

Press release

The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa and the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa discuss progress since the World Cocoa Conference in Berlin at joint event at the International Fair for Sweets and Snacks (ISM) in Cologne

Using the optimistic mindset – further strengthening trust

Berlin/Cologne, 30/01/2019 - "Business as usual is no longer an option." Was the outcome of the World Cocoa Conference in Berlin nine months ago a signal for a new beginning, and has the cocoa sector become more sustainable since then? This question was discussed by three representatives of the confectionery industry and the food retailers and a cooperative representative from Côte d'Ivoire at a joint event of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa and the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa at the International Confectionery Fair in Cologne. For the about 100 participants in the discussion event, it was clear that progress was made, especially in terms of cooperation at international level and between the various actors from private sector, government and civil society, such as the Cocoa & Forests-Initiative to end deforestation. In this initiative governments of three cocoa-producing countries, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Colombia, take part, and ambitious national implementation plans have been developed.

The Swiss and German sustainability platforms have joined forces with further key actors from civil society and the private sector, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and other organizations to establish an international working group on living income for cocoa farmers. The Task Force Living Income aims to develop solutions to close the income gap that exists between the current income of cocoa farmers, which is mostly below the poverty line (USD 1.90 per person per day as defined by the World Bank), and a living income. With the foundation of the Belgian multi-stakeholder initiative "Beyond Chocolate" at the beginning of this year, a third main consumer country of cocoa, along with Germany and Switzerland, is now clearly committed to a sustainable cocoa sector and will support the previous activities.

And yet, there are still great tasks to be accomplished. The Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), Hans-Joachim Fuchtel, as well as the Deputy Consul General of Switzerland in Frankfurt a. M., Hans-Peter Willi, addressed in their opening speeches the need to develop a clear structure and a common understanding for the entire supply chain. "We must make the measures verifiable and also make the governments of the producing countries responsible," said Fuchtel. And Willi also said in view of the urgent problems such as

poverty, loss of biodiversity, deforestation and climate change: "The Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa has set as their goal to engage actively in the solution of these problems."

The Chairman of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa, Wolf Kropp-Büttner, referred to the recently adopted 10-point Action Plan for a sustainable cocoa sector of the Federal Ministries of Germany involved, BMEL and BMZ. "The 10 points are widely in line with the objectives of GISCO," Kropp-Büttner said. "They are a visible sign that the urgent problems in the cocoa sector are to be tackled together in a sustainable and effective way.

The farmers themselves are an important key actor to improve the situation in cocoa cultivation. They must learn and play their role as entrepreneurs. Although this still needs to be supported. Petra Heid of Chocolats Halba named three essential elements to strengthen producers: training, especially in cultivation with a focus on diversification through mixed cultures, but also in accounting and farm management, in order to achieve secure nutrition and greater economic independence. Pre-financing also is an important element in facilitating investment.

Florian Schütze of LIDL emphasized that farmers must be given an economic future. The company has been taking responsibility for a sustainable cocoa sector for years. "With Lidl, Fairtrade producers have a sales channel with a guaranteed minimum price and Fairtrade premiums that guarantee planning security and enable consistent cocoa production," Schütze said.

Alida N'Takpe-Coulibaly, the representative of an Ivorian cocoa farmers' cooperative, pointed out that farmers need stronger support in their step towards a safer economic existence. "They need to learn and develop an understanding of how to manage their income," she said. Income could also be saved or invested. This would require a rethink on the part of farmers and could only be achieved through long-term support, like coaching. Even when world market prices were high, such as in 2011 with over 3,000 US-Dollars per ton of cocoa beans, farmers did not invest. Profits were neither invested in the business nor in the education of the children. Here women play a particularly important role. Their income benefits the family to a much higher degree than the income of men.

Barry Callebaut actively takes part in the discussion how to improve the income of the farmers to overcome poverty and ensure their subsistence. Through its "Forever Chocolate" sustainability initiative, the world's leading processor of quality chocolate and cocoa products aims at lifting 500,000 farmers out of poverty by 2025, eliminating abusive child labour in its supply chain, becoming CO₂-positive and using only sustainably sourced ingredients. To this end, the company is actively involved in numerous international alliances. Andres Tschannen of Barry Callebaut referred from

this experience to the important role that the governments of the producing countries play in the quest for greater sustainability.

Alida N'Takpe-Coulibaly also mentioned another important aspect: "Many young people are interested in agriculture. It is important to involve them more in projects," she said. She herself studied economics, but then decided to continue her family's cocoa farming tradition and founded the cooperative RASSO in 2015. Since then, the number of members has grown continuously from around 100 to over 800, of whom more than 300 are women.

Dr. Stefan Schmitz, Head of Department at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), spoke of a clear change in awareness, which could be perceived. "It is important for successful change to continue the numerous good initiatives and projects," Schmitz said. Progress in regulation is also needed. "The BMZ will promote this as well," Schmitz continued. Under the motto "promote and claim", the BMZ wants to strengthen direct dialogue with producer countries and demand policy changes more strongly. A third point is to strengthen forums in which producing countries also sit at the table. The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa with its project PRO-PLANTEURS is one example of this. It involves the government of Côte d'Ivoire as well as the German Federal Government.

Urs Furrer, board member of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, in his closing remarks reinforced the demand for the inclusion of producer countries and once more focused on farmers. "We have to make cocoa farming a successful business, Furrer said. "My wish therefore is to establish also a multi-stakeholder initiative in a producer country. We have to achieve an even stronger exchange and to enable more joint learning from mistakes we made," Furrer continued.

Lucas Simons of NewForesight moderated the event and has broad knowledge of sustainability, challenges and solutions. He said the start has been made. The sector is at a crossroads where a disorderly juxtaposition of many initiatives creates a system where actors develop mutual trust, coordinate and work towards a common goal. "I see us close to this point," Simons said, calling for the trust that has grown to be nurtured and further strengthened.



Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao
German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa



Swiss Platform for
Sustainable Cocoa



Caption:

Using the optimistic mindset in the cocoa sector – The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa and the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa in a joint event discussed together with about 100 participants at the International Sweets and Snacks Fair (ISM) Cologne what progress has been made since the World Cocoa Conference 2018 in Berlin.

(from the right) Hosts and panelists: Hans-Peter Willi, Deputy Consul General of Switzerland in Frankfurt a. M., Petra Heid, Chocolats Halba, Wolf Kropp-Büttner, GISCO, Alida N'Takpe-Coulibaly, cooperative Rasso, Hans-Joachim Fuchtel, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), Urs Furrer, Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, Beate Weiskopf, GISCO, Andres Tschannen, Barry Callebaut, Florian Schütze, Lidl, Christine Müller, Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, Lucas Simons, NewForesight.

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Caption:

Alida N'Takpe-Coulibaly of the Ivorian cocoa cooperative RASSO spoke about the situation of the cocoa farmers. Protection of natural resources, project schemes and engagement from the consumers' side were topics in the presentations of Petra Heid, Chocolats Halba, Andres Tschannen, Barry Callebaut, Florian Schütze, Lidl *(from the right)*.

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About the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa:

The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) is a joint initiative of the Federal Government, civil society, industry and retail and brings together relevant actors from Germany with those of producing countries and international initiatives. The goal of GISCO is to improve living conditions of cocoa farmers, to protect and preserve natural resources and biodiversity in the producing countries as well as to increase the proportion of sustainable cocoa. GISCO currently has more than 70 members and is open to other interested parties.

See here for more information: www.kakaoforum.de/en

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German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa



Swiss Platform for
Sustainable Cocoa

About The Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa

The Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa brings together actors from the cocoa and chocolate industry, the public sector, non-governmental organisations, and research institutes. The members of the Cocoa Platform actively engage to promote sustainability in the cocoa value chain.

See here for more information: www.kakaoplattform.ch/en

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