

Press Release

German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa presents options for action towards a deforestation-free cocoa sector at Anuga fair

Cocoa Cultivation without Forest Loss

Berlin/Cologne, 10/10/2019 – Climate change has arrived in the public consciousness. Conservation of forests, also in cocoa production, is a key factor for this. Between 1988 and 2008, two to three million hectares of forest were destroyed worldwide for the cultivation of cocoa, mainly in West-Africa. "The cocoa sector must no longer be held responsible for deforestation," said Wolf Kropp-Büttner, Board Chair of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO). "The cocoa sector must contribute to ensuring that the forest is preserved and protected." This is also earmarked in GISCO's new twelve goals. GISCO invited experts from politics, non-governmental organizations and private sector to discuss how the demand for deforestation-free cocoa could be implemented at the international food trade fair Anuga in Cologne.

Dr Eva Ursula Müller, head of department at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), is a forestry scientist herself. She outlined the challenges as well as the steps already being taken by the German government. Measures against deforestation are crucial to this and were also recorded, for example, in the 10-Point Plan for a Sustainable Cocoa Sector. "A possible increase in productivity must not come at the expense of the environment," said Müller. At the same time, she referred to the important role of consumers and their purchasing decisions. "Even if", as Müller pointed out, "the price is all too often the decisive factor at the supermarket checkout".

It must be guaranteed that the supply chains of European companies are free from environmental degradation, child labor and forced labor. "The European Parliament has been vocal on calling the EU to come up with legislation on sustainability due diligence obligations on companies", the Greens/EFA MEP Heidi Hautala said. She highlighted that also companies have started recognizing the need for a level playing field in a fragmented regulatory environment, and to make sustainability the norm in the industry. "What has been achieved so far in terms of child labor and deforestation is insufficient," Hautala said. "There is still a giant leap to be made here."

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Julia Christian, of the forest protection non-governmental organization Fern, also advocated an EU regulation requiring companies to ensure they are not importing products linked to deforestation. “France, Denmark and Netherlands recently called the EU to look into such measures. Germany has so far been too absent from this discussion”, Christian criticized the German stance.

Christian as well as some of the other speakers pointed out that it needs also the cooperation with the producing countries. One major example of a commitment to forest conservation is the Cocoa & Forests Initiative (CFI), a unique cooperation of 34 companies, among them also ten GISCO members, and the two top-producing countries of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. “This cooperation commits companies and governments to reversing deforestation and making cocoa a sustainable crop,” said Ethan Budiansky, Director of Environment at the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF). Initiated at the climate conference COP 23 in 2017 in Bonn (Germany), CFI has already developed company action plans with concrete targets aligned with national priorities. One million farms in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana will be mapped, with the aim of 100% traceability of the cocoa. “This will ensure that the cocoa does not come from protected areas,” said Budiansky. Another important forest protection measure is the replanting of trees on degraded areas and the establishment of cocoa agroforestry systems, combined agriculture and forestry, as well as training for approximately one million cocoa farmers to teach them about improving cocoa productivity, growing more cocoa on less land, and forest conservation.

Jérôme Abroba Aké, Director in charge at the Ministry for Forests and Water of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire – the most important producer of cocoa imported to Germany – presented the new forestry policy as solution approach of the Ivorian government. The Ivorian forest areas have decreased to 11 percent of its former area. Cocoa, along with palm oil and rubber, is the main reason for this and is cultivated today on 15 percent of the country's surface as the most important export commodity. Aware of this almost irreversible situation, the government adopted a new forestry policy in 2018, which produced two instruments for its implementation: the strategy for the conservation, rehabilitation and expansion of forests, the aim of which is to increase the forest cover rate to around 20% by 2030, and a new law adopted and promulgated in July 2019. In Cologne, Aké also promoted support for the Ivorian concern. On the one hand to the cocoa industry and cocoa traders: “As concessionaires, they can acquire land-use rights and within these rights support and implement the



legal requirements for the forest conservation," said Aké. On the other hand, the government needs technical and institutional support in order to consistently implement their goals.

The perspective of an international present food retailer was represented by Florian Schütze from Lidl. Those like Lidl who are active in many countries need transparency and reliability in their supply chain. Lidl has been involved in the training of cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire for several years. According to Schütze, binding European standards would not only ensure fairer international competition, but would also increase effectiveness in complex global supply chains. It is important to involve the producer countries in this process.

Lisa Kirfel-Rühle, Deputy Head of Division at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), concluded: "Cocoa entering the EU must be free from human rights violations and deforestation". However, the producing countries must also be able to implement these requirements. The BMZ has given itself a framework for action and will implement it consistently. "2020 will certainly be an exciting year for all of us," concluded Kirfel-Rühle.

About the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa:

The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) is a joint initiative of the German Federal Government, the German sweets and confectionery industry, retail grocery, and civil society. GISCO 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 cultivation and commercialization of certified cocoa. GISCO currently has more than 70 members and is open to other interested parties. See here for more information: www.kakaoforum.de

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Caption:



Following the invitation of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa, representatives from international politics, private sector and civil society discussed how to reconcile forest conservation and cocoa cultivation. (From right: Jérôme Aké, Côte d'Ivoire Ministry for Forests and Water, Julia Christian, Fern, Florian Schütze, Lidl, Ethan Budiansky, World Cocoa Foundation/Cocoa&Forests Initiative, Heidi Anneli Hautala, EU Parliament; Facilitator Bernd Fiedler.)



Côte d'Ivoire wants to tackle the issue of forest conservation consistently, as Jérôme Aké, Director of the Ministry of Forests and Water, confirmed at an event of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa in Cologne. Up to 20 percent of the land's surface should be recovered by forests on the long term.

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