

*Press Release*

## 7<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

### **German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa adopts new objectives**

- **Living income for cocoa farming households, observance of human rights and cocoa cultivation without deforestation newly anchored in objectives**
- **Federal Minister Dr. Gerd Müller emphasizes the pioneering role of GISCO**
- **Members of GISCO increase the proportion of cocoa certified according to sustainability standards to 65 %**

**Berlin, 14/05/2019** – The members of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) committed themselves to a clearly defined objective at their General Meeting in May 2019 in Berlin. This should serve as a framework for action for a sustainable cocoa sector. It comprises twelve individual goals. These include contributing to a living income for cocoa farming households, actions against deforestation, and compliance human rights within the cocoa supply chain. The twelve specific goals are defined by a comprehensive definition of what GISCO means by sustainable cocoa that goes far beyond certification according to sustainability standards.

Federal Minister Dr. Gerd Müller praised the multi-stakeholder initiative, of which the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) also is a member, for its pioneering role. An "improved, fair cocoa cultivation" is a high-ranking topic of his ministry. The long-term goal is 100 percent sustainability, also in other sectors. "If a voluntary commitment does not help, we must set legal regulations," Federal Minister Müller said in a brief address to the members of GISCO and its guests. Müller also promised to support the dialogue with the governments of the producing countries.

The urgency of a living income and of better living conditions for cocoa farming families formed the thematic framework of the General Meeting of GISCO. "The cocoa sector will not be sustainable as long as farmers are unable to earn a living," emphasized Board Chair Wolf Kropp-Büttner. Around 100 members and guests took part in the public event. These included the Executive Director of

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#### **German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO)**

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the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO), Michel Arrion, and representatives of other multi-stakeholder initiatives, politics and science.

"Four out of five cocoa farming families do not earn a living income," Dr. Maria Flachsbarth, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), said in her opening speech. Strategies and solutions for a living income must include dialogue with producer countries and their support reforms. The actors along the supply chain should also have to comply with their human rights duty of care. "We will see where binding regulations are needed," Flachsbarth said.

Dr. Katharina Böttcher, Ministerial Director at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), called the 10-point plan for a sustainable cocoa sector, of both ministries, presented at the beginning of the year a "signal for more fairness along the entire value chain - from the cocoa fields to the consumer". Implementation must include monitoring of the measures. Addressing the producing countries, those have to "ensure that existing laws, in particular the ban on child labor, are implemented", Böttcher said.

Great hopes are set on Michel Arrion, the new Executive Director of the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO). It is his goal to make ICCO more responsive to pressing issues such as poverty and deforestation. Arrion also wants to promote the necessary dialogue between the producer and consumer countries that are members of ICCO. Arrion sees multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) and similar initiatives like in Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands as important approaches. They should even intensify their dialogue with cocoa-producing countries. A sustainable cocoa sector can only be achieved through joint efforts.

GISCO already gained four new members in 2019 and has grown to 76 members: companies, civil society organizations and the German government represented by the two federal ministries, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL).

One of the goals of GISCO is to increase the proportion of cocoa in confectionery sold in Germany sourced from certified cultivation in accordance with sustainability standards to 85 percent by the year 2025. Currently, 65 percent of the cocoa already comes from certified cultivation, based on the members of GISCO (reference year 2018).

The objectives of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa can be found [here](#).

Caption:



German Development Minister Dr. Gerd Müller together with the Executive Board and Executive Secretary of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO). At GISCO, the German confectionery industry, the food retail trade and civil society organizations together with the German government are committed to a sustainable cocoa sector. What this must include was highlighted even more clearly at the General Meeting in Berlin in May.

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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](http://www.kakaoforum.de/en)*

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