjan formed one of the RSCE2 Background Document for deliberation in Trinidad and Tobago Roundtable.
RSCE2 IN PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

5. The Second Roundtable for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy (RSCE2) took place in Trinidad and Tobago from 24-26 March 2009. The meeting successfully convened over 300 stakeholders representing all stages of the cocoa value chain, cocoa producing regions and the major cocoa consumers. The meeting in terms of logistics, facilitation and side events was conducted in a constructive atmosphere, thanks to a very committed and generously supporting host.

6. The organization of the event of this size and nature posed a challenge, both in terms of the number of participants and in budgeting. Amongst others these included the high local costs of hotel accommodation and catering in Trinidad and Tobago, costly flight tickets and Daily Subsistence Allowances (DSA), large number of participants in both meetings and the appreciating US Dollar which substantially impacted the budget. Despite these challenges, the Secretariat managed the expenditures very prudently and as a result, following the successful conclusions of both the Abidjan Preparatory and the RSCE2 Meetings, a small amount remained unspent.

7. Overall, given the broad diversity of participants, it was recognized that some would have had higher expectations in terms of the outcomes of RSCE2. The Secretary General of COPAL made a statement on behalf of its members. However, the broad consensus was that sustainability in cocoa was now better defined, more widely discussed and the fact that stakeholders were still engaged in continuous dialogue, has raised the profile of a sustainable cocoa economy. It was agreed that much has been achieved to enhance stakeholders’ understanding of the cocoa sustainability concept but much more remained to be done.

8. The outcome of the RSCE2 known as the Declaration of Trinidad and Tobago provides a solid basis and challenging mandate for further work towards a more sustainable cocoa economy at the international and national level. Participants reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Accra Agenda and discussed major issues. It was recognized that the Accra Agenda had raised awareness on the need to work towards a sustainable cocoa economy and had made considerable progress by establishing priority areas for action towards a sustainable cocoa economy. The Roundtable arrived at the following conclusions:

   a. Agreed on a working document containing the “Ten key elements to enhance the implementation of the Accra Agenda” to be further discussed at future meetings.

   b. Encouraged to further improve the document on “Guidelines on Best Known Practices in the Cocoa Value Chain” by widening its scope to include all stages such as processing, manufacturing, retailing and consumption.

   c. Agreed to continue as a coalition of stakeholders hosted and facilitated by ICCO. The negotiations on the new International Cocoa Agreement provide Members with the opportunity to examine the ways and means of providing the appropriate legal framework for the Roundtable.

   d. Agreed to set up an Expert Working Group to thoroughly study the feasibility of establishing a Cocoa Sustainability Fund to provide additional direct and timely financing of relevant projects and programmes in the cocoa sector, primarily for the benefit of producers.

   e. Participants expressed their resolve to continue working together in a spirit of cooperation and respect for the roles to be played by the different stakeholders.
f. Agreed to continue the process initiated in Accra and to hold a Third Roundtable for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy (RSCE3) in the Netherlands, at a time to be decided.

THE ICCO COUNCIL DECISION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE ROUNDTABLE FOR A SUSTAINABLE COCOA ECONOMY (RSCE2) AND CONSIDERATION OF THE WAY FORWARD

9. The results and outcome of the second Roundtable meeting was reported to the 79th session of the ICCO Council in Moscow in June 2009 to decide on the next steps.

10. The Council expressed its sincere gratitude to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the excellent hosting of the Second Roundtable for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy, which had taken place in Port of Spain from 24-26 March 2009 through the generous sponsorship provided by the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The Roundtable had culminated in “The Declaration of Trinidad and Tobago” which contained key recommendations on issues such as guidelines on best known practices in the cocoa value chain, the Modus Operandi of the RSCE and the feasibility of establishing a Cocoa Sustainability Fund. The Government of the Netherlands had kindly offered to host the next Roundtable meeting at a date to be determined.

11. Following the meetings of the Roundtable Working Group and consultations on a Cocoa Sustainability Fund in May 2009, the representatives of Côte d’Ivoire and Brazil expressed the view that the Council should take stock of the recommendations of the first and second Roundtable meetings before proceeding to the organization of a third Roundtable meeting, noting that the Organization should avoid adopting a paternalistic approach in relation to the national sovereign policies of producing countries, through the imposition of certification. They observed that the creation of a Cocoa Sustainability Fund could place an additional financial burden on producers and added that the preparations for any future Roundtable meeting should be undertaken by the Consultative Board on the World Cocoa Economy.

12. The spokesman for Consumers noted that the Second Roundtable (RSCE2) had been very positive in bringing together a wide representation of stakeholders from across the cocoa chain, noting that the Council had agreed to the creation of an independent Working Group to prepare for the RSCE2, which had functioned well. It was important to maintain the momentum in preparing for the Third Roundtable. He added that consultations on the creation of a Cocoa Sustainability Fund were at a very early stage, and that the Council had yet to agree upon the establishment of a Working Group for the Fund. The collection of a levy was a matter to be closely considered, so as to avoid that producers would be burdened with extra costs.

13. The spokesman for Producers tabled a Declaration by the producing countries in French for further consideration by the Council at its next session in September 2009:

14. Amongst others, while asserting their desire to work towards a more sustainable cocoa economy, with particular emphasis on economic aspects; the declaration recommended that the scope and applicability of the decisions and recommendations made in the first two Roundtables be assessed; that the next Roundtable should not be organized until that assessment has been completed and duly approved by the relevant ICCO bodies; that the RSCE2 Working Group should not be reconvened; that the organization of any future Roundtable should be undertaken by the Consultative Board on the World Cocoa Economy, which should in due course submit specific proposals to the Council regarding
the effective implementation of this remit; and reiterated that any initiative in this area should respect the national legislation in each country with regard to social issues and matters of labour law and environmental protection. It further recommended that the Roundtable be considered as a forum for debate, answerable to the ICCO and organized as required.

15. Finally, the Council agreed to conduct an evaluation of the recommendations of the first and second Roundtable meetings at its next session in September 2009.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

16. Arising from the Council decision, it would mean that the hosting of the next Roundtable and the next steps towards achieving sustainability in the cocoa economy would be taken by the ICCO Council at its next meeting. In this regard, the ICCO Secretariat has prepared a document providing a status report on the implementation of the Accra Agenda and the Declaration of Trinidad and Tobago and recommendations for the way forward for the consideration of the Council. The ensuing Council decision will be posted on the Roundtable website for information of all interested stakeholders.