



COCOBOD *News*

A publication of Ghana Cocoa Board

April, 2024

Confidential

**ADVOCATING FOR
CORPORATE SECRECY
& CONFIDENTIALITY:**
**Safeguarding Reputation through
Responsible Conduct**

REVIEW OF THE PRODUCER PRICE OF COCOA FOR THE 2023/24 COCOA SEASON

PRODUCER PRICE

The Government of Ghana, in consultation with stakeholders, has reviewed the Producer Price of cocoa for the rest of the 2023/24 crop year.

The Producer Price of cocoa has been

increased by 58.26% from GH¢20,928 per tonne to GH¢33,120.00 per tonne for the rest of the 2023/24 cocoa season. This figure translates into GH¢2,070 per bag of 64 kg gross weight and takes effect from Friday, 5th April 2024.

The increase in the producer price of cocoa has become necessary to enhance the income of cocoa farmers in line with the vision of the NPP government and in response to the rising prices of cocoa on the international market.

The welfare of cocoa farmers is dear to the heart of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana. It is for this reason that since the NPP government assumed office in 2017, the producer price of cocoa has been increased by 336% from

GH¢7,600 per tonne in the 2016/17 cocoa season to an unprecedented level of GH¢33,120 per tonne for the rest of the 2023/24 cocoa season.

BUYERS' MARGIN

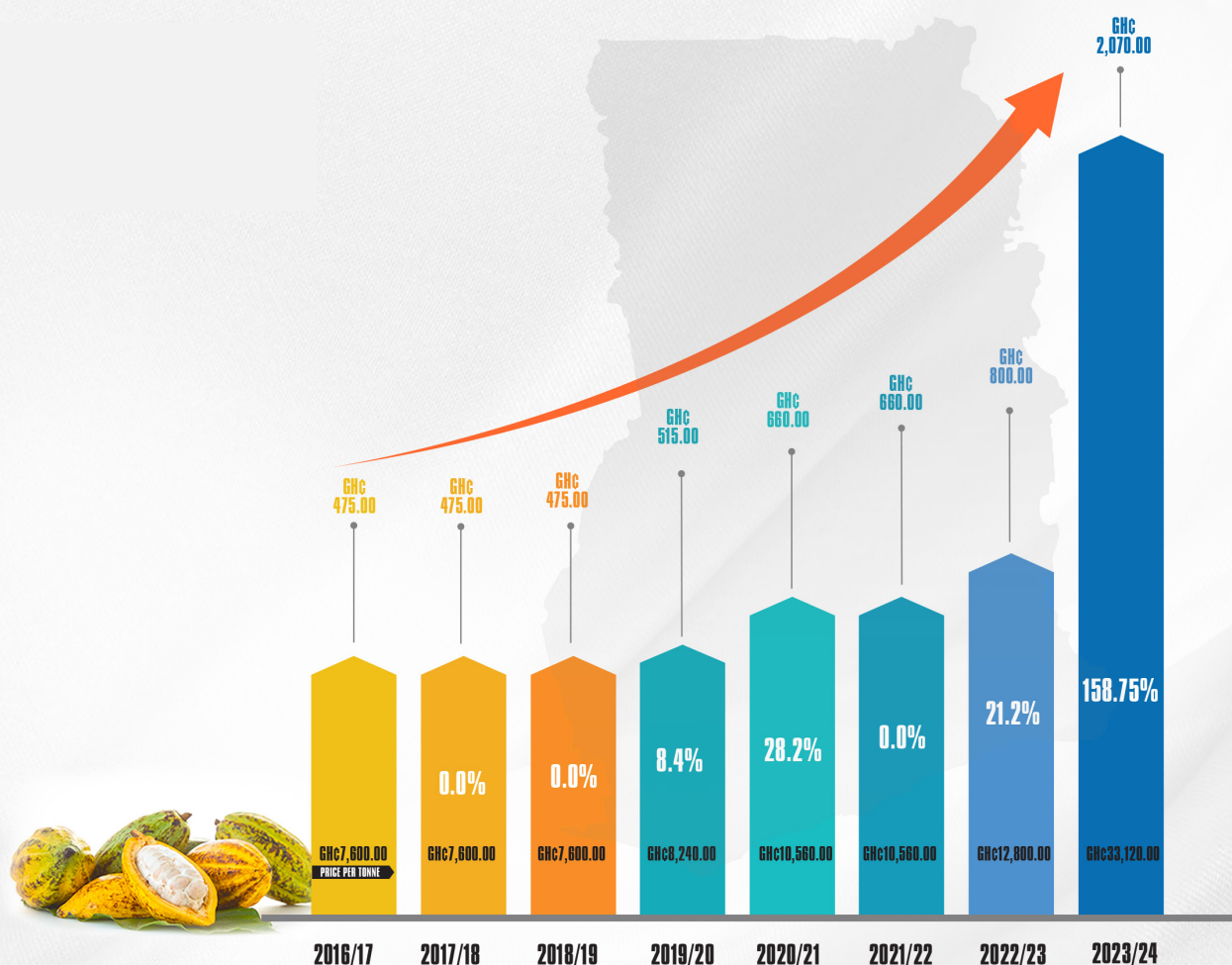
Government has also approved a review of the Buyers' margin to GH¢2,980.00 per tonne for the rest of the 2023/24 cocoa season. This increase is expected to cushion the LBCs against the increase in finance cost due to an increase in the producer price of cocoa.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The new price and margins take effect from Friday, 5th April 2024.

SIGNED:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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ADVOCATING FOR CORPORATE SECRECY & CONFIDENTIALITY: SAFEGUARDING REPUTATION THROUGH RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT



Corporate secrecy and confidentiality have deep roots in the history of commerce and trade, creating significant footprints in protecting trade secrets in the areas of techniques, formulas, quality and uniqueness of products, routes and maps, new territories, patents trademarks, copyrights among others.

Today's world has become highly interconnected and information-driven, making it imperative for organizations to ensure strict maintenance of corporate secrecy and confidentiality.

This is paramount in the sense that it safeguards the reputation and integrity of every corporate institution, including the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

In this edition of COCOBOD News,

we highlight the importance of safeguarding confidentiality through responsible staff conduct. This discussion aims to foster collective support in upholding the Board's reputation and integrity.

As staff, we pride ourselves working with a reputable public organization like COCOBOD that is committed to producing premium quality cocoa, integrity, and trustworthiness. It is, therefore, key that every member of this unique family upholds these values by adhering to strict confidentiality protocols in all their interactions, both within and outside the organization.

In view of this, a critical understanding of the importance of protecting sensitive information of the organization must be among the

Board's key corporate secrecy and confidentiality requirements. In the light of this, issues pertaining to strategic plans, production strategies, propriety technology, financial data, or stakeholder information, we are exposed to or entrusted to us through our routine work schedules are valuable asset that must be safeguarded with utmost care and diligence.

Our conscious effort to adhere to strict corporate secrecy and confidentiality not only demonstrates our respect for the trust placed in us by stakeholders but also plays an important role in preserving COCOBOD's competitive advantage.

By maintaining confidentiality, we ensure that proprietary information remains protected from unauthorized

access, misuse, or exploitation by malicious actors. In this era of misinformation and disinformation campaigns, the least we could do to safeguard our individual image and reputation, as well as, that of the Board in general is to jealously protect confidential information.

It is worth emphasizing that, our deliberate responsible conducts in handling confidential information is integral to maintaining trust and credibility with our stakeholders, including our financiers, input suppliers, LBCs, external buyers, NGOs and Civil Society Organizations in the cocoa sector, investors, and the general public.

Any attempt on our part to breach the relevant confidentiality expectations does not only jeopardize our relationships with our core stakeholders but also undermines their confidence in the Board's ability to protect their interests and information.

We currently find ourselves in a hyper-connected digital environment, with its associated ever-present risks of data



breaches and leaks. It is, therefore, incumbent upon each of us to exercise caution and diligence in our handling of confidential information, both online and offline.

This includes safeguarding hard and electronic files, using secure communication channels, and following established protocols for sharing information internally and externally.

Additionally, promoting a culture of confidentiality within the cocoa

industry reinforces our commitment to ethical conduct and responsible corporate citizenship.

This eventually sends a clear message to our stakeholders that we take our obligations seriously and prioritize their interests above all else.

In conclusion, I wish to use this medium to urge all of us to embrace our role as guardians of COCOBOD's secrecy and confidentiality.

In doing so, we would be protecting the Board's reputation and competitive advantage and also uphold the trust and confidence placed in us by our stakeholders.

Let us continue to demonstrate our commitment to excellence, premium quality delivery, and integrity in all aspects of our work. Let us strive to ensure that Ghana's cocoa industry remains a beacon of hope, prosperity, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and reliability as we continue to feed the global confectionery industry with premium quality cocoa.

End

COCOBOD REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE COCOA PRODUCTION



A group photograph of Management and the European Union delegation

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has reaffirmed Ghana's commitment to working with the European Union (EU) and other EU countries in ensuring the sustainable production of cocoa in the country.

He said COCOBOD would continue to engage the EU on ways to ensure the smooth operationalization of the new EU Regulations, particularly the aspect that deals with traceability and sustainable cocoa production.

He said as Ghana's industry regulator, COCOBOD was fully ready to comply with the new EU Legislation and would therefore continue to implement policies and programmes that are

in line with the provisions in the new legislation in order to ensure a sustainable cocoa industry.

Hon Boahen Aidoo however observed that effective compliance is also contingent on adequate and transparent information flow, adding that COCOBOD would seize the opportunity during the meeting in Brussels to dialogue with the EU for clarity on some aspects of the legislation in order to facilitate their implementation.

'We at COCOBOD are fully committed to a sustainable cocoa industry and have demonstrated this through the implementation of stringent policies concerning traceability; we hope the meeting in Brussels will afford us the

opportunity to seek clarity on certain aspects of the legislation to aid in our compliance" he emphasized.

The COCOBOD CE made these assertions when a delegation from the Netherlands, led by the country's Ambassador to Ghana conferred with management of COCOBOD in Accra.

The meeting, amongst others, centred on ways to maximize cooperation between Ghana and the Netherlands in the areas of cocoa trading and marketing, as well as, ways to deal with the deadly Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD) using laboratory technology designed by Iribov West Africa, a Dutch-owned Plant Laboratory Company located in Sogakope in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Hon Boahen Aidoo emphasized the strategic importance of the Netherlands as one of the biggest trading partners in the cocoa sector and said more would be done to explore other ways to enhance the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

He further described as 'good news' the move by Iribov West Africa to invest in research towards tackling the CSSVD which he said is the single biggest nemesis to Ghana's cocoa sector.

The Netherlands Ambassador to Ghana, H.E. Mr. Jeroen Verheul, on his part, said his country would continue to remain an important partner to Ghana in cocoa trading. Mr. Verheul indicated that the Netherlands, as a major trading point of the EU is seeking to strengthen its cooperation with Ghana in the areas of commerce and scientific research in order to improve the cocoa sector.

The Business Development Manager of Iribov West Africa, Mr. Kees Veldhuijzen, briefed the management of COCOBOD on the research work carried out by his organization on the potential solution to the prevalence of the CSSVD in Ghana.

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF BUNSO COCOA COLLEGE INAUGURATED

A 12-member Governing Council of the Bunso Cocoa College (BCC) has been inaugurated at Cocoa House in Accra with a mandate to advance sound policies and programmes that will make the college the preferred choice for students desirous of pursuing their dreams in agriculture.

The Governing Council is made up of representatives from, among others, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), the University of Cape Coast and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control, Dr Ebenezer Owusu.

Administering the oath of office, the Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo charged them to prioritize the training of students with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to help them find space in the cocoa value chain and other related areas.

According to the COCOBOD Chief Executive, effective discharge of the Council's functions will go a long way to help develop the country's cocoa sector by nurturing a new generation of experts who can exploit the potential of cocoa beyond primary cultivation.

He observed that though globally the cocoa industry is worth over \$120 Billion, farmers in the upstream, gain only 7%, a development which he said was very regrettable and needed to be reversed.

According to Hon Boahen Aidoo, the downstream operations, including processing, manufacturing, trading and marketing, are central to the sustainability of the sector and stressed that the college must focus on training the needed human resources to take advantage of opportunities within the multi-billion-dollar cocoa industry.

'It is our expectation that the governing body will roll out more tailor-made training programmes to equip the students with modern skills and knowledge that will make them more useful, particularly in the multi-billion-dollar downstream cocoa value chain', he emphasized.

He further noted that the BCC has in the past seven years seen massive transformation, adding that the facility, which used to run training programmes for staff of the Board, especially those involved in extension and other technical services from the Cocoa Health & Extension Division (CHED) has now been facelifted to a Diploma Awarding institution and will soon attain the status of a university.

Touching on the future prospects of Ghana's cocoa sector, Hon Boahen Aidoo gave the assurance that the country's cocoa industry will weather the storm even in the midst of daunting global economic and environmental challenges.

He admitted that though factors such

as illegal mining, climate change, the prevalence of the cocoa swollen shoot diseases as well as other global economic challenges like price fluctuations have had a negative impact on the cocoa sector, he was very optimistic that Ghana's cocoa sector will prevail.

The Chairman of the Council, Dr. Ebenezer Owusu, acknowledged the onerous task ahead of the Council and pledged that they would work relentlessly to meet the expectations of the Board.

He said the Governing Council would collaborate with all stakeholders to implement policies and programmes that will create a convivial learning environment for students.

Other members of the Council include the Rector of the College, Dr. (Mrs) Mercy Asamoah, Mr. Francis Cudjoe and Dr. Michael Opoku Agyeman-Representatives of the Convocation, Armstrong Kwame Morny and Emmanuella Akosua Asamoah-representatives of the Alumni, and Rev. Prof. Asare Danso- Snr Lecturer (Rtd) of the University of Cape Coast.

The rest are Mr. Yaw Akrofi, Principal Research Scientist (Rtd) CRIG, Dr. (Mrs) Eureka Emefa Ahadjie Adomako, Snr Lecturer, Dept. of Plant and Environment Biology, University of Ghana, Legon. Master Samuel Owusu, is the Students' Representative Council's representative on the Council.



A cross section of members being sworn in as the governing council

NATIONAL BEST FARMERS EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO GOV'T FOR INVESTMENTS IN COCOA

The President of the National Best Farmers Association, Nana Charles Gyamfi has commended the President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and his administration for the investments in the cocoa sector over the past 7 years.

According to the 2019 National Best Farmer, the introduction of several innovative policies such as the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme (CFPS), Cocoa Management System and the recent increases in cocoa prices are a demonstration of the President's commitment towards improving the lives of cocoa farmers and the industry.

Nana Gyamfi observed further that despite the challenges the industry encountered during the 2022/2023 crop season, cocoa farmers have seen enormous improvement in their socioeconomic conditions as a result of the continuous commitment and competent leadership of the current management of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

He made these remarks in a statement delivered on behalf of the association during a courtesy call on the President at the Jubilee House in Accra.

"Through your visionary leadership and unwavering dedication, your government has demonstrated a profound understanding of the importance of cocoa farming for our nation's economy and has tirelessly championed the cause of cocoa farmers, ensuring that their voices and concerns are heard at the highest levels of governance," He said.

According to him, the introduction of the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme was very commendable, stressing that the scheme will help ensure financial stability for cocoa farmers upon their retirement.

He further added, 'the provision of subsidized fertilizers and other



A photograph of H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, officials of COCOBOD and members of the Association of National Best Farmers

agricultural inputs have helped to boost yields, improved the cocoa business and made it lucrative for the youth to venture into the cocoa sector."

He hinted that farmers' battle against the deadly Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD) could not have been successful without the courageous implementation of the National Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme, as most of his colleague farmers in the Western North Region who abandoned their farms have all returned and are now doing profitable business on their farms.

Touching on illegal mining, Nana Gyamfi said, the galamsey activities in some parts of the cocoa regions, specifically, the Western South region have destroyed a chunk of cocoa farms resulting in low output and destruction of farmers' means of livelihood.

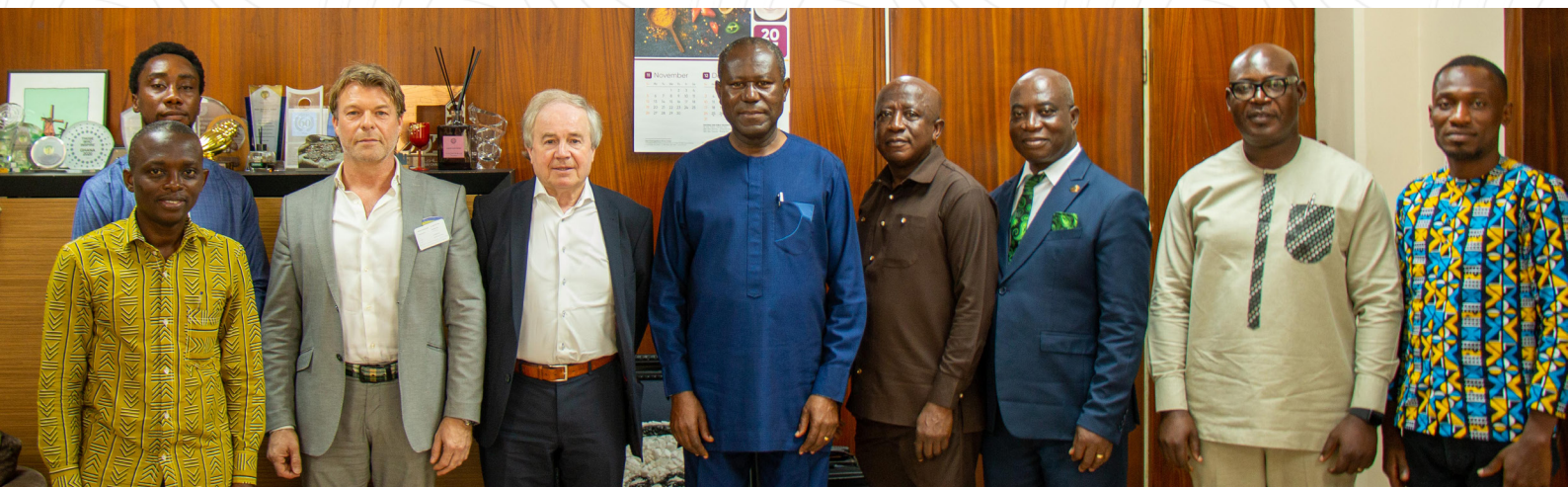
On his part, President Akufo-Addo also commended the association for rallying behind the management of COCOBOD in creating a very vibrant and resilient cocoa sector.

Crediting the management of COCOBOD, led by Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, for the successes chalked in the cocoa sector, the President urged the farmers to continue to work hard in order to sustain the gains made so far.

"Thank you for the accolades, but I must say, these wouldn't have been possible if Hon Aidoo failed me after his appointment, so all praises go to the management of COCOBOD," he added.

President Akufo-Addo further encouraged the farmers to support the management of COCOBOD to build a more stable sector for the benefit of all farmers across the sector

COCOBOD AND ROAM TECHNOLOGY EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP TO COMBAT BLACK POD DISEASE



A group photograph of Management with the delegation from Roam Technology, Belgium

The management of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has met with a delegation from Roam Technology, Belgium, to discuss a possible collaboration for the effective management of the prevalent black pod disease within the cocoa sector.

The two parties have since agreed to explore the feasibility of conducting tests on Huwa-San, an agricultural disinfectant produced by the Belgian company, as a possible treatment against *Phytophthora palmivora*, a destructive plant pathogen that causes diseases in a wide range of plants including black pod disease on cocoa farms across the sub-region.

Black pod disease has always presented a substantial threat to cocoa plants, inflicting severe damage to cocoa pods and the overall output of cocoa farms. The disease is characterized by the appearance of dark lesions on pods, which ultimately lead to the pods rotting. This reduces plant yields and negatively affects the livelihoods of cocoa farmers.

Scientists from the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), which is the subsidiary of COCOBOD in charge of scientific research and testing of all agrochemicals before application on

cocoa farms in Ghana, will be working closely with Roam Technology.

Their focus will be to conduct rigorous tests and evaluations of Huwa-San's effectiveness in controlling black pod disease before certification for application on cocoa farms.

Documents so far offered by Roam Technology showcase studies of Huwa-San's proficiency in effectively combating comparable fungal infections that affect other crops. The documented evidence appears to show its consistent efficacy in controlling and managing fungal infections in crops like avocados, pineapples, papayas, and tobacco leaves, when applied at different stages of plant development.

The studies underscored effective resistance against plant pathogens, significant reductions in plant and fruit loss, increased economic yield, extended shelf life, and an overall improved quality achieved through the application of Huwa-San.

The Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy & Quality Control at COCOBOD, Dr Ebenezer Owusu, said the management of COCOBOD is poised to find innovative approaches

to effectively manage the various pests and diseases which affect cocoa trees.

He added that the results from Huwa-San's application in other crop sectors suggest that it holds a lot of promise for the effective management of the black pod disease in cocoa, however, management will rely on the expert advice of CRIG on its efficacy on cocoa trees, the environmental impact, among others, in deciding the way forward.

COCOBOD's present approach to managing the black pod disease is carried out under the Cocoa Diseases and Pests Control Programme (CODAPEP). Through the program, COCOBOD works hand-in-hand with farmers to plan and execute spraying activities. It carries out three annual fungicide spraying exercises against black pod disease, and farmers are responsible for the rest.

To achieve optimal black pod control, it is highly recommended to conduct at least six and no more than nine sprayings each year, using COCOBOD-approved agrochemicals. This collaborative approach between COCOBOD and farmers, have so far helped to ensure the sustainable production of superior-quality cocoa in the country.

COCOA FARMERS EMBRACE GHANA COCOA TRACEABILITY SYSTEM (GCTS)



A cross-section of cocoa farmers at the sensitization programme



More than 150 cocoa farmers in Fahiakobo and surrounding communities in the New Edubiase District, Ashanti Region have been sensitised on the Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS).

GCTS is part of a wider initiative by COCOBOD to enhance cocoa sector efficiency and traceability to ensure a sustainable cocoa industry. It will also help to ensure compliance with changing access requirements to major cocoa export markets.

Speaking at a durbar, Mr Dickson Agyapong, a Principal Officer at the Social Science and Statistical Unit (SSSU) of Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), explained that the introduction of the Cocoa Management System (CMS) has birthed the Ghana Cocoa Traceability Systems (GCTS) which is a key component of the EU regulatory framework.

Mr. Agyapong added that, the GCTS platform will help trace every tonne of cocoa sold to the LBCs from the farmer all the way to final consumer outside the shores of the country and the reverse of the same process.

He further explained that the GCTS comprises of various actors along the value chain that will work hand in hand to ensure that Ghana's cocoa sector continues to maintain its niche as the producer of 'Premium Quality Cocoa' on the international market.

'With the GCTS, farmers, purchasing clerks, district officers and managers of LBCs, haulers among others all have a role to play to ensure it is successful', he reiterated.

Adding on, Mr Agyapong stated that, other components of the GCTS such as the Cocoa Purchase App will help reduce the stress farmers go through in acquiring payment from the sale of their produce to LBC's. By this, a far better and prompt payment through Mobile Money (Momo), bank transfers and other electronic payment platforms will be used for the transactions.

Notwithstanding these facts, Mr. Agyapong also said, just as farmers who produce certified cocoa attract some premium from the sale of their cocoa, a traceable cocoa of high quality that has passed through all the checks, inspections and accepted by Cocoa

Marketing Company (CMC) for shipping will also attract extra premium.

'If you apply the teachings from your Community Extension Agents and none of your cocoa is rejected through the process and shipped, management will trace and reward you accordingly', he emphasized.

Mr. Agyapong further advised farmers to be actively involved in the process to have a better understanding since the cocoa sector is currently evolving and competing with other countries in the cocoa business.

'Cote d'Ivoire is actively involved, Nigeria, Cameroon other African countries are also embarking on this transformational agenda and innovation, so accept it and let it be part of your trading life', he said.

Mr. Agyapong also urged cocoa farmers across the country to continue to support the Board's initiative to build a more vibrant and sustaining cocoa sector.

In all more than 6000 cocoa farmers are expected to be sensitized in the New Edubiase District.

COCOBOD CALLS FOR EQUITABLE COST-SHARING OF TRACEABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has underscored the need to implement an equitable cost-sharing framework involving Ghana, the European Union (EU), and operators to sustain Ghana's cocoa traceability infrastructure, under its Cocoa Management System (CMS).

He said, while the advantages of a robust traceability system are anticipated to benefit all stakeholders in the industry, producer countries, such as Ghana, have thus far borne the brunt of the costs associated with establishing the essential infrastructure for traceability.

It is, therefore, important, he added, to engage in further dialogue to establish clear protocols and formulae for the distribution of operational costs of the traceability system along the value chain.

The COCOBOD CE made this call during a meeting in Accra with an EU delegation led by its Commissioner for Environment, Oceans, and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevicius.

He highlighted the fact that cocoa production in Ghana and neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire is already suffering from the effects of changes in climatic conditions, that threaten the livelihoods of millions in the region and warned that without proactive measures, cocoa production in the two countries will continue to suffer the effect of the increasingly severe climatic conditions.

The situation, he said, raises the need for greater support from the EU for climate adaptation and carbon management programmes, in the global south. He added that cocoa trees can play a pivotal role in reforesting vast areas of Ghana and serve as an effective tool for carbon sequestration.



Mr. Alex Assanvo, the Executive Secretary of the Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana Cocoa Initiative (CIGHCI), on his part, affirmed the significant strides made by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in advancing their traceability infrastructure for their cocoa exports. He asserted that both countries are on track to the requirements under the impending EU regulations but expressed concern over the persistence of unauthorised cocoa trade routes into the EU market.

He said despite the progress and costs incurred by the two leading cocoa-producing countries in their traceability efforts, a substantial volume of cocoa continues to find its way into the EU through channels not sanctioned by the regulatory bodies in the two countries.

He therefore emphasised the importance of implementing stringent measures to curb the illicit inflow of cocoa into the EU. Failure to do so, he cautioned, could render the



EU legislation more punitive than constructive for Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

In response, the EU Commissioner commended Ghana for its efforts toward aligning with the EU, adding that sustainable trade will generate local value for Ghana and other cocoa-producing countries.

While recognising the importance of the traceability infrastructure in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, he acknowledged the necessity for a cost-sharing mechanism but insisted that the responsibility should lie with operators, particularly in acquiring the traceability information required by EU port authorities.

He said the EU is committed to working with cocoa-producing nations to foster sustainable agricultural practices and improve economic outcomes for local communities.

HARNESSING COCOA'S POTENTIAL AS A TOURISM OFFERING

Participants at the 2024 edition of the Chocolatarium have called for investments in Ghana's cocoa as it holds promise for increased tourism earnings and positions Ghana as an agricultural tourism hub.

Speaking at the event, which focused on the business of chocolate, the Deputy Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board in charge of Operations, Dr. Emmanuel Opoku said strategic collaboration between investors, processors and promoters is key to ensuring that Ghana makes significant earnings from the global chocolate market through the export of processed cocoa-based products and tourism.

He added that the Tetteh Quarshie Museum, the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, the Jubilee Farm, as well as the various cocoa seed gardens across the seven cocoa regions among other sites, offer great tourism experiences that the country needs to tap into, to create a niche for Ghana as an eco-tourism destination.

'This is the time for the business community to come in with financial support, technical know-how and marketing acumen to push further, the strides we have made towards ensuring Ghana's fair share of the international chocolate market which was valued at about 238.5 billion US dollars in 2023', he noted.

On the back of Dr. Opoku's call, the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), highlighted the significant contribution of the Chocolate Week Celebration to the increment of Ghana's per capita cocoa consumption from 0.45kg to 1kg over the past six years.

For his part, the Chief Executive of Ghana Tourism Authority, Mr. Akwasi Agyemang acknowledged that while the feat is significant locally, Ghana still has to pick up to match the average global consumption level which hovers between 5kg to 12kg.

The Director of Investment at the



Dr. Emmanuel A. Opoku - Deputy Chief Executive, Operations

Ghana Investment Promotion Authority (GIPC), Mr. Ashong Lartey offered hope for Ghana's earnings from the global chocolate business, saying there is potential to recover and become a top earner through investment in research, unique ingredients, appealing products and packaging, and adhering to global standards.

He urged local processors and artisanal chocolatiers to take advantage of the Investment Desk at GIPC, which offers free insights and support on how local businesses can penetrate new markets and build networks.

The Chief Pharmacist of the Cocoa Clinic, Dr. Edward Amporful gave compelling research-backed reasons for cocoa consumption to be adopted as a key component of the country's preventive healthcare offerings.

He said, while every chocolate product has some health benefits, regular consumption of dark chocolate and natural cocoa powder is scientifically proven effective against non-communicable diseases and health conditions like hypertension, diabetes,

obesity, pre-menstrual syndrome, cancer, and malaria among others.

COCOBOD and GTA received commendations for their collaborative efforts towards making cocoa a national tourism asset from panellists discussing Cocoa as a strategic tourism-marketing tool for Ghana.

They offered suggestions in tackling various issues within the sector such as encouraging youth participation, empowering women along the value chain, promoting child education, ethical and sustainable production, exploring unique flavours, technology, packaging, and investment and marketing opportunities for increasing Ghana's per capita consumption from 1kg, and promoting the health benefits of cocoa.

They proposed the institution of a National Chocolate Festival to be held annually in December as part of a strategic plan to promote the health and economic benefits of cocoa, to harness its tourism potential and position the sector as an attractive eco-tourism destination for the global tourism consumer.

The Chocolatarium which is in its second year, was the final programme in a series of events for the National Chocolate Week.

In honour of the late Minister of Tourism, Mr. Jake Obetsebi Lamptey who pioneered the celebration of the National Chocolate Day in 2003, COCOBOD and GTA presented his widow, Mrs. Esther Obetsebi-Lamptey who was a special guest at the Chocolatarium with a hamper of chocolates and cocoa-based products.

Meanwhile, the National Chocolate Day which used to be observed on only 14th February has now become a weeklong of celebrations, highlighting Ghana's cocoa processing sector with exhibition of products from local processors and artisanal chocolatiers as a major programme.

WOMEN MUST INSPIRE EACH OTHER FOR CAREER PROGRESS – EFFIA TENGE



A cross-section of ladies present at the summit



Madam Effia Tenge addressing participants at the event

The Director of Public Engagement at the Parliament of Ghana, Madam Effia Tenge has called on women to support each other through advocacy, mentorship and good leadership to promote a brighter and more inclusive future for women.

Madam Tenge made the call at a summit organized by the ladies' clubs of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to commemorate the 2024 International Women's Day. She expressed her desire to see a world where women inspire each other, explaining that the uplifting of one woman can serve as motivation for many other women worldwide.

'Women, we must begin to support each other. Let's ask ourselves how we are going to support actions and measures that promote women.

Forgetting others when we get to our destination is not femininity or womanhood. So, on a day like this, I believe we need to orient our minds that when we get opportunities to be up there, we will support those who are coming", she stressed.

The Director of Public Engagement explained further that when women collaborate and mentor each other, it helps in the discovery of one's purpose and urged the participants from the various divisions of COCOBOD to motivate and commend each other for their contributions towards the growth of the industry.

'The people who need to inspire us are always around us but sometimes we look for people elsewhere, people we may not even know, thinking that

they are the ones to push us to where we need to be. The encouragement and commendations we receive from the people around us is what sometimes push us to identify our unique purpose as women", she advised.

Held under the sub-theme, 'Share to inspire', some female leaders in the organisation were invited to discuss their journeys of perseverance and achievements in the industry. They included Dr. Ellen Crabbe, Family Physician Specialist - Cocoa Clinic; Mrs. Yvonne Esuon, Deputy Director, Finance - Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC); Mrs. Joyce Poku-Dwumoh, Head of Warehousing and Port Operations - CMC and Mrs. Evelyn Sampare-Kwarteng, Accounts Manager-COCOBOD.

They shared the challenges they have faced in their career journey and how they overcame them. Through their stories, they inspired the ladies to aspire for greatness and not allow obstacles along the way to prevent them from achieving their dreams.

They also highlighted the importance of qualities such as hard work, resilience, perseverance, confidence, and efficiency in achieving success. They underscored the need for the ladies to maintain a balanced life, prioritizing personal well-being alongside professional pursuits.



Some excited participants present at the event



GHANA HAS LOST OVER 500,000 HECTARES OF COCOA FARMS TO CSSVD

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has revealed that over 500,000 hectares of cocoa farms in Ghana have been lost to the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD), posing a major threat to the country's cocoa production.

While recognising the gravity of the challenge, Hon Aidoo also offered some assurances, indicating that measures have been put in place and continue to be implemented to address the issue.

Hon Aidoo made this disclosure during a panel discussion at a partnership meeting of the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) in Amsterdam, where he shed light on the multifaceted challenges confronting cocoa production in Ghana.

In addition to the CSSVD, the COCOBOD Chief Executive highlighted the detrimental impacts of illegal mining and climate change, which further exacerbate the decline in cocoa productivity and pose a great threat to

the livelihoods of cocoa farmers. "The unregulated mining industry is causing deforestation, soil degradation, and water pollution, all of which are negatively affecting the growth of cocoa trees.

Coupled with this menace is climate change which is having a devastating effect on cocoa trees, which are highly sensitive to temperature and weather patterns. The rise in temperatures, unpredictable rainfall, and prolonged droughts are affecting tree growth and reducing their output", he lamented.

Hon Aidoo said to address the CSSVD challenge COCOBOD instituted the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme in 2017 to halt the spread of the disease, restore unproductive farms and ultimately improve the livelihood of cocoa farmers.

The rehabilitation programme involves identifying diseased farms, cutting down affected trees, replanting with disease-resistant cocoa varieties,

compensating affected farmers, and promoting good agricultural practices.

The Chief Executive of COCOBOD also stressed the importance of securing sustainable incomes for cocoa farmers, underscoring the Living Income Differential (LID) and the recent significant hikes in Ghana's Producer Price for cocoa farmers as crucial advancements in this regard.

Nevertheless, he underscored the need for a collective commitment across the industry to prioritize the sustainable incomes of cocoa farmers, backed by concrete action to ensure its realisation. The Director General of Conseil du Café Cacao, Mr Yves Brahima Koné, also touched on the major threat that CSSVD poses to West African cocoa production.

He urged the industry to show immediate commitment to addressing this issue, emphasizing that failure to do so could result in the industry succumbing to these challenges.

MAXIMIZING COCOA YIELDS (PART 2): THE ART OF HAND POLLINATION

By Agnes Annoh and David Asare Oduro,
Public Affairs - Accra



A shot of a happy pollinator working in a cocoa farm

Hand Pollination, a farming practice, which is traditionally limited to Cocoa Seed Gardens and experimental farms was adopted by Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in mainstream cocoa cultivation in June 2017 as a technique to boost cocoa yields. Prior to its adoption, COCOBOD had indicated that a cocoa tree produces millions of flowers but less than 10% is pollinated in a natural setting resulting in between 20-40 pods - a situation that does not support sustainable cocoa production in Ghana.

In a natural setting, cocoa blooms are pollinated by midges. These tiny insects pollinate the complex reproductive structure of the cocoa tree. However, natural pollination by insect pollinators is susceptible to external factors such as the effect of continuous application of chemicals on farms, harsh weather conditions and tree distribution.

These factors inhibit the significant

role of the insects and lead to low pods formation.

Recognizing the need for a more controlled and reliable method to increase cocoa pod formation, COCOBOD introduced the art of hand pollination to supplement natural fertilization of flowers in an effort to increase pods per a tree, targeting an average of between 100-200 pods. The overarching goal is to support the attainment of over one million metric tonnes of cocoa annually, all things being equal.

The programme, which started with the training of some 7,000 youth in cocoa-growing communities by COCOBOD also had within its blueprint, a projection to employ over 30,000 young men and women to be trained and equipped with the requisite skills and tools to pollinate efficiently. At the launch of the National Hand Pollination Programme at Awadua

near Mankranso in the Ahafo Ano South District of the Ashanti Region, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo bemoaned that while cocoa trees in countries such as Ecuador and Indonesia produced more cocoa pods resulting in farmers getting about two tonnes per hectare, their counterparts in Ghana got as low as 0.45 tonnes.

He observed that the unfortunate situation, was the motivation for the national implementation of the technique in conventional cocoa farming to modernize cocoa cultivation and create jobs for the teeming youth in cocoa-growing communities. In the 2018/19 crop year when the exercise was scaled up, there was high adoption rate among farmers. Over 30,000 youth were employed in exercise across the cocoa region leading and appreciable cocoa production levels.

In addition to heightened competition

among farmers, particularly those whose farms are close to each other, the beauty of seeing cocoa trees carrying plenty pods was great, an impetus to farmers who hired pollinators while others personally made pollination part of their routine farming activities.

On one of the visits of the Chief Executive of COCOBOD to Bompieso and Bremang in the Huni Valley District of the Western South Cocoa Region, it was amazing as officials took turns to count pods on different cocoa trees and recording extreme values ranging between 1,200 - 1,500 pods but 200 – 300 pods on the average due to the effects of the hand pollination.

Amazingly, hand pollination, a key component within the Board's Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs), has combined with a number of other productivity-driven interventions such as Pruning in its feat to progressively increase production to over one million metric tonnes of cocoa in 2020/21 crop year.

It is worthy to note that as a prerequisite for hand pollination, a cocoa tree must first meet pruning conditions. It is advised that cocoa trees are pruned at least two months prior to pollination. Pruning promotes massive flower development which creates a conducive environment for efficient

hand pollination, after the application of the appropriate fertilizer. With the increase in flower development through pruning, the number of flowers eligible for pollination increases as well and employing hand pollination increases the number of flowers pollinated daily.

It is important that hand pollination is done promptly after flower blooming to maximize the chances of successful fertilization.

After cocoa trees are pruned and fertilizers applied, the art of hand pollination follows a number of steps to achieve favourable results. First, the farmer identifies the male and female flower on the trees.

The male flowers contain the pollen and the female ones have the potential to develop into pods. After proper identification, pollen from the male flowers is gently collected with forceps and a handy can and meticulously dropped onto the stigma of the female flowers to facilitate fertilization.

A few weeks into this will lead to the development of cherelles and subsequently, pods which, if upon availability of the necessary and favourable conditions, will lead to heavily loaded pods on a cocoa tree. The advice to pollinators to aim at pollinating the flowers formed on the

stems of the cocoa trees instead of the branches is key in avoiding the potential damage to the branches and pods if not supported with sticks (staking).

IMPACT OF HAND POLLINATION IN THE COCOA INDUSTRY

1. Increase in Yield and Productivity: One of the primary motivations for adopting hand pollination is the promise of increased yields and consistent quality. Hand pollination allows for a targeted and controlled pollination process which significantly increases the chances of successful pod formation and, consequently, maximizes cocoa yields.

2. Minimizes Excessive Land Expansion: Hand pollination enables farmers to obtain more than twice the tonnage of cocoa on the same land size. This limits excessive land expansion and reduces environmental degradation through deforestation as farmers are able to earn more on the same piece of land.

3. Income Boost: With the boost in cocoa yields through hand pollination coupled with pruning, farmer income significantly increases, inevitably improving living standards for farmers and their households.

In conclusion, Kudos to COCOBOD for demystifying hand pollination which was once a niche practice. Today, its extensive application in mainstream cocoa farming has provided a paradigm shift, emerging as a transformative technique in cocoa farming, offering farmers in Ghana a precise tool to unlock the full potential of their cocoa trees. The combined effect of pruning and hand pollination stands as a testament to innovation, adaptability and sustainability.

As farmers embrace this dynamic alliance (fusion of pruning and hand pollination), Ghana's cocoa industry is well positioned on a trajectory to thrive in a dynamic global market, signaling a sustainable and prosperous future for the cocoa sector and by extension, the Ghanaian economy.

So, the question remains this: Can a diseased farm be pollinated? Obviously No. Such farms also require their own intervention and so in the next edition, the writers will put in perspective the journey through the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme and its strides.



A picture of a well pollinated cocoa tree

OUR DIVERSITY MUST STRENGTHEN US – GHANAIS URGED



The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has called on Ghanaians to see the differences in the country's rich cultures and traditions as a source of strength, unity, and progress.

In a speech read on behalf of the Chief Executive by Dr. Ebenezer Owusu, Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control at the launch of the 3rd Edition of the Heritage Month at Cocoa House in Accra, Hon Boahen Aidoo lauded the importance of coming together to celebrate our country's heritage as an organization. He described it as an opportunity to form stronger bonds as colleagues and most importantly as Ghanaians.

"Together, let us embrace this opportunity to strengthen the bonds that unite us, to foster a sense of belonging and pride in our cultural identities, and to reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive and equitable workplace", he said.

He further underscored the importance of paying homage to our traditions, noting that each individual has been

influenced, to some extent, by these traditions. Additionally, he emphasized the significance of learning from one another while celebrating the diverse and beautiful cultures within our communities.

"Throughout this month, we will be epitomizing and paying homage to the traditions that have shaped us over the years through music, food, art, and colourful display of Ghanaian fabrics sewn in different styles, and espousing our ethnic, tribal, and regional uniqueness.

The month will also bring to the fore, the exploration and appreciation, and opportunity to learn from one another and celebrate the beauty of the diverse nature of our culture", he shared.

Hon Aidoo, therefore, encouraged all staff to partake in the activities lined up for the month's celebration and expressed his eagerness to see staff celebrate and promote Ghana by donning and showcasing made-in-Ghana fabrics and attires throughout the entire month.

'By the series of carefully chosen

programmes, I am keenly interested in seeing a massive display of our Ghanaian fabrics in every office. Let the Fugu, batakari, dumas and the kente brighten up the environment on each day of this month as we promote our culture through the patronage of made-in-Ghana fabrics", he remarked.

Heritage Month is a fun-filled, month-long celebration dedicated to honouring traditions and promoting cultures and communities that make Ghana truly unique. The deliberate timing of the Heritage Month festivities in March, alongside Ghana's Independence Day celebration serves not only to celebrate and promote the country's cultural legacy but also to mark a significant milestone in our nation's history.

This year's celebration is under the theme, 'Eat Ghana, Wear Ghana, Feel Ghana'.

Throughout the month, COCOBOD will mark the occasion with various activities including Flag Day, Rep your region, the Good Old Days, The Reign of Kings and Queens as well as a Food Bazaar with a variety of Ghanaian dishes and assorted local beverages.



FUGU, KENTE, DUMAS, BATAKARI: COCOBOD LIGHTS UP STAFF SPIRIT IN HERITAGE MONTH

Ghana, with its rich cultural diversity and vibrant history, holds a special place in the hearts of its people. Each year, in the Heritage Month, the nation bursts with pride and celebration, commemorating the diverse traditions, values, and legacies that define us as Ghanaians. However, beyond the streets adorned with colourful flags and the complimentary statements by well-meaning Ghanaians calling on all to be patriotic, lies a deeper significance of the Ghana Month (March) - the spirit of unity and camaraderie that flows through our communities.

In celebrating the Ghanaian cultural diversity and heritage, staff of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) for the 3rd time in a grand style, have kept lighting up offices with series of activities throughout the month of March in commemoration of the Heritage Month and the positive impact it brings to workplaces across the nation.

Starting with an official launch at the beginning of March, the incessant display and manifestations of the cultural diversity of our Motherland by staff of COCOBOD in Accra, Tema and the cocoa regions can only be described as amazing and splendid.

Every day, employees arrive at their offices, adorned in traditional attires such as Fugu, Kente, Dumas, Batakari, not only reflecting the vibrant colours of our nation but also typifying the hues of the nation's beautiful culture, reminding themselves of the

commitment and sacrifices of our forefathers, including our gallant cocoa farmers, who devoted themselves to build our cherished nation.

From the Chief Executive and his management team flowing down to all and sundry, the faces of staff of the various subsidiaries and divisions including, the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED), Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC), Quality Control Company (QCC), Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) and the COCOBOD Head Office have demonstrated a feeling of national pride as they proudly shared the bond, unity, friendship, selfless cooperation, and a sense of belongingness.

With a month-long of activities to celebrate this year's Heritage Month, the management of COCOBOD is urging staff to respect the diversity that our cultural differences have bequeathed us, while turning the same passion, ageless resilience and the national significance to the most valuable cash tree - Cocoa, a heritage passed onto us from generations to generations some fourteen decades ago when the famous Tetteh Quarshie began commercial cultivation of cocoa in Ghana.

Amongst the activities designed to ignite employees' spirit and demonstrate the deep-rooted respect for our vibrant culture are, 'National Flag Day' - where staff were encouraged to rally around the Red, Gold, Green and Black pigments of the National Flag and

also display their historical knowledge about Ghana in a Quiz contest, 'Rep Your Region', which encouraged staff to showcase the unique customs in their respective regions, 'The Good Old Days', yet another event aimed to reminisce the nostalgic feelings of the past, 'The Reign of the Kings and Queens' - challenging staff to compete in a fashion contest mimicking the Kings and Queen mothers from their respective areas.

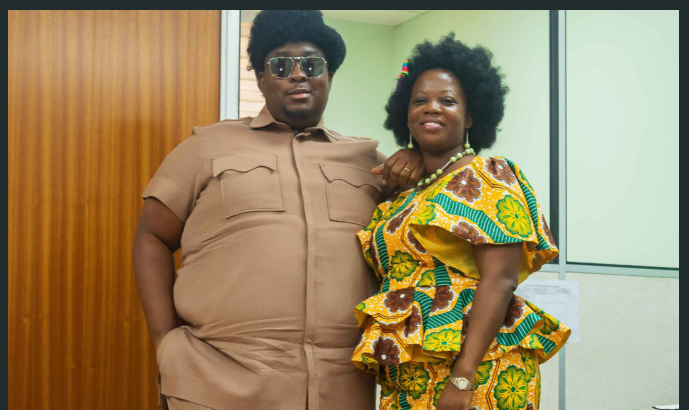
The celebration was climaxed with Food Bazaar, displaying delectable local cuisines to celebrate the country's culinary diversities at the premises of COCOBOD, amidst live band performances, and traditional games.

Amidst the funfair that characterizes the celebration, it is imperative to remind ourselves of the values that bind us together as a nation. By fostering staff enthusiasm in this special occasion, workplaces can cultivate a sense of belonging, strengthen employee engagement, and contribute to the preservation of our cherished cultural heritage. As we come together to honour the legacies of our ancestors and celebrate the beauty of Ghanaian culture, let us embrace the opportunity to build a more inclusive, united, and vibrant workforce for generations to come.

Let us not forget that cocoa is our heritage and we must all rally support to preserve, promote position it as a national legacy.

2024 HERITAGE MONTH IN PICTURES





COCOBOD DIRECTORS ENHANCE ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS FOR WORKPLACE SUCCESS



A group photograph of some directors present at the training programme

Directors from all six subsidiaries and divisions of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) have undergone a two-day training in excellent administrative skills for workplace success at the Accra City Hotel.

The training held from the 13th to 14th of March 2024, was facilitated by ETAL Associates LTD, a leading entity in administration and resource management training for corporate and public institutions.

Speaking at the opening of the training, the Deputy Chief Executive for Finance and Administration, Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah said the training programme was necessary to equip the directors with the requisite administrative soft skills set to enhance their performance in the modern workplace.

Mr Ray Ankrah added that the cocoa industry is a collective heritage and presents a huge responsibility for professionals to sharpen their

administrative skills against the ever-evolving nature of workplace challenges. He stressed that the training is meant to arm employees with the expertise needed to deliver more effectively.

He admonished the participants to ensure that they assimilate the modern workplace doctrines of effective time management, emotional intelligence, resource management and effective communication for organizational development.

Participants were taken through practical case studies in mastering their communication skills for organizational efficiency, leadership skills, and emotional intelligence in decision-making.

In addition to examining practical workplace administrative procedures, participants' competencies in general administration were tested through peer review assessments, which warranted participants to make group presentations.

All participants were presented with certificates of participation at the end of the training. They expressed their optimism to implement and impart the knowledge gained to their respective capacities.

CHIEF IMAM URGES GHANAIS TO CONSUME MORE COCOA

The National Chief Imam, His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Usman Nuhu Sharabutu has added his voice to calls for Ghanaians to patronize the consumption of locally produced cocoa products to promote healthy living and boost the economy of the country.

The renowned Islamic cleric noted that it is a moral obligation for every Ghanaian to support efforts at protecting the cocoa industry, which is a source of national pride, stressing that the national campaign towards the consumption of locally manufactured cocoa products is a laudable initiative which must be embraced by all.

The National Chief Imam made the call when a delegation from the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Ghana Tourism Authority paid a courtesy call on him at his office to officially inform him of the commencement of activities



for the 2024 National Chocolate Week Celebrations and to solicit his 'blessings' and support.

The Chief Imam, who accepted the role as an Ambassador for National Cocoa Consumption, also pledged to use his office to promote the campaign amongst Muslims and the Islamic communities.

The Eminent Islamic leader also used the occasion to call for peace and unity amongst all the religious sects in the country and commended the organisers of the cocoa consumption campaign for pursuing a course which will not only lead to the development of the economy but also enhance the nutritional needs of Ghanaians.

'I ask Allah to bless your efforts and reward you for pursuing a good cause. I appeal to all Ghanaians to embrace this campaign and ensure its successful implementation', he noted.

The team also took the campaign to the National Mosque and the Cantonments Police Mosque where they interacted with the congregants and briefed them on the essence of the National Chocolate Week and the series of activities earmarked for this year's celebration.

Meanwhile, the National Chocolate Week is an annual event spearheaded by the Ghana Cocoa Board in collaboration with the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and cocoa processors to promote the consumption of locally manufactured cocoa products

GHANA MAKES GIANT STRIDES IN PER CAPITA COCOA CONSUMPTION



Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah - Deputy Chief Executive, Finance and Administration

Ghana has increased its per capita cocoa consumption from 0.45kg to 1kg through the successful implementation of various interventions.

Announcing this during the media launch of the 2024 National Chocolate Week, the Deputy Chief Executive, Finance and Administration of COCOBOD, Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah, in a speech read on behalf of the Chief Executive, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, revealed that over the past few years, promoting cocoa consumption through the Chocolate Week and other initiatives has led to a shift in the domestic consumption patterns among Ghanaians.

‘Through targeted campaigns, educational initiatives, and collaborative efforts with stakeholders, we have witnessed a gradual shift in consumer attitudes towards locally produced cocoa products and this has translated into the realization of a per capita consumption of 1kg’ he stated.

On the back of this, he encouraged stakeholders not to be complacent but to rather work harder towards achieving greater strides in the campaign for cocoa consumption in Ghana.

“Of course, we cannot be complacent about this accomplishment, especially given the fact that elsewhere in Europe and the Americas, per capita cocoa consumption ranges from 7kg to 11kg. Instead, we feel more motivated to consolidate the gains made and enhance our key strategic focus areas to achieve maximum impact”, he said.

The Deputy CE assured the Cocoa Processing Company (CPC) that enough cocoa beans would be made available to them to facilitate the production of more chocolate products to meet public demands.

The National Chocolate Week was initiated three years ago by COCOBOD in collaboration with the Ghana Tourism Authority to celebrate Ghana’s

rich cocoa heritage and promote the campaign for local consumption of cocoa and its products.

Mr. Ankrah explained that the National Chocolate Week is not only aimed at promoting consumption but also at educating and engaging the public on the nutritional benefits of cocoa as well as fostering a sense of pride in cocoa.

Reiterating this, the Chief Executive Officer of Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), Mr Akwasi Agyemang, emphasized the importance of the National Chocolate Week adding that it has served the purpose of promoting awareness and drawing attention to the experience of the unique flavours that Ghana cocoa provide.

‘The National Chocolate Week is important because it allows us to promote awareness of the significance of the industry and also to attract visitors to experience the unique flavours and heritage associated with cocoa production’, he said.





CONSUME COCOA TO IMPROVE YOUR WELL-BEING

The Chief Pharmacist of the Cocoa Clinic, Dr. Edward Ampofo has advocated for increased cocoa consumption among the citizenry as a sure way to improve health and enhance productivity.

Explaining the numerous health benefits of cocoa at the 2nd Edition of the Chocolatarium organized by Ghana Cocoa Board and Ghana Tourism Authority to climax the 2024 National Chocolate Week celebrations, Dr. Ampofo highlighted the need for Ghanaians to prioritize the consumption of unsweetened cocoa, describing it as a hub of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, which makes it a valuable addition to our local diets.

He further explained that cocoa contains carbohydrates, proteins and other sources of nutrients making which make it a complete food source. He added that although considered as a complete food, cocoa has low caloric content which makes it the better option for people concerned about obesity.

One of his key messages was the role of cocoa in promoting cardiovascular functions. He revealed how regular cocoa consumption has been shown to help reduce the risk of stroke and other heart related conditions such as high blood pressure by improving blood circulation.

He explained that this was because of the presence of polyphenols in cocoa which rank higher than the level of polyphenols in red wine, usually taken by Ghanaians ostensibly to reduce the risk of heart conditions.

‘Many Ghanaians like to regularly drink red wine or green tea because it is good for the heart but the components in these products, for which reason they consume them, can be found more in cocoa. Cocoa has twice the capacity of antioxidant properties in red wine and about thrice the capacity of that of green tea’, he shared.

Additionally, he emphasized the role of cocoa in promoting the health of brain cells. Cocoa enhances blood flow to the brain, thus improving memory

performance and focus.

‘If you make it a point to drink cocoa every day, I am confident that your brain will function better and things such as memory loss would be a thing of the past’, he assured.

While it is imperative for Ghanaians to pat each other’s shoulders for the collective efforts towards the realization of a per capita consumption of 1kg, the need to intensify the advocacy on the health benefits of cocoa to drive massive consumption cannot be underestimated. In the long run, cocoa will be less susceptible to world price volatility.

Meanwhile, this year’s National Chocolate Week, themed ‘Eat Chocolate, Stay Healthy, Grow Ghana’ was geared towards promoting local consumption of Ghana cocoa and chocolate as well as increasing tourism. As Ghanaians cultivate the habit of consuming cocoa daily, Ghana can unlock the transformative power of cocoa and propel itself towards greater economic prosperity.

CULTIVATING PROSPERITY: THE FAR-REACHING IMPACT OF COCOA FARMING ON COCOA COMMUNITIES IN GHANA

By Benjamin T. Larweh, Public Affairs - Accra

Cocoa is a source of food, income, employment, industrial raw material and resources for poverty reduction for producing countries (Peprah, 2015).

Aside from providing livelihood for millions of smallholder farmers and their families, most of who are located in the Global South, cocoa is the main ingredient for the multibillion global chocolate industry, raking in between One Hundred and Twenty Billion (\$120b) and One Hundred and Fifty Billion (\$150b) United States Dollars annually.

Tetteh Quarshie is historically recognized for introducing cocoa to the Gold Coast in the late 19th century, marking a crucial moment in the country's agricultural trajectory.

From a very humble and an uncertain beginning, Ghana's cocoa business evolved to become a key economic activity for the nation within a few decades of its arrival.

Today Ghana is the second leading exporter of cocoa to the United States, Europe and Asia (Glavee-Geo et al. 2020), with the produce consistently contributing about 80 percent of the country's total agricultural export earnings (ISSER, 2017). In general terms, cocoa exports contribute significantly to Ghana's total foreign exchange earnings (Bank of Ghana, 2021; Ghana Statistical Service, 2020; Deans et al. 2018).

The April 2023 edition of the COCOBOD News reported a recent data collected by the Ghana Cocoa Board through the Cocoa Management System (CMS) which shows that current



farmers who often work on predominantly family-owned farms.

Income from cocoa is not only crucial for the sustenance of these farming households but also serves as a catalyst for economic activities within the community. Proceeds from cocoa are used to establish other petty businesses which benefit the entire community (Bymolt et al., 2018).

In their assessment of the political economy of the cocoa value chain in Ghana, Teye and Nikoi (2021), posit that while contributing significantly to the livelihoods of individuals and households, cocoa also promotes corporate social responsibility initiatives.

This is corroborated by the demonstrated commitment of national, regional and district cocoa award winners, over the years, to the development of their respective communities through the provision of various social and infrastructural amenities, educational support for the less privileged and other support systems.

Cocoa farming also creates employment opportunities at various levels (Peprah, 2015). From the farmers working directly on the fields to those involved in transportation, processing, and trading, the entire cocoa value chain stimulates job creation. This, in turn, helps in reducing unemployment rates and fostering economic stability within the local community.

The economic gains from cocoa farming contribute to the development of local infrastructure. Communities

total number of registered cocoa farmers in Ghana hovers a little below 800,000. This would suggest that close to 2.4 million workers are employed in just the production end of the cocoa value chain, assuming that each registered farmer employs a minimum of two additional persons for various activities on his/her farm during the production year.

It can therefore be asserted that cocoa farming plays a critical role in the nation's socio-economic discourse, including shaping the local economies of communities, extending far beyond the agricultural sector.

In this article, I explore how cocoa farming serves as a cornerstone for producing communities in Ghana, with a deeper look at the nuanced and multi-faceted economic, social, and cultural impacts of the nation's most revered produce on local economies.

According to the Ghana Cocoa & Forest Initiative (2022), cocoa cultivation is a key source of economic empowerment for local communities, being a major source of income for the countless smallholder

heavily involved in cocoa production often witness improvements in roads, schools, healthcare facilities, and other essential services. Benneh and Anaman (2019), citing Send Ghana (2019), validate this assertion by outlining how cocoa exports were a key source of Ghanaian government funding from 1920 to 1990.

Studies show that reserves built up from cocoa revenues were used to provide the first independent administration with the means to pursue an ambitious infrastructural development programme, including the establishment of over 200 secondary schools, several universities, and thousands of kilometers of good roads.

As cocoa farming brings economic prosperity to communities, there is often a positive impact on education. Families can afford to send their children to school, and increased government revenues from cocoa production may be allocated to improving educational infrastructure. Consequently, there is a gradual improvement in literacy rates and educational attainment within these communities. In effect, increased revenue, generated from cocoa, helps governments to invest in, and enhance the overall well-being of local communities.

Cocoa farming is also deeply ingrained in the social and cultural fabric of many Ghanaian communities. It fosters a sense of community identity and solidarity. During the farming period, and particularly peak harvesting seasons, communal efforts are often required, strengthening social bonds among community members. The 'Nnoboa' system in Ghana, a traditional system of community labour-sharing or communal labour, is worth mentioning here.

This is a customary practice whereby members of a community come together to help each other with various tasks such as farm clearing, cocoa harvesting, pod breaking, construction, or other communal projects. In the 'Nnoboa' system, community members take turns working on each other's farms or assisting with other projects, typically without monetary compensation.

The 'Nnoboa' system is deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture and traditions, and it continues to be practiced in many rural communities across the country. This system fosters a sense of solidarity and

mutual support within the community, as individuals rely on each other for assistance and cooperation, thereby contributing to a sense of collective responsibility and collaboration.

Cocoa farming with its antecedent social systems is thus an important social means for promoting cooperation, sharing resources, and strengthening community bonds.

Despite the positive impacts, cocoa farming communities in Ghana encounter a myriad of challenges. These include inadequate emphasis on food crop production, resulting in food scarcity among smallholder cocoa farming households. Furthermore, the improper application of weedicides and inadequate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) adversely affect cocoa production, environmental integrity, and human well-being.

The presence of illegal small-scale mining activities in many communities, exacerbates labour shortages, water contamination, and land use conflicts within cocoa-growing areas.

Moreover, moribund cocoa trees, weed infestation, pest and disease, notably the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD), and limited areas for cocoa cultivation pose significant hurdles for cocoa farmers in Ghana.

Additionally, the cocoa industry grapples with economic instabilities stemming from fluctuations in producer prices, smuggling of Ghana's premium cocoa to neighbouring nations, as well as climate and weather-related disruptions such as the severe droughts experienced in recent months (Kosoe & Ahmed, 2022). Concerted efforts are required to curb these challenges.

In conclusion, this paper explored the broad impact of cocoa farming on cocoa growing communities, confirming the long held opinion that the golden pod serves more than just an economic commodity—it is the lifeblood of countless families, the cornerstone of rural livelihoods, and a catalyst for sustainable socio-economic development. From the verdant forests of Ghana to the rolling hills of Ivory Coast, cocoa farming not only sustains livelihoods but also fosters social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and economic empowerment.

As we continue to put in efforts to preserve the enduring heritage and legacy of the cocoa business, let us recognize the invaluable contributions of the hardworking and resilient cocoa farmers, whose dedication and determination sustain the global cocoa supply chain.

By investing in the well-being of cocoa communities, promoting sustainable farming practices, and fostering partnerships that empower farmers, we can ensure that cocoa farming continues to be a force for positive change, lifting communities out of poverty, and cultivating prosperity for generations to come. Together, let us nurture the roots of cocoa farming and harvest a future where every cocoa community thrives.

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INCREASING COCOA PRODUCTION IN GHANA - THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 4Ps

By Felix Kwame Quainoo, CHED
Dunkwa-on-Offin

Cocoa, scientifically known as *Theobroma cacao*, is one of the important cash crops cultivated in Ghana. The crop has widely been described as the mainstay of Ghana's economy in view of its continuous contribution to strengthening Ghana's gross foreign exchange reserves. For instance, in 2021 alone, cocoa contributed about GHS3.1 billion (\$533 Million) to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), accounting for over 10% of the country's GDP.

Even though the agricultural sector is the largest employer of Ghanaians, the cocoa subsector alone employs over one million farmers. In addition, Ghana's cocoa sector is touted for supporting the livelihoods of millions of people in the commerce, services and industrial sectors of the economy and thus, making the cocoa industry a pillar of Ghana's economic development drive.

In the 2020/2021 crop year, Ghana recorded its highest ever cocoa production of 1,047, 000 metric tons. However, since attaining this feat, cocoa production has rather been sluggish, with the country struggling to achieve an average of 800,000 tons of cocoa production annually. This has led to simmering disquiet among cocoa farmers and also industry players, watchers, connoisseurs and policymakers.

Declining levels of cocoa bean stocks have been attributed to a myriad of factors which have gained notoriety in recent times. The unbridled and unmitigated age-old challenge of cocoa smuggling to neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire and Togo, mostly along the Eastern and Western corridors has significantly caused a drip in revenue from cocoa trade.

The rampant threat of illegal small-scale mining (Galamsey) continues to hang around the neck of the country like an albatross, wreaking

unimaginable havoc on Ghana's cocoa landscape. From Wassa Akropong in the Wassa Amenfi East District of the Western South Region to Akwatia in the Kwaebibirem District in the Eastern Region, the level of devastation of productive cocoa farms as a result of galamsey activities is a tearjerker and an apology to our conscience as Ghanaians.

What makes it even more heart-wrenching is the fact that there appears to be absolutely no hope in sight in addressing this canker as the nation appears virtually impotent and powerless in handling the menace.

Consequently, hundreds of hectares of productive cocoa farms are razed down on a daily basis much to the chagrin of all, as law enforcement agencies look on unconcerned and in some cases complicity in our woes. Galamsey has consequently contributed largely to the unfortunate sharp decline in Ghana's cocoa production as witnessed in recent times.

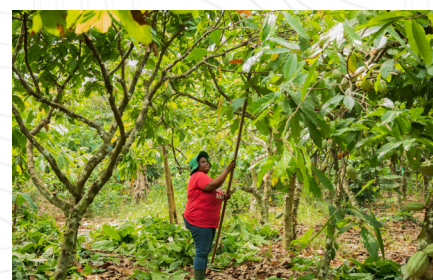
Another contributing factor is the twin challenge of the Cocoa Swollen Shoot and Virus Disease (CSSVD) and moribund cocoa farms. CSSVD affects about 17% of Ghana's total cocoa tree stock whilst 23% of the total tree stocks are overaged, moribund and unproductive and need massive rehabilitation. What this means is that, only 60% of the country's total cocoa tree stock is productive while 40% is technically redundant.

As a concrete step, COCOBOD in 2017 introduced the novel Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) in an effort to restore declining cocoa yields and in effect, ensure sustainable cocoa production. At the core of the PEPs module are the 4Ps of cocoa production which are Pruning, Pollination, Poultry Manure, and Protection. COCOBOD is poised to normalize the annual production of one million metric tons of cocoa from its 60% productive stock.

It is in light of this vision that COCOBOD, through Community Extension Agents (CEAs), has introduced the 4Ps in its extension activities to aid farmers realize the full benefits of the PEPs.

Today, COCOBOD has successfully mainstreamed these 4Ps as components of the Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs) for adoption by cocoa farmers and the expectation is that with the support of thousands of cocoa farmer cooperatives across the country, high adoption rate would be achieved in this agenda.

So, what really are the 4Ps of cocoa production and how do they support the PEPs to improve yields?



PRUNING

Pruning is the systematic removal of the unwanted growth or parts of the cocoa plant. It is a good agronomic practice that is not only needed to optimize or shore up cocoa production but also to facilitate and ensure safer farm operations. Due to the strategic importance of pruning to cocoa farming, it has been described as the magic wand and master key to ignite higher yields in cocoa production.

In 2018, COCOBOD for the first time recruited some energetic youth as casual labourers across the seven cocoa-growing regions and 70 districts to undertake what is now the Mass Cocoa Pruning. COCOBOD, through its Cocoa Extension Agents (CEAs) at the beginning of every year encourages cocoa farmers and cocoa farmer cooperatives to ensure that all productive cocoa farms are pruned

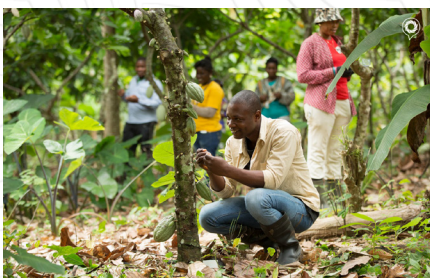
between the months of January and April.

This exercise is being augmented by some 100,000 dual-purposed motorized pruners and slashers which were distributed to farmer cooperatives a few years ago to support, demystify and reduce the drudgery associated with the traditional means of pruning and weeding. These machines were also ostensibly introduced to discourage the use of weedicides in cocoa farms and in the process ensure biodiversity protection and conservation. Every year, COCOBOD provides fuel and engine oil to the cooperatives to support the operation of the motorized pruners and slashers.

Today, mass cocoa pruning is headlined by cocoa farmers and cocoa farmer cooperatives themselves as they have come to realize the significant difference pruning makes in their productive cocoa farms. Pruning basically involves the removal of unwanted growths like basal chupons, lateral, interlocking, drooping, diseased and dead branches. During pruning, epiphytes like mistletoes which feed off cocoa trees are totally removed.

This automatically ensures the reduction of insect pest populations on the farm by not less than 50% while keeping the farm aerated with sufficient sunlight penetration to secure proper and healthy growth of trees.

After the mass cocoa pruning exercise, farmers are given flower inducers and liquid fertilizers to apply on their cocoa farms. These flower inducers and liquid fertilizers trigger the formation and retention of flowers. Guess what!, the magic of pruning is not only scientific but also biblical. In John 15:2, the holy book says, "He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful". Mass Pruning prepares the farm for Pollination.



POLLINATION

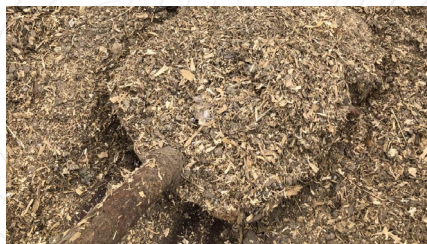
Pollination is the transfer of pollen

grains from the anther of a flower to the stigma of another flower. This leads to fertilization and thereby fruit formation (In this case cherelles which grow into pods). It is common knowledge that the natural agents of pollination are insects (mainly midges in cocoa) air, etc. Unfortunately, natural pollination does not produce the needed pod load per tree which can lead to increased cocoa production.

It is against this backdrop that COCOBOD in 2017, introduced what is known as Artificial Hand Pollination, where forceps were used by farmers to artificially transfer pollen grains from the anther of flowers from one tree to the stigma of flowers of another tree.

Here again some youth were recruited and trained to artificially pollinate flowers on cocoa trees in all productive cocoa farms across the country. Today, due to the increased production levels and the huge financial benefits associated with artificial hand pollination, the exercise is now owned by cocoa farmers and cocoa farmer cooperatives themselves. Cocoa farmers now carry out artificial hand pollination themselves by employing COCOBOD-trained pollinators who pollinate their cocoa farms for them at a fee.

Every year COCOBOD supports cooperatives with thousands of forceps to facilitate artificial hand pollination. After pollination there is the need to fertilize the soil to give the pollinated trees adequate nutrients to support the high pod load on the trees, hence the application of Poultry Manure.



POULTRY MANURE

Cocoa farmers in Ghana have become so accustomed to the use of inorganic fertilizers to fix low soil nutrients. This situation has hampered the campaign for the adoption of organic means of addressing soil nutrients deficiency.

The over-reliance on the application of inorganic fertilizer on cocoa farms has invariably created the problem of salty and acidic soils. To this end, when inorganic fertilizers are applied, they are only available in the soil but

not available to root hairs for fertilizer uptake.

These cocoa soils end up being deficient not only in vital nutrients over years through mineral mining (through harvesting of cocoa pods) but also get degraded. Poultry manure, being organic, comes in handy to aid the regeneration of degraded soils.

Poultry manure is soil-friendly and can easily be utilized by the cocoa plant for increased production. This, coupled with its low cost as compared to inorganic fertilizers as well as its ready availability on the local market, makes it the best alternative to cocoa farmers.

COCOBOD therefore recommends that after pruning and artificial hand pollination, the next most important thing that cocoa farmers ought to do is to apply poultry manure to their cocoa to restore lost nutrients and increase crop nutrition to boost cocoa production in the country.



PROTECTION

From the foregoing analysis, it is obvious that the diligent application of the first 3Ps in mainstream cocoa farming guarantees increased yields.

When pod load increases, it is important to give 'Protection' to the pods against pests and diseases like insects and fungus. Capsid, stink/shield bug infestations and black pod disease can whittle down the gains made by about 25%. COCOBOD has therefore expanded the scope and strategically modified the operational modalities of the Cocoa Mass Spraying exercise by making large volumes of insecticides and fungicides available on time at various gang areas for crop protection.

It is envisaged that the adoption and implementation of the 4Ps of cocoa production in Ghana would invariably lead to increased production and support the achievement and sustenance of one million metric tons of cocoa and beyond.

Yes, we can do it! It is possible!

LET'S UPHOLD HIGH ETHICAL STANDARDS IN THE WORKPLACE - WORKERS' UNION ADVISED

The Chairman of Ghana Cocoa Board's (COCOBOD) Supreme Consultative Council, Mr Isaac Ansah has emphasized the importance of ethical conduct among staff in the workplace, highlighting it as the foundation of professional integrity.

Addressing the Supreme Consultative Council's meeting, Mr. Ansah stressed on the detrimental effect of unethical conduct in the organization. He cited rumour mongering as one of the unethical conducts common among staff, explaining the negative impact it has on the organization's image.

He emphasized the value of integrity, and confidentiality as they handle critical documents in the course of their duties and admonished staff to refrain from spreading false news and always verify information.

Mr. Ansah further called for discipline at the workplace and an observance of the regulations that govern the behaviours of staff to avoid being sanctioned for a breach of any of the rules. According to him, lateness, absenteeism and insubordination among others do not only tarnish the image of the organization but also affects personal development.

'Our indiscipline level is alarming. Lateness, insubordination, and others do not help the industry. There is no industry that can function without proper discipline of its members. So, we urge you to put a stop to such behaviour' he said.

The Supreme Chairman highlighted



Mr Isaac Ansah, Chairman: Supreme Consultative Council, COCOBOD

various achievements of the Council including progressive discussions with management on home ownership and car loans and assured that leadership is engaging management on a myriad of staff issues to ensure that systems work to enable qualified staff to get access to these loans to make life comfortable.

He also mentioned the successful implementation of a 15% salary increase as well as back pay enjoyed by staff and commended management for the successful negotiation. He therefore encouraged staff to be financially prudent, adding that financial discipline is not only dependent on how much one earns but the saving habits that one develops.

'With this increase, it is important that we develop saving habits because the best time to save is now. It is not how much you earn but what you use what you earn for. Let us do well to manage

what we have. There's no good period that will come for you to save. Start now" he advised.

Reiterating the importance of ethical conduct, the Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Mr. Fiifi Bofo, emphasized the critical role of each employee in safeguarding and enhancing the organization's public image.

He explained that the narrative that is put out there by COCOBOD staff contributes largely to shaping how the organization is perceived by external stakeholders including the public. He therefore encouraged staff to be mindful of their comments, remarks and other representations while dealing with the public.

'We have allowed a certain narrative in the public domain about COCOBOD which is why people say what they say about us. As employees, every word we utter about the organization matters. It is our responsibility to protect the work we do. Learn to keep information about COCOBOD to ourselves.

Refrain from forwarding confidential information to the public. As employees, we ultimately suffer collateral damage when any negative impression is created. It is in our best interest to protect COCOBOD's image", he stressed.

Meanwhile, the meeting was attended by Human Resource Managers, the Chairman and some members of the Senior Staff Association as well as Executives and members of the Supreme Council.



TARKWA-NSUAEM MUNICIPAL CO-OPERATIVE COCOA FARMERS UNION INAUGURATED



A section of the cocoa farmers union inaugurated

The Tarkwa-Nsuaem Municipality Cooperative Cocoa Farmers Union in the Western South Region has been inaugurated to help support the welfare of cocoa farmers in the area.

The formation of the union was born out of a shared vision of fostering unity and enhancing the well-being of cocoa farmers and marks a significant step towards progress and sustainable cocoa production in the region.

The Union will provide a platform for the over four thousand six hundred and ninety-seven (4,697) cocoa farmers to engage COCOBOD and other stakeholders in shaping the policy direction of the cocoa industry, as well as, pull resources for their mutual benefit.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr Samuel Osei, the Western South Regional Manager of the Cocoa Health & Extension Division (CHED), charged members of the union to embrace unity, inclusivity and transparency in all their activities, stressing that it is only through the communal spirit and co-operation that the vision and objectives of the group can be fully realized.

While commending the leadership of the

individual co-operatives for bringing all members together to form the Union, Mr Osei charged them to eschew divisive practices such as discrimination and favouritism which tend to undermine the objectives and operations of the association.

He reaffirmed COCOBOD's unwavering support for the members, pledging assistance in their pursuit of advancement and prosperity.

The union is poised to harness the support of COCOBOD and other stakeholders to enhance cocoa production, improve livelihoods, and elevate the standard of living for its members.

Speaking on behalf of the newly executives, the Chairman of the Union, Mr. Peter Addotey, accepted the challenge and called on his members to support his team of executives to

enable them deliver on their mandate to bring prosperity and enhanced welfare of their members.

He assured them of servant leadership, accountability and transparency. The inauguration ceremony served as a beacon of hope for the cocoa farming community and showed the potential for collective action to drive positive change in their cocoa activities.

Other members of the executives include Mr. Francis Adjei- Vice Chairman, General Secretary- Christian Togeh, Financial Secretary -Mr. Samuel Addy, Mad. Hawa Abubakari as the Treasurer, Salifu Mumuni as the Organizer and Mr. Kwame Boateng as the Potter.

The Council Members for the Union include Daniel Danzel, Emmanuel Atsu, Daniel Azure and Augustine Gbetty.



CHED RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM CANADIAN NGO, SOCODEVI



Mr. Nicolas Demers-Labrousse (left) presenting a laptop to Dr. Ebenezer Owusu (DCE - A&QC)

A Canadian Non-Governmental Organization based in Ghana, Société de Coopération pour le Développement International (SOCODEVI) has presented 4 Desktop Computers and 2 Laptops to the management of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) to support the division in its data collection and processing activities amongst co-operatives in cocoa growing communities across the country.

The donation forms part of the 'TogetHER Project', an initiative for women and cocoa-growing communities which is being funded by Global Affairs Canada.

The handover took place at the Headquarters of COCOBOD in Accra last Thursday by officials of SOCODEVI,

led by its Country Director, Nicolas Demers-Labrousse and Martha Rayner Opoku Mensah, Principal Coordinator for the TogetHER Project.

The project, which was launched in March 2023, also seeks to address climate change and environmental protection by working with growers and government and private agencies in cocoa-growing communities.

In his remarks, the Country Director of SOCODEVI, Mr. Nicolas Demers-Labrousse expressed his outfit's commitment towards improving the lives of communities, and empower women co-operatives in order to help address the issue of gender-based barriers in the cocoa industry.

He stated through the initiative,

SOCODEVI is seeking to impact the livelihoods of 3,000 women and 1000 youth from two cocoa growing regions including Ashanti and Western North Regions, stressing that the project, since its inception, has recorded huge successes.

The Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control, Dr. Ebenezer Owusu, who received the items on behalf of Management, commended SOCODEVI for the kind gesture and expressed the hope that the collaboration between the two entities will continue to grow stronger. 'We appreciate SOCODEVI-Ghana's commitment to supporting our mission.

These computers will undoubtedly help in our efforts towards climate smart agricultural practices, ensuring sustainable cocoa production and improving the livelihoods of our hardworking cocoa farmers." Dr. Ebenezer Owusu noted.

The Executive Director of CHED, Rev. Edwin Afari, underscored the importance of empowering extension agents at the district levels with the requisite logistics to help in data collection and monitoring, stressing that CHED has over the years benefitted immensely from the collaboration between COCOBOD and SOCODEVI.

Also present at the presentation were the Director of Research, Dr. Francis Baah and Deputy Director, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, Mr. Paul Ntim.



DYNAMIC AGROFORESTRY: A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH TO GHANA'S CONVENTIONAL COCOA CULTIVATION PRACTICES

By Agnes Annoh, Public Affairs - Accra

Cocoa farming has long been the backbone of Ghana's agricultural sector, playing a significant role in the country's economy and providing livelihoods for millions of farmers.

However, Conventional Cocoa Cultivation Practices (CCCP) have faced criticisms for their contribution to deforestation, soil degradation and biodiversity loss.

Notwithstanding, there is a growing recognition of the potential of Dynamic Agroforestry (DAF) as a promising alternative that will not only sustain cocoa production but also promote sustainability and resilience in cocoa farming systems while conserving the environment.

Understanding Dynamic Agroforestry DAF is an innovative approach to farming that integrates a variety of plants and animal species in a synergistic manner to create diverse, productive, and resilient farming systems. Unlike CCCP, DAF mimics natural ecosystems through the construction of natural forest-like systems with high biomass production. Its primary emphasis lies in the natural regeneration of native trees and shrubs along with managing tree canopy through pruning.

In Ghana, DAF involves intercropping cocoa with shade trees, fruit trees, and other crops, intentionally establishing strata for the cocoa, to foster biodiversity and soil health. DAF was initially rolled out in Ghana by Kuapa Kookoo and their partners under an initiative named "Sankofa".

CRIG and DAF

In a bid to provide technical support to the implementation team, the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) allocated a 2 ha plot to establish a DAF plot to conduct research on the DAF model, focusing on the use of lowest fertility soil to grow cocoa without touching any forests.

The first DAF plot at CRIG was

established in May of 2022 and is currently 19 months old. With the welfare of Ghanaian farmers at its core, CRIG has also initiated another DAF plot, modified to conduct further research aimed at determining the most suitable DAF system that will be beneficial to the Ghanaian farmer and allow for easy adoption.

BENEFITS OF DYNAMIC AGROFORESTRY

The DAF model is centered on the principle of diversity. Planting a variety of tree species alongside cocoa trees yields various benefits such as:

1 Biodiversity Conservation: DAF, through mimicking the natural ecosystem, promotes biodiversity by providing habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. This enhances ecosystem resilience and supports pollination.

2 Soil Health and Fertility: The presence of diverse plant species helps to improve soil fertility and structure, preventing soil erosion. The plants that are pruned are used as shrubs to build biomass for the soil which maintains and promotes soil moisture, and nutrient cycling, thereby decreasing reliance on chemical inputs.

3 Livelihood and Sustenance for Farmers: In addition to cocoa, the DAF model gives farmers the liberty to select and plant a variety of food crops that can fetch them extra income as well as serve as an extra source of food. By diversifying their crops and income sources, farmers can improve their livelihoods and food security. This also reduces their dependence on a single commodity and boosts their finances.

4 Climate Resilience: With climate change posing increasing challenges to agriculture, Dynamic Agroforestry offers a level of resilience. The integration of trees in the DAF system helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change by buffering against extreme temperatures, increasing carbon sequestration, and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

CHALLENGES OF DYNAMIC AGROFORESTRY

While the adoption of DAF presents promising opportunities, it also has its share of challenges. Some of these challenges include:

1 Cost of Establishment: The financial burden on farmers in establishing a DAF plot poses a significant challenge within the DAF system. There is the need for careful consideration of expenses such as acquiring the needed seedlings and shade trees, which might not be readily available in the farmers' local environment. These costs altogether might be beyond the farmers' means.

2 Initial Labour Requirements: Farmers who lack the resources to cover initial costs of labour for clearing the land to create a suitable surface for planting cover crops essential for DAF plots, might find it difficult to adopt the DAF system as the initial costs are relatively higher as compared to the CCCP.

3 Choice of Tree Species: To ensure the success of the DAF system, it's crucial to tailor it to benefit the farmers. This requires identifying the optimal combinations of crops and shrubs to integrate into the DAF plots for maximum yields once the cocoa trees mature. These combinations should also bring value to the farmer through generating returns from the produce. To achieve this, comprehensive technical assistance and training is required to empower farmers with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions when establishing their DAF plots.

In conclusion, DAF offers a promising pathway to transform Ghana's cocoa industry. By embracing DAF, Ghana can unlock the full potential of its cocoa sector while protecting the environment and improving the well-being of farmers. With commitment, continuous support and investment, DAF can pave the way for a more resilient and sustainable future in Ghana's cocoa industry.

ALIGN ASSESSMENT PROCESSES WITH CORE ORGANISATIONAL GOALS



“Professionalism is very key and cuts across regardless of where you find yourself. Be truthful with your stakeholders at all times and take the necessary measures to always follow due processes”, he stated.

In his opening remarks, the Director of Human Resources, Mr. Francis Gyamfi Ocran, highlighted the importance of professional development and staff capacity, and encouraged the participants to fully partake and make contributions in order to make the training a meaningful one.

One of the key highlights of the workshop was an in-depth analysis of the methodologies and framework for conducting staff capacity assessments, data collection and how to measure staff capacity.

The workshop also addressed the significance of revising and developing clear cut job descriptions for the capacity assessment.

The interactive sessions also explored strategies for staff capacity building and provided the platform to discuss issues related to capacity evaluation and to make inputs on the tools required for the assessment.

By equipping HR professionals with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to assess and enhance staff capacity, COCOBOD is poised to unlock the full potential of its workforce and drive sustainable growth and success in the cocoa industry.

In attendance were HR managers and deputies from COCOBOD, Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED), Seed Production Division (SPD), Quality Control Company (QCC), Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC), Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) and Bunso Cocoa College (BCC) as well as regional administrators from the cocoa regions



A group photograph of participants at the HR training

Human Resource professionals have been urged to ensure that assessment processes are in line with core organizational values, goals and objectives.

At a technical workshop organized by the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in collaboration with the Cocoa Sector Institutional Support Project (COSISP) for human resource professionals across the Board, participants were taken through key skills and capabilities required to improve efficiency in their routine roles.

The workshop also focused on staff capacity assessment, aimed to equip the HR team with the requisite

knowledge, tools and insights to optimize staff capabilities to drive organizational growth.

Addressing the workshop, the president of Continental Consultants Ghana Limited, Mr. Yaw Adu-Boahene, who was also a facilitator, stressed some core values of COCOBOD that participants should focus on as Human Resource professionals.

According to him, it is imperative for HR professionals to embody the core values of the organization they represent as much as possible, adding that truth and effective communication are vital virtues in enhancing the credibility of the profession.

UGANDAN DIPLOMATS PAY FAMILIARIZATION VISIT TO CRIG

By Geoffrey Opoku-Darko, Public Affairs - CRIG

The Member of Parliament (MP) for Bwamba County of Uganda, Honourable Richard Muhumuza Gafabusa along with three other diplomats has embarked on a familiarization visit to the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG).

Their visit was aimed at gaining insights into cocoa sector operations in Ghana as well as engaging with stakeholders along the cocoa value chain.

The Executive Director of CRIG, Dr. Francis Padi welcomed the delegation, providing them with an overview of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Institute's research activities.

He highlighted the importance of good agronomic practices such as pre-harvest, and post-harvest management, including fermentation, as well as COCOBOD's Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) in ensuring crop improvement and sustainable cocoa production.

Dr. Padi underscored CRIG's significant contributions to cocoa development by researching the waste of mandate crops, highlighting by-products such as assorted Ghana Dark bar chocolate, cocoa wine and brandy, cocoa butter pomade and soap, cashew nuts, cocoa and cashew jams, all derived from the waste and produced at the New Products Development (NPD) Unit of the Institute to assist farmers generate extra income.

Expressing his optimism about the collaboration, the Executive Director emphasized the potential benefits to both countries, in ensuring optimal yields and fostering a sustainable environment for cocoa production.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, Hon. Muhumuza Gafabusa acknowledged the transformative impact that the collaboration between the two countries will have on Uganda's



Honorable Richard Muhumuza Gafabusa - Member of Parliament for Bwamba, Uganda

cocoa industry.

'Uganda has long been famous for its coffee, but we are novices in the cocoa sector, which is why we are on a mission to learn from our fellow African countries, especially Ghana, the world's best exporter of quality premium cocoa', he shared.

Meanwhile, the attendees included Mr.

Patrice Brimmogi, Executive Director of Uganda Development Corporation, Lillian Ricketts-Hagan, Honorary Consul Uganda-Ghana, Elizabeth Muramura, Uganda Development Corporation, Aidah Vumilia, Uganda Development Corporation, Richard Berchmans Armah, Principal Public Affairs Officer, and Geoffrey Opoku-Darko, Public Affairs Officer.

CRIG URGED TO INTRODUCE FARMERS TO DAF MODEL



The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo has called for the Dynamic Agroforestry (DAF) model and its techniques to be disseminated to farmers across the country as part of efforts to restore farmlands degraded by the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD).

Hon Boahen Aidoo made this call during a field trip he embarked with the Swiss Ambassador, H.E. Simone Giger to the DAF plots at the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG). According to him, it is important to share the model with farmers because it is the transformative approach Ghana needs as it endeavours to regenerate its forests and revive lands impacted by the CSSVD.

“DAF is a good technique which must be disseminated to the farmers so that as many farmers as possible will adopt it especially as we look to restore a lot of our farmlands which have been affected by the CSSVD”, he emphasized.

The COCOBOD CE described the DAF model as a good upgrade to Ghana's Conventional Cocoa Cultivation Practice (CCCP) and explained further that there is not enough biodiversity and biomass to provide soil moisture on the conventional cocoa farms to help cocoa survive, especially during the dry season.



Officials of COCOBOD and Swiss delegation inspecting a model cocoa farm

The CE was confident that the classical DAF techniques of integrating a diverse array of trees and food crops that increase biodiversity while providing enough biomass for the soil, will bear more cocoa due to soil capability.

“In the conventional farm, the biodiversity is not much, and the biomass is not there to provide enough soil moisture to make cocoa survive during the dry season. This is a good model, an upgrade of our existing system. We need this model to rejuvenate and regenerate our forests and I believe this is the way to go”, he shared.

He therefore called on CRIG to adopt a system of DAF that will be beneficial to Ghanaian farmers and allow for easy adoption.

Hon Aidoo recognized the significant costs associated with the DAF and its potential financial implications for individual farmers and called for support from the Swiss Ambassador to

collaborate with COCOBOD and CRIG in scaling up the project.

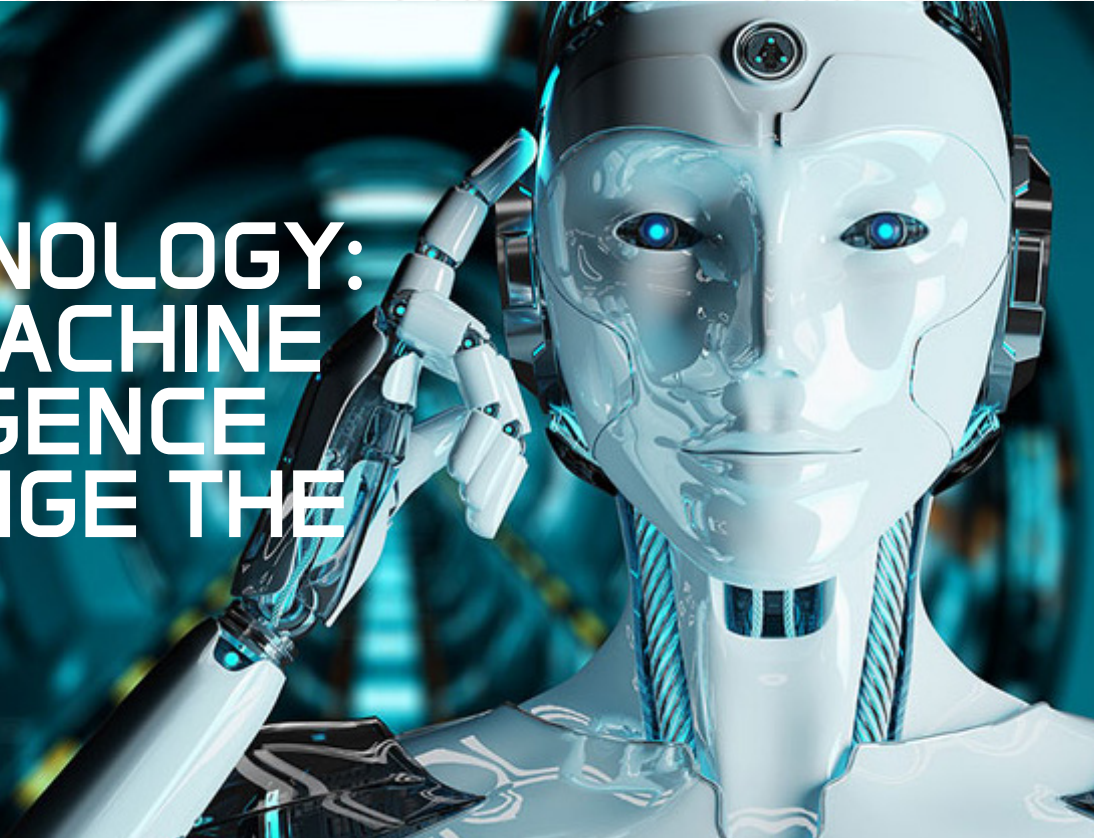
“This calls for a lot of investment which I think individual farmers will find difficult. At COCOBOD, we are playing our part, but this is where partnership comes in. So we want you to play the advocacy for us in the industry because without the bean there will be no bar therefore now the bean needs support from the bar so that we all sustain the industry”, he said.

On her part, the Swiss Ambassador, H.E. Giger commended the CRIG team for the effort put into the project and reemphasized the need to carry out the DAF project on a larger scale not only with Ghanaian farmers but possibly with other countries.

She acknowledged the call for support and assured that the call would be carefully considered for further deliberations with donor partners to drive the project and scale it up significantly.

AI TECHNOLOGY: USING MACHINE INTELLIGENCE TO CHANGE THE WORLD

By Obed Aboagye-Frimpong:
Public Affairs



INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative and promising technologies of our time.

It is the product of years of computer science research and development and has the ability to transform entire sectors, increase productivity, and alter how we live and work.

UNDERSTANDING AI TECHNOLOGY

The main objective of AI technology is to replicate human intelligence in machines. It gives computers the ability to learn from existing data, solve complex problems, recognise patterns, and make decisions—all things that previously required human cognition.

AI encompasses various subfields, including machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics. Machine learning allows computers to improve from data using algorithms, including reinforcement, unsupervised, and supervised learning.

Natural language processing enables machines to understand and generate human language, powering chatbots and virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa.

Computer vision allows machines to interpret visual information, driving applications like facial recognition and autonomous vehicles.

These technologies collectively enhance the capabilities and applications of AI across various industries.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE COCOA INDUSTRY

AI can significantly enhance various aspects of Ghana's cocoa industry by providing data-driven insights, optimising processes, and improving productivity.

The following are some ways AI can contribute to the growth of Ghana's cocoa industry:

1. SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIMIZATION

AI can streamline the cocoa supply chain by optimising logistics, inventory management, and transportation routes. Predictive analytics can anticipate demand fluctuations, and minimising wastage within the cocoa sector.

2. QUALITY CONTROL

AI-powered image recognition and machine learning algorithms can aid the Quality Control Company (QCC) in assessing the quality of cocoa beans based on visual characteristics such as size, colour, and texture. This enables automated sorting and grading processes, ensuring consistency and premium quality throughout the supply chain.

3. PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

By analysing historical data on weather patterns, market trends, and crop yields, AI algorithms can aid in forecasting cocoa production, demand, and prices. This can lead to effective planning, optimised resource allocation, and risk management in a volatile international cocoa market.

4. MARKET INTELLIGENCE

AI can analyse vast amounts of data from various sources, including social media, news articles, and market reports, to provide real-time market intelligence to stakeholders, such as the regulator, licenced buyers, hauliers, civil society groups and others, in the cocoa industry.

5. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

AI can accelerate the research and development efforts of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) by aiding in the analyses of genomic data to breed disease-resistant and high-yielding cocoa varieties.

6. FARMERS' SUPPORT

AI-powered applications can provide personalised recommendations and advisory services to cocoa farmers, offering guidance on best practices, pest management, and financial planning. These digital platforms empower farmers with access to information and resources to improve their livelihoods and sustainability practices.

CONCLUSION

As we witness the transformative impact of AI technology, ushering in a new era of possibilities, it also brings forth ethical and societal considerations that demand careful attention and navigation. That, notwithstanding, it provides opportunities for Ghana to overcome challenges, enhance productivity, ensure the sustainability of its cocoa industry, to maintain its position as a leading cocoa producer in the global market.



Ghana Cocoa Board
Poised to Maintain Premium Quality Cocoa