



# COCOBOD *News*

A publication of Ghana Cocoa Board

September, 2024

354.55%  
INCREASE  
IN 4YRS

WHY GHANA'S  
CURRENT COCOA  
PRODUCER PRICE AND  
SUPPORT SYSTEMS SHOULD  
DISINCENTIVISE SMUGGLING



# Stay Healthy

Enjoy a Taste of Cocoa  
Every Day



**CHAIRMAN** Mr. Francis Akwasi Opoku, Director Legal/Solicitor Secretary  
**CO-CHAIRMAN** Mr. Stephen Fiifi Boafo, Deputy Director, Public Affairs

**MEMBERS** Dr. (Mrs.) Mercy Asamoah, Rector, Bunso Cocoa College  
Dr. Edward Okyere Amporful, Chief Pharmacist, Cocoa Clinic  
Ms. Jane Yeboah, Manager, Public Affairs  
Mr. Benjamin Teye Larweh, Deputy Public Affairs Manager

**DESIGN** Obed Aboagye-Frimpong, Public Affairs Officer

**PHOTOS** Archibald Owusu-Ansah, Asst. Public Affairs Officer  
Edward Kojo Asante, Asst. Public Affairs Officer

# WHY GHANA'S CURRENT COCOA PRODUCER PRICE AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS SHOULD DISINCENTIVISE SMUGGLING



Cocoa smuggling has been a persistent issue in West Africa for decades, with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, the world's two largest cocoa producers being the worst affected. This illegal trade dates back to the colonial era, when borders between the two nations were porous, and cocoa farmers sought higher prices by selling their produce across borders.

Over the years, fluctuating cocoa prices, currency differences, and varying government policies have fuelled smuggling activities, as farmers are often tempted by marginal price advantages in neighbouring countries.

Despite efforts by both governments to curb the practice, smuggling has remained a challenge, driven by economic disparities and the vast, difficult-to-monitor borders. These activities undermine the formal cocoa

trade, affect government revenue, and distort production statistics, making it harder for both countries to accurately manage and support their cocoa sectors.

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), on 11th September 2024, announced that the country's cocoa farmers would be paid \$3,048 per tonne of cocoa for the 2024/2025 Cocoa Season. This pricing decision has recently drawn comparisons to neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, following the government's announcement on 1st October 2024 that farmers would receive \$3,060 per tonne for the Season.

With only a marginal difference of \$12 between the two countries, concerns about cocoa smuggling have emerged.

COCOBOD News in this edition,

however argues that the marginal price difference of \$12 per tonne between the two countries should not be seen as an attractive option for cocoa smuggling, given Ghana's robust support systems for cocoa farmers.

## 1. THE MARGINAL PRICE DIFFERENCE

The \$12 price difference between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire may appear to be an incentive for some farmers, particularly those in border regions, to smuggle cocoa to Côte d'Ivoire for slightly higher earnings. However, when viewed in the context of operational and logistical realities, this difference is negligible.

Smuggling cocoa across international borders involves significant risks, including legal penalties, confiscation of goods, and the additional costs



associated with transporting cocoa through illegal routes.

These risks often outweigh the minimal gains that would come from the slightly higher price. Additionally, fluctuations in exchange rates, fuel prices, and other costs associated with moving cocoa across borders can erode the already slim financial advantage. Ultimately, the potential benefits of smuggling are too small to justify the dangers and complications involved in these activities.

## 2. GHANA'S COMPREHENSIVE FARMER SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Unlike Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana's cocoa sector provides extensive support systems that go beyond immediate pricing, making the overall value proposition for cocoa farmers more attractive in the long term.

Ghana Cocoa Board's holistic approach to farmer welfare ensures that cocoa farming is more sustainable and profitable for local farmers. Here are some of the key interventions Ghana is implementing:

- **Productivity Enhancement Programs:** COCOBOD is implementing several initiatives aimed at increasing farm productivity. For example, through the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme, farmers receive technical and financial support to rehabilitate diseased, old, moribund farms.

Additionally, COCOBOD supplies subsidized fertilizers, improved seedlings, extension services, and training on good agricultural practices, which lead to higher yields and improved income for farmers over time. These supports ensure that Ghanaian cocoa farmers can produce more cocoa on the same land, maximizing their profitability even at competitive pricing.

- **Access to Premium Markets:** Ghana is internationally recognized for the high quality of its cocoa, and as a result, many farmers have access to certification schemes such as Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance.

These certifications not only offer premiums but also open doors to international markets that reward sustainable and ethical production. Ghanaian farmers participating in these schemes benefit from additional earnings that are far more substantial



than the \$12 price difference with Côte d'Ivoire.

- **Timely Payments and Transparency:** COCOBOD ensures timely and transparent payments for cocoa delivered through its licensed buying companies (LBCs).

This system contrasts with the uncertain payment structures often encountered when cocoa is sold through unregulated, illegal channels in cross-border smuggling. Ghana's well-structured payment system provides a level of financial security and trust that is more valuable than the small price gains promised by smuggling.

## 3. GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY SUPPORT

The Ghanaian government, in collaboration with COCOBOD, continues to invest in improving the living standards of cocoa farmers. Projects aimed at improving rural infrastructure, such as roads, healthcare, and education facilities in cocoa-growing communities, contribute to the well-being of farmers and their families.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy to ensure that cocoa farming remains a viable and rewarding livelihood. The recent institution of the COCOBOD Education Trust Fund is good example worth citing.

Additionally, COCOBOD has actively engaged with farmers through education programmes, sensitizing them on the dangers and long-term

consequences of engaging in smuggling activities. These campaigns emphasize the importance of maintaining Ghana's reputation as a leading producer of high-quality cocoa and the benefits of participating in the formal cocoa economy.

## 4. LEGAL AND SECURITY MEASURES TO PREVENT SMUGGLING

The Ghana Cocoa Board, in collaboration with relevant government agencies, is implementing strict legal and security measures to curb cocoa smuggling across its borders, including rewards for persons and teams who contribute to the arrest of perpetrators.

Joint task forces have been established to patrol border regions and smuggling hotspots, monitoring and apprehending individuals involved in illegal cocoa trading. The penalties for smuggling include confiscation, fines and imprisonment, serving as strong deterrents for individuals who may be tempted to engage in such activities.

Moreover, border security has been strengthened in collaboration with local authorities, reducing the chances of smuggling continuing to increase. Many Ghanaians are now aware of the legal consequences and understand that the risks of getting caught far outweigh the marginal price difference offered in Côte d'Ivoire.

## CONCLUSION

While the \$12 price difference between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire may entice some individuals to engage in illicit cocoa trading and smuggling, the broader context reveals that this difference is unlikely to promote widespread illegal trade.

Ghana's comprehensive farmer support programs, including the productivity enhancement programmes, and access to premium markets, provide substantial long-term benefits that far exceed any short-term gains from smuggling. Additionally, the legal and security measures in place should serve as effective deterrents.

By continuing to invest in the welfare of its cocoa farmers, Ghana can ensure that its cocoa sector remains competitive, sustainable, and attractive for its farmers, even in the face of slight price differences with neighbouring countries.



# REVIEW OF THE PRODUCER PRICE OF COCOA FOR THE 2024/2025 COCOA SEASON



## History of Cocoa Prices

The world market price of cocoa has witnessed the highest levels of volatility over the past 12 months. Spot prices moved from around US\$2,000/ton in March 2023, peaked at US\$12,072/ton in February 2024 before dropping significantly to US\$7,960/ton in September 2024.

On the futures market, where Ghana has traded for over 50 years, prices moved from \$2,200 in March 2023 to over \$10,000 in February 2024 before dropping significantly to \$6,246 in September 2024. The severe highs and lows of prices are indicative of a market and sector that requires careful analysis before making any pricing decisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, against this background, the Producer Price Review Committee (PPRC) on cocoa, agreed yesterday on the Producer Price of cocoa and other rates and fees, for the 2024/2025 crop season.

## Producer Price

We are pleased to announce that the producer price of cocoa for the 2024/25 season is GH¢48,000.00 per tonne or GH¢3,000.00 per 64kg bag. On an inter-season basis, it has been increased from GH¢20,928.00 per tonne or GH¢1,308.00 per 64kg bag at the opening of 2023/24 season to now GH¢48,000.00 per tonne or GH¢3,000.00 per 64kg bag.

This is an unprecedented increase of 129.36%. The vision of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo is that the cocoa industry remains robust, resilient and sustainable for present and future generations. This appreciable increment in the producer price of cocoa signifies the government's commitment to improving the sector and the livelihoods of the Ghanaian cocoa farmer.

## Effective Date

The 2024/25 price, margins, rates and fees will take effect from today, Wednesday, 11th September 2024.

**DR. BRYAN ACHEAMPONG (MP)**  
**MINISTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

Delivered On  
Wednesday, 11th September, 2024



# COCOBOD TO CONSTRUCT MODEL BASIC SCHOOLS IN COCOA-GROWING AREAS



Mr. Peter Mac Manu - Board Chairman, COCOBOD



The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has established an education trust to oversee the repurposing of financial resources from the former COCOBOD Scholarship Scheme. The resources will be used to construct model basic schools in underserved cocoa-growing areas, with the aim of improving access to quality education.

The decision to shift the focus towards primary education infrastructure in rural cocoa-growing areas was made following consultations with various stakeholders, including Members of Parliament, the Council of State, the Ghana Education Service, and Cocoa Farmer Associations.

In a statement delivered on behalf of the Chief Executive of Cocoa Board, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Finance and Administration, Mr. Ray Ankrah, highlighted the pivotal role of COCOBOD's former scholarship scheme in aiding the wards for farmers access secondary education.

He said the former scholarship scheme which has annually provided financial assistance to around 10,000 students in senior high schools across Ghana can be credited with enabling numerous young Ghanaians to attain significant positions of trust and responsibility.

However, he said, the introduction of the Free Senior High School Programme by the government in 2017 prompted COCOBOD to reevaluate the allocation of its educational funds.



Members of the Board being sworn in as trustees of the COCOBOD Education Trust

Following extensive engagements with stakeholders, the decision was reached to shift the focus towards primary education infrastructure

"The new model schools will bridge the educational infrastructural gap between children in rural areas and their counterparts in the cities," Mr Ankrah stated. "This initiative will facilitate access to quality education, help develop the potential of cocoa farmers' children, and ultimately contribute to the manpower needs of these communities."

The newly inaugurated five-member COCOBOD Education Trust will be chaired by the Governor of the Bank of Ghana (BoG), Dr. Ernest Addison. The other members are the Director-General, Ghana Education Service (GES), Dr Eric Nkansah; the 2022 National Best Cocoa Farmer, Mr. Bismarck Fuachie; the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations at COCOBOD, Dr. Emmanuel A. Opoku and the Director, Legal & Solicitor Secretary, COCOBOD, Mr. Francis Opoku.

Swearing in the trustees, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of COCOBOD, Mr. Peter Mac Manu, emphasized the significant impact of the former scholarship scheme while expressing optimism for the new direction focusing on basic education.

"The COCOBOD Scholarship Scheme has been a beacon of hope for many young Ghanaians," he said. "As we transition to the Education Trust, our focus on primary education infrastructure will ensure that we continue to support the educational advancement of cocoa farming communities", he said.

In his acceptance statement, Dr. Ernest Addison, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the COCOBOD Education Trust, expressed gratitude for the confidence reposed in him and the other members of the trust. He said, "Education is fundamental to our progress, and we are committed to ensuring that this trust makes a meaningful impact in the lives of cocoa farmers and their children".



# COCOBOD SECURES WORLD BANK FINANCING TO BOOST COCOA REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has secured a US\$100 million financing facility from the World Bank to further support its cocoa rehabilitation programme, aimed at revitalizing the country's cocoa industry.

Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, Chief Executive of COCOBOD, made this revelation during an interactive engagement with a group of farmers on a 30-acre cocoa farm at Assin Sienchem in the Assin North District belonging to Theophilus Tamakloe, the 2022 Central Regional Best Cocoa Farmer.

The announcement came on the second day of a four-day tour of the Central and Western South Cocoa Regions, which began on Wednesday, 3rd July.

The COCOBOD boss, expressed optimism about the programme, stressing that the facility from the World Bank will provide the much-needed financial support to tackle the pressing challenge of moribund and ageing cocoa trees.

'By rehabilitating our cocoa farms, we are not only securing the livelihoods of our farmers but, also ensuring the sustainability of our cocoa industry for future generations.' Hon Boahen Aidoo emphasized.

So far, five key districts known for their cocoa production have been earmarked to benefit from the rehabilitation efforts which will be funded with the World Bank facility.

Assin Foso, New Edubiase, Juaso, Nkawkaw, and Konongo districts were selected based on the severity of the impact of cocoa diseases and the age profile of many of the cocoa trees in those locations.

The rehabilitation programme involves



Hon Boahen Aidoo addressing farmers at the durbar

the systematic removal of diseased, moribund, and aged cocoa trees, which have significantly hindered cocoa production. The farms are then replanted with disease-tolerant, early-bearing, high-yielding cocoa varieties to increase production.

The programme is expected to improve farmers' production volumes and incomes within the medium term and

contribute to the overall economic development of the regions involved.

As the rehabilitation programme progresses, COCOBOD plans to further expand its reach to other cocoa-producing regions in the country, ensuring that all affected areas receive the necessary support.

Farmers present at the announcement welcomed the initiative, expressing hope that the rehabilitation efforts will indeed increase yields and improve the quality of their cocoa beans. Speaking on behalf of the farmers, Theophilus Tamakloe expressed gratitude to COCOBOD for the support.

The touring team then proceeded to farmer rallies at Assin Nyankomase and Twifo Praso.

These events collectively gathered approximately 2,000 cocoa farmers, creating a platform for open dialogue and exchange of ideas.

At the rallies, Hon Aidoo discussed enhancing productivity, sustainable farming practices, the process for determining the producer price and the support available from COCOBOD to improve the welfare of cocoa farmers.





# EL NINO, SMUGGLING, AND OTHER FACTORS CAUSED A DECLINE IN PRODUCTION – COCOBOD CE

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has attributed the decline in cocoa production for the 2023/2024 crop season to the adverse effects of El Niño among other factors. He explained that this climate phenomenon has significantly impacted cocoa supply globally, resulting in substantial losses for producers.

Hon Boahen Aidoo made these remarks during a meeting with a three-member delegation from the London branch of the Bank of China. The delegation visited COCOBOD to discuss the challenges affecting global cocoa production and explore potential strategies for recovery.

“We all know that we are not in normal times, the presence of El Nino has affected our production not just in Africa but Europe also,” he said.

Hon Aidoo also highlighted the issue of cocoa smuggling, which has further hampered efforts to meet the production target for the 2023/2024 crop year.

“Cocoa smuggling cannot be left out in this equation as it has also affected us greatly in achieving our target, currently our production is around 500mt,” he added.

Expressing concern over the disappointing performance in the first quarter of the year, Hon. Aidoo noted that there was not much cocoa to account for.

“2023/2024 syndication was signed in January 2024, we announced the producer price in September 2023, and by the time the money came in a lot of our cocoa had been smuggled out,” he lamented.

Despite these challenges, the Chief Executive expressed optimism about the future, citing the rehabilitation of



Hon Aidoo making a statement during the meeting with representatives of Bank of China

cocoa farms as a positive development that will help increase production levels in the coming years, particularly in the Western North Region.

“We expect to see a significant increase in production from the rehabilitated farms. We shouldn’t get anything less than 800,000 metric tons,” he projected.

Addressing the issue of illegal mining (galamsey), Hon Aidoo emphasized that it is a national issue that COCOBOD cannot tackle alone. He revealed that COCOBOD is considering legislation to protect cocoa trees from destruction.

“COCOBOD has set up a galamsey desk that is fighting for affected cocoa

farmers and their farms for proper compensation and jail terms for companies destroying cocoa farms,” he added.

Mr. Glen Unsworth, who led the delegation from the Bank of China, urged COCOBOD’s management to prioritize the well-being of cocoa farmers. He assured that the Bank of China is committed to ensuring that farmers receive prompt payment for their produce.

“There wouldn’t be any delay tactics on this year’s syndication, we will be prompt in releasing all payment so that farmers can get paid when they bring their produce”, he assured.

Mr. Unsworth further emphasized that sustaining the cocoa sector is a shared responsibility and reaffirmed the Bank of China’s commitment to contributing to the sector’s growth.

The Bank of China has been a key stakeholder in supporting COCOBOD through its pre-export receivables-backed trade finance facility for cocoa purchases. They remain committed to supporting the upcoming syndication process.





# COCOBOD HONOURS BEST COCOA FARMERS WITH UK TRIP

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has sponsored 12 award-winning cocoa farmers on an educational tour of the United Kingdom, a key trading destination for Ghana's premium cocoa.

The farmers, who distinguished themselves as the national best cocoa farmers from 2019 to 2023, spent their nine-day visit touring factories of major cocoa buyers and chocolate manufacturers in the UK. This visit aims to provide first-hand insights into the operations of these companies.

The leader of the delegation, who also serves as the Head of Public Affairs at COCOBOD, Mr Fiifi Boafo, addressed the farmers at their first port of call and stated that the visit is part of the Board's incentive packages to recognize the contributions of farmers and expose them to new approaches for their cocoa business.

Mr Boafo further disclosed that the annual event was necessary to allow for policy reforms to ensure that farmers benefit fully from the sponsorship.

Welcoming the delegation to the UK, the Manager in charge of the Cocoa Marketing Company (UK) Limited (CMC), Mr Fuad Abubakar, mentioned that the UK office of CMC was established in the 1960s to serve as a hub for cocoa price determination and to play other



liaison roles between COCOBOD and its trade partners.

According to Mr. Abubakar, the office has continuously facilitated all preparatory processes and follow-up activities for the annual Cocoa Syndicated Loan Facility.

He urged the farmers to embrace the various Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) introduced by

COCOBOD and called on them to offer their maximum cooperation and support for the full implementation of other initiatives, including the farmers' pension scheme.

The farmers paid a courtesy call on the Ghana High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and visited the Mars Chocolate Factory, the largest chocolate manufacturing company in the world, as well as, Cadbury World.





# COCOA PRODUCTION NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR DEFORESTATION - COCOBOD BOSS ASSERTS



Hon Aidoo addressing participants at the 2024 International Federation of Geoscientists (FIG) Working Week conference

The Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo has convincingly argued that cocoa can play a pivotal role in agroforestry, fostering enhanced carbon sequestration.

According to him, cocoa production contributes significantly in helping to mitigate the impact of climate change and its effects on the environment.

This stands in sharp contrast to the widely held assertions that the cultivation of cocoa leads to deforestation and contributes to adverse effects on climate change.

"Contrary to the long-held notion that cocoa is a major driver of deforestation, the experience in Ghana projects cocoa as a great measure in climate mitigation and environmental adaption" He noted.

The Chief Executive made this profound statement at the 2024 International Federation of Geoscientists (FIG) Working Week on the topic: "African Approach to addressing Global Warming and Climate Change" at the La Palm Royal Beach Hotel in Accra.

Hon Aidoo also affirmed that the introduction of numerous Productivity

Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) and Vertical Productivity in the cocoa sector has not only led to sustainable cocoa production but has also helped in addressing issues of deforestation.

According to him, huge investments made in policies such as rehabilitation, pruning, hand pollination, climate-smart and regenerative farming in the last seven years have ultimately helped in promoting cocoa sustainable farming practices with priority on environmental conservation and provision of social safety nets to support the wellbeing of farmers and local communities.

Hon Boahen Aidoo said the main objective of COCOBOD was to economize the use of land through 'vertical', rather than 'lateral' production of cocoa and this according to him, has contributed to the preservation of forest lands.

Aside the impact of the PEPs initiatives, the COCOBOD Chief Executive further espoused the natural and scientific benefits of cocoa trees to the ecosystem, explaining that cocoa is the unsung mollifier in climate change because cocoa as a woody plant performs a major function in carbon sequestration by absorbing carbon

dioxide directly from the air, thereby reducing the emission of gas into the environment.

Hon Boahen Aidoo however emphasized that despite the successes achieved in sustainable cocoa production, activities such as illegal mining, climate change, price volatility and unjust market order, as well as cocoa swollen shoots virus disease continue to pose major challenges to the country's cocoa industry.

Touching on long term solution, the COCOBOD Chief Executive emphasized the need for a global action demands cutting down on anthropogenic activities, i.e. the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, and adaptation of more efficient, effective, responsible and resilient production systems.

The annual FIG Conference draws participants from around the world. It brings experts from all the different areas of surveying – interpreted in the broadest sense including land surveyors, geospatial experts, valuers, quantity surveyors, hydrography surveyors etc, together to enhance the cooperation and understanding of each other's fields.





# FARMERS' WELFARE IS OUR PRIORITY - COCOBOD CE

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has reaffirmed COCOBOD's commitment to the welfare of Ghanaian cocoa farmers.

Hon Aidoo reiterated this during a meeting with some members of the Coalition of Concerned Cocoa Farmers at Cocoa House in Accra. The meeting discussed the challenges faced by farmers and the future of the Ghana cocoa industry.

He emphasized that COCOBOD is deeply committed to farmers' welfare and success in recognition of their contribution to Ghana's cocoa industry.

"COCOBOD is here because of the cocoa farmer, even though we are portrayed as being unconcerned about your plight, COCOBOD recognizes your challenges and is committed to ensuring that you continue to receive the necessary support and well-deserved reward for your hard work," he said.

The delegation, led by the Coordinator of the Coalition, Mr. Johnson Siem, expressed some grievances which they believe are responsible for the decline in the cocoa business. Other issues discussed centered on cocoa prices,

COCOBOD's sales approach of cocoa and farmer welfare.

Responding to the concerns raised, Hon Aidoo explained the global cocoa marketing and its dynamics. He stated that on the global cocoa market, the prices are determined by the forces of demand and supply of cocoa.

The COCOBOD Chief explained that the Board's adoption of the forward sales strategy aims to mitigate the risks associated with spot sales. He highlighted that the forward sales policy helps secure better prices due to its predictability, unlike the uncertainties inherent in spot sales.

"We opt for forward sales because it helps us secure better prices for our farmers and shields them from the uncertainties of the spot market, ensuring that they receive a fair return for their cocoa. Forward sales have always been higher than spot sales. Unfortunately, in the past year there has been an inversion because of the effects of El Niño," he emphasized.

Hon Aidoo urged farmers to adhere to good agronomic practices to maximize their yields. He also cautioned them against cocoa smuggling emphasizing

its potential to hinder Ghana's ability to fulfil its obligations from the forward contracts.

Hon Aidoo outlined plans to redirect funds originally allocated for the secondary school scholarship scheme towards addressing other educational needs within the cocoa farming communities.

"As part of our commitment to farmer wellbeing, COCOBOD has established an educational trust to redirect funds from the scholarship scheme. These funds will be used to refurbish and equip schools in cocoa-growing communities with the required amenities to provide conducive learning environments for the children of cocoa farmers," he concluded.

Mr. Siem, on behalf of the farmers, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive and discuss the pertinent issues affecting cocoa farmers. He called on management to enhance engagement with farmers, advocating for more farmer involvement in cocoa-related decision-making processes to foster a better understanding of the operations of the industry.



# COCOBOD BOSS CALLS FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN GHANA'S COCOA PROCESSING INDUSTRY



The Chief Executive of COCOBOD addressing members of the Akuapem-Mampong Traditional Authority

The Chief Executive of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has urged private investors to venture into Ghana's cocoa processing subsector.

He said private investment is essential for the country to maximize its gains from cocoa production, as processing significantly enhances the value of cocoa beyond that of raw beans.

Speaking at the Grand Durbar of the inaugural Cocoa Festival in Akuapem-Mampong on Saturday, July 27, 2024, Hon Boahen Aidoo highlighted the economic potential of these investments for the country. He assured that COCOBOD is committed to supporting and collaborating with private investors to ensure the success of their cocoa processing businesses.

"It is important for the private sector to invest in cocoa processing. This investment can lead to the creation of more job opportunities for our youth and contribute to an increase in export revenue through processed cocoa. By doing so, Ghana can fully realise the benefits of its cocoa production," Hon

Aidoo said. The Cocoa Festival, which focuses on celebrating and advancing the cocoa industry, also showcases the historic, cultural, and economic importance of cocoa to the Akuapem-Mampong area.

The festival also serves as a platform to recognize the crucial contributions of Tetteh Quarshie and Mampong to Ghana's cocoa sector and its history, while also envisioning a more prosperous and self-sufficient future for the industry in the country.

The Akuapem-Mampong, Osabarima Kwame Otu Dartey III, emphasized the importance of the Cocoa Festival to the Mampong community and reiterated the community's desire to celebrate and cherish the cocoa bean, a symbol of their cultural and economic identity.

He called on the government and COCOBOD to invest in development projects within the local community, expressing a desire for the community to benefit from enhanced infrastructure and social amenities essential for sustainable development.

"We urge the government and COCOBOD to prioritize Akuapem-Mampong in their development plans," he said, and added that "Our community has long been a significant contributor to Ghana's cocoa industry, and it is time we see the tangible benefits of our hard work."

Speaking on behalf of Oseadeeyo Kwasi Akuffo III, Osuodumgya Otutu Ababio V, Akuapem Nifahene & Chief of Adukrom, highlighted the critical need for value addition in the cocoa sector.

He emphasized the need to create more jobs in Akuapem-Mampong by establishing a cocoa processing factory in the community. This, he noted, would not only provide employment opportunities for the youth but also boost the local economy.

Osuodumgya Otutu Ababio V, also noted the need for the creation of a Cocoa Festival Fund aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the festival and funding development projects in the country.





# COCOBOD INTRODUCES MEASURES TO CHECK THE SALE OF COCOA FARMS TO ILLEGAL MINERS

The country's cocoa regulator, Ghana Cocoa Board is set to introduce aggressive measures aimed at addressing the unfortunate phenomenon where some cocoa farmers release their farms for purposes other than cocoa production.

The Head of Public Affairs at COCOBOD, Mr. Fiifi Boafo, who gave the hint at the Annual General Meeting of the Ghana CSOs Cocoa Platform (GCCP) in Accra said the Board was deeply worried about the wanton destruction of viable cocoa farms, including newly rehabilitated ones, and would soon roll-out a legal regime to protect cocoa farms and safeguard the industry.

The move comes amidst concerns about reports that some farmers are continuously giving out their lands for mining and other activities, thereby denying the country of the much-needed revenue from its major agricultural export commodity.

Mr. Boafo, said the measures, would include the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Board and cocoa farmers to dissuade them from selling their farms out.

He observed that Government, through COCOBOD, has spent millions of dollars through a loan facility contracted from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to revive thousands of hectares of diseased and moribund farms under its cocoa rehabilitation programme and cannot sit unconcerned and allow the investments go down the drain.

"There are moves to come to some understanding with farmers on how best to preserve their cocoa farms and desist from giving them out for purposes other than cocoa production", he noted.

He further hinted that some rehabilitated farms will soon be handed over to beneficiary farmers across the seven cocoa regions. He added

that before these farms are officially handed over to the beneficiaries, a concrete commitment to preserve the farms would have been reached with the beneficiaries.

Aside the on-field productivity enhancement initiatives, the country's cocoa regulator has successfully completed the Cocoa Management System (CMS) which has registered over 790,000 farmers.

He appealed to the CSOs to join forces with Government and COCOBOD to deal with the menace of illegal mining and other challenges such as smuggling in order to save the country's cocoa industry.

"The reality is that it will be in the interest of all of us to work to protect and safeguard the cocoa industry in Ghana because without cocoa there will be no COCOBOD and there will be no CSOs Cocoa Platform to engage in advocacy", Mr. Boafo advised.



# COCOBOD AND SHAWBELL CONSULTING PARTNER TO REVIEW KEY COCOA INDUSTRY LEGISLATIONS



Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has signed a contract with ShawbellConsulting in a strategic move to enhance the regulatory framework of Ghana's cocoa industry.

The contract is aimed at reviewing and enhancing the Ghana Cocoa Board Act 1984 (PNDCL 81) and other relevant legislations, regulations, and guidelines governing Ghana's cocoa industry.

At a signing ceremony at Cocoa House in Accra on Tuesday, 18th June 2024, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo underscored the significance of the partnership, stressing the need to have Ghana's cocoa laws reviewed to foster a more robust legal framework that addresses critical issues facing the industry.

Hon Boahen Aidoo emphasized that the decision to review the laws is in light of emerging opportunities, as well as challenges facing the cocoa industry.

He pointed to factors such as land use, evolving global market trends and the growing number of Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs) as some key reasons for the review.

'For over 40 years, our laws have been tried and tested but now with

emerging opportunities and challenges, we feel there is a need to relook at these laws.

Today, cocoa is competing with other land uses such as illegal mining. People are able to destroy cocoa trees and use the land for illegal mining without regard for existing laws," he stated.

'In the past, the Produce Buying Company (PBC), which was the sole purchaser of cocoa for COCOBOD, operated under these laws tailored for its activities. Currently there are about 65 LBCs operating under these same laws which is why it is imperative to review the laws to streamline guidelines for their operations," he added.

The COCOBOD CE also requested ShawbellConsulting to consider recent European Union (EU) legislation on deforestation and child labour in their review to ensure that Ghana's cocoa industry continues to align its activities with best international standards.

On her part, Miss Phyllis Christian, CEO and Founder of ShawbellConsulting,



Hon Aidoo and Ms. Phyllis Christian (CEO - ShawbellConsultant) exchanging the signed document

expressed her firm's commitment to the project and gave their assurance to help create a comprehensive legal regime that enhances efficiency in the cocoa industry.

She called on management to give them their full support as the two organisations work together to successfully implement the project.

'We require your utmost cooperation and for you to be responsive as possible especially when there is the need to speak with you about the processes," she urged.

Meanwhile, the Board's partnership with ShawbellConsulting forms part of the broader Cocoa Sector Institutional Support Project (COSISP), funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), which aims to enhance COCOBOD's performance through comprehensive reforms and capacity building.



# BE OBJECTIVE ON COCOA RELATED ISSUES - COCOBOD CE ADVISES

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has urged members of the Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform (GCCP) to maintain objectivity in their analyses of the cocoa sector, emphasizing that constructive criticism is vital for development communication.

He cautioned that biased and partisan views can hinder efforts to build a robust cocoa sector and encouraged the platform to verify facts with the cocoa regulator before publishing them.

Hon Aidoo acknowledged GCCP as an integral part of the cocoa sector and called for collaboration to build a more resilient industry for Ghana. He encouraged the association to serve cocoa farmers by sensitizing them on the board's programmes aimed at

supporting their businesses. He emphasized that the vision of any cocoa platform should align with COCOBOD's vision to enhance farmers' capacity and knowledge in various cocoa farming models.

"The opinions you share in the public space significantly impact our key stakeholders along the value chain, so use your platform to educate, inform, and build our cocoa farmers' knowledge of good agronomic practices," he added.

Regarding illegal mining and cocoa smuggling, the COCOBOD Boss assured that management has implemented robust measures to combat these activities, including jail sentences of 6 months to 10 years for perpetrators.

Nana Kwasi Barning Ackah,

Coordinator of GCCP, called for deeper collaboration between GCCP and COCOBOD to enhance understanding of cocoa-related issues. He suggested leveraging the platform as a primary point for disseminating information to cocoa farmers, given their close links with farmers.

"Our platform comprises representatives from various farmer communities across the country, so use us to tell your story to the farmers," he advised.

Meanwhile, the Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform (GCCP) is a platform established to influence cocoa sector policy and programmes for reforms in the sector, comprising farmer representatives, civil society, media, academia, and certification bodies.



Left - Hon Aidoo engaging audience at the meeting, Lower right- A group photograph of COCOBOD management and GCCP reps.



# COCOBOD PARTNERS WITH ASILI TO BOOST COFFEE CONSUMPTION IN GHANA

In an earnest effort to boost local coffee consumption, Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has entered into an agreement with Asili Coffee Purveyors Ltd., a licensed coffee dealer, to promote the beverage's popularity in Ghana.

This initiative is part of a wider intra-African continental Coffee Consumption Initiative, which is supported by the Inter-African Coffee Organization with a grant of US\$25,000. The project will benefit local coffee roasters by providing them with opportunities to market and sell their products.

At the signing ceremony at the Cocoa House in Accra on Thursday, 30 May 2024, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, underscored the significance of the partnership between COCOBOD and Asili in bolstering the coffee industry.

He stressed the need for Ghana, as a coffee-producing nation, to enhance its efforts in promoting coffee beverages.

Hon Aidoo urged Asili to enhance the value of its offerings and devise innovative strategies for blending cocoa and coffee, catering to both domestic and continental markets. He also expressed his desire for Asili to continue to champion Ghanaian coffee production commending John Nana Addo Francois, CEO of Asili, as an exemplary entrepreneur for the youth of Ghana and a staunch advocate for locally produced coffee.

In response, Mr. Francois conveyed his enthusiasm for collaborating with COCOBOD, pledging to boost coffee



consumption in Ghana in alignment with the project's goals.

The partnership marks the first step towards developing a thriving domestic coffee market while also creating a safety net for coffee farmers and reducing their vulnerability to global market fluctuations. Additionally, the project aims to attract the interest of young people and integrate coffee consumption into the Ghanaian lifestyle.

A critical element of the project is the GHCOFFEE HUB, a new coffee shop concept by COCOBOD. The new hub will offer freshly brewed coffee made from Ghanaian beans and feature a coffee shop that sells locally processed coffee, both wholesale and retail.

It will also include a resource centre providing comprehensive information on Ghana's coffee sector, including studies, research reports, investment

opportunities, and details about producers, processors, and marketers.

Additionally, the hub will have an exhibition area showcasing products from local coffee processors, allowing patrons to witness the entire coffee processing chain and interact with producers and processors during scheduled events.

Meanwhile, Asili Coffee Purveyors Ltd., who already plays a key role in coffee cultivation in the Akuapem region, will under the agreement, establish and operate four retail mini cafés at Zen Petroleum filling stations in Greater Accra to promote the visibility and mass consumption of local coffee.

The company will collaborate with operational partners like Koko King Limited, renowned for its expertise in retail and mass food marketing, while Zen Petroleum will provide the locations for the mini cafés.





# ANTI-COCOA SMUGGLING TASKFORCE CONFISCATES 400 BAGS OF SMUGGLED COCOA BEANS



Shots of smuggled cocoa beans confiscated by the Anti-Cocoa Smuggling Taskforce

The Anti-Cocoa Smuggling Taskforce of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), in collaboration with the Ghana Police Service has seized 400 bags of smuggled cocoa beans across several key locations. This marks another significant achievement in the ongoing efforts to tackle the illegal cocoa trade.

The Taskforce, whose intensive efforts have recently led to several arrests and incarcerations, executed the operations in Atebubu, Adomi Bridge on the Atimpoku Highway, and Sogakope in the Volta Region, resulting in the arrests.

The operations, carried out between July 1 and 13, were based on tip-offs and involved various vehicles, including trailer trucks and saloon cars, that were

being used to transport the cocoa to neighbouring Togo.

During a media briefing, Mr. Charles Amenayaglo, Director of Special Services and Head of the Anti-Smuggling Taskforce at COCOBOD, provided details on the operations, as follows:

On Monday, July 1, the Taskforce intercepted two trucks near Atebubu-Amantin, uncovering 160 bags of smuggled cocoa beans destined for Togo via Dambai in the Oti Region.

Then on the dawn of Thursday, July 11, a team on patrol around Sogakope intercepted three vehicles (a Land Cruiser Prado and two Toyota Corolla saloon cars) carrying a total of 20 bags of smuggled cocoa beans concealed in

fertilizer bags.

The operation on July 13 saw Taskforce members stationed at the Adomi Bridge intercept a trailer carrying two containers. They recovered 218 bags of smuggled cocoa beans packed in one of the containers.

Mr. Amenayaglo confirmed that all vehicles involved have been impounded and the suspects are currently in custody at the Atebubu and Sogakope Police Stations, assisting with investigations.

The crackdown on cocoa smuggling remains a top priority for the Taskforce, as the illicit trade undermines the local cocoa industry and poses a significant threat to the economy by depriving the country of crucial export revenues.



# CE'S TOUR OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN REGIONS IN PICTURES









# COCOA FARMERS NEED TO BE INTRODUCED TO DAF – COCOBOD CE URGES

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 devastated by the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD).

Hon Boahen Aidoo made this call during a field trip 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.

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.

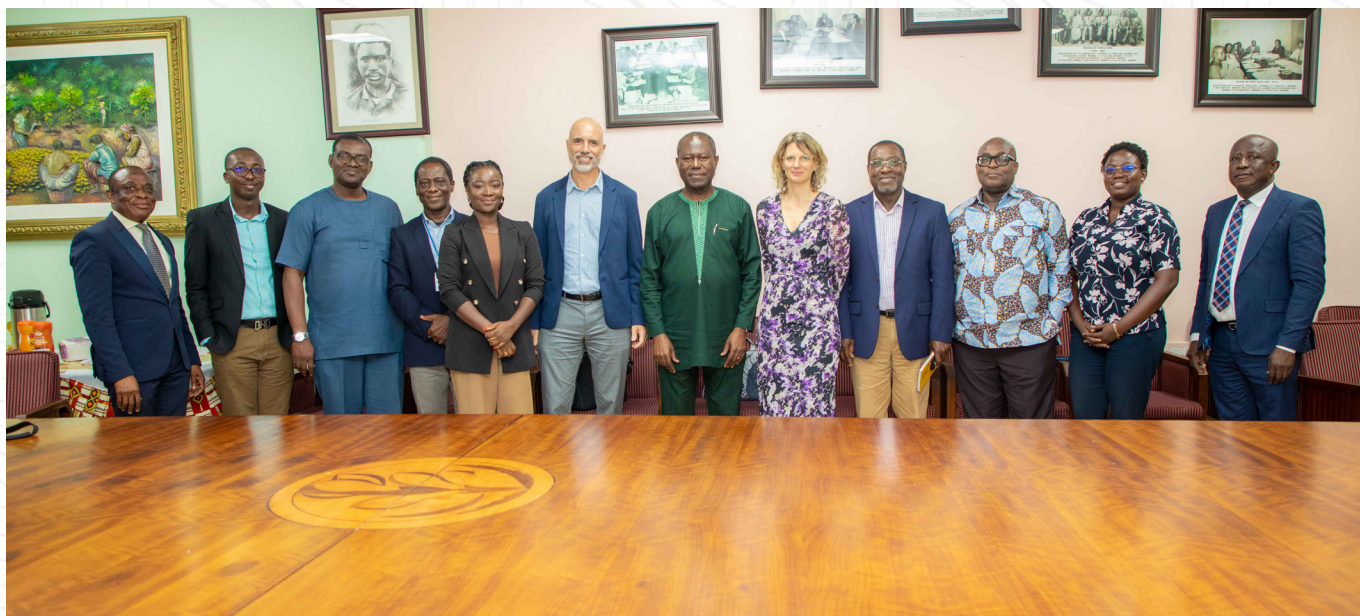
“This calls for more investments which I think individual farmers will find difficult to make. At COCOBOD, we are playing our part, but this is where partnership comes in. So we want you to play the advocacy for us in the industry because without the bean there will be no bar therefore now the bean needs 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.



A group photograph of some CHED staff with the Swiss Ambassador





# SOLIDARIDAD REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO COCOBOD IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL MINING

The Executive Director of Solidaridad Network, Mr. Andre de Freitas, has reaffirmed his company's unwavering support for the management of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in its bid to tackle illegal mining, a major threat to cocoa production.

Mr. Freitas, accompanied by his regional directors for Europe and West Africa, paid a working visit to the COCOBOD Head Office, where he expressed his outfit's commitment to providing technical backstopping to help address the challenges faced by COCOBOD in implementing solutions for sustainable cocoa production.

He was emphatic about his team's obligation to continue the longstanding partnership with the Board as development allies, especially in tackling illegal mining to ensure that the menace is controlled to prevent the disposal of farmlands.

He further indicated his readiness to hold brainstorming sessions with COCOBOD on existing state policy guidelines to address the legalization of small-scale artisanal miners, such that

the investment in land reclamation and farm rehabilitation will support efforts at increasing cocoa production in the country.

On his part, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, welcomed the initiative of a strengthened partnership for both entities and outlined major flagship programmes of the Board where grants from donors have been utilized and have proven impactful in transforming the cocoa landscape for improved productivity.

The Chief Executive hailed the impact of pruning, hand pollination, irrigation and rehabilitation projects in massively improving the cocoa production landscape; as these agronomic innovations have encouraged vertical cultivation and mitigated deforestation.

Hon Aidoo used the opportunity to appeal for increased collaboration with donors and partners in sustainability, to expand their sponsorship scope in order to guarantee the implementation of cocoa improvement programmes such as the Cocoa Traceability

Programme and other farmer welfare improvement programmes.

He highlighted the efforts of COCOBOD in pioneering the Cocoa Traceability Programme which has registered great success and indicated that plans are far advanced to ensure a nationwide traceability scheme for other crops.

He added that this has largely been possible as a result of the effective partnerships that exist between COCOBOD and development partners such as GIZ, the German development agency.

'On our part, to ensure that farmers produce in an environmentally sustainable manner, we have implemented PEPs [Productivity Enhancement Programme] such as hand pollination, pruning and rehabilitation as part of our environmental restoration schemes to reclaim our forests.

He refuted claims that cocoa production is a source of deforestation. 'Organizations would have to help correct the narrative of cocoa being a source of deforestation,' he urged.



# COCOA, THE GAME-CHANGER TO AFRICA'S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY - COCOBOD CE TELLS STUDENTS



A group photograph of management and students from Nigeria College of Agri-business



Dr. Ayodele Olorunfemi (head of the Nigerian delegation) presenting a plaque to Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has urged agribusiness students to explore opportunities within the cocoa value chain to capitalize on the multi-billion-dollar global chocolate industry.

According to the COCOBOD Boss, the time is rife for Africa to move from merely being the major producer of the raw cocoa to becoming a huge beneficiary of the economic prospects offered by the commodity.

This, he said, can only be realized through cooperation among producers, deliberate policies, and increased awareness about both the economic and nutritional benefits of cocoa and cocoa products.

Hon Boahen Aidoo made the call when addressing students of the Nigeria College of Agri-business who were in the country as part of their international study programme to learn about Ghana's cocoa industry and gain valuable insights into the country's cocoa value chain.

Explaining the purpose of the visit, the head of the delegation and Registrar at the College, Dr. Ayodele Olorunfemi, expressed their appreciation for the warm reception, stressing that the visit was intended to offer an opportunity for the students to better appreciate the value of the cocoa industry and also provide the students the real encounter to acquire knowledge as well as experience about Ghana's cocoa production system, operations of the Board, as well as, the local and international dynamics of the commodity.

In an enthralling encounter with the students, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo delivered a comprehensive briefing on the organization's operations from administration, production to sales and marketing of the commodity.

He observed that currently the chocolate industry is worth over \$140 Billion US Dollars, stressing that the entire Africa continent unfortunately earns less than 4 percent from this

amount annually and called for a paradigm shift in that narrative.

While commending the students for the laudable initiative to expand the frontiers of knowledge in agribusiness, he urged them to prioritize research into how African can also take advantage of the huge economic potentials in the cocoa industry and encouraged them to brace themselves for the challenge. The students also presented a plaque to management as a token of gratitude.

Meanwhile, other management members present at the meeting were, Dr. Emmanuel Opoku (Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations), Dr. Ebenezer Owusu (Deputy Chief Executive (Agronomy & Quality Control), Rev. Edwin Afari (Executive Director of Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED)), Mr. Vincent Okyere Akomeah (Managing Director of Cocoa Marketing Company) Dr. Alfred Arthur (Executive Director of Seed Production Division (SPD), Mr. Samuel Agyakwa (Head, CODAPEC) and Mr. Albert Yeboah (Director, Audi).



# NATIONAL BEST COCOA AWARD WINNERS ADVOCATE FOR ENHANCED VALUE ADDITION



National Best Cocoa Award Winners in a photograph with KOA representatives in Zurich, Switzerland

The 2022 National Best Cocoa award winners have called for the adoption of pragmatic measures to add more value to cocoa for job creation and enhanced income.

Bismark Fuachie, the 2022 National Best Cocoa Farmer, Joyce Dapaah, the 2022 Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer, and Peter Paintsil, the 2022 Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmer, made the call when they visited KOA, a natural cocoa fruit juice producer headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland.

The farmers, who were on an educational tour of Europe to engage with international partners across the cocoa value chain, were particularly impressed by KOA's innovative use of cocoa pulp. They urged the company to expand its operations to all cocoa-growing regions in Ghana.

"If such significant revenue can be

generated from cocoa pulp, which we typically discard, imagine the substantial incomes that could be derived from other parts of the cocoa pod," remarked Joyce Dapaah, the 2022 Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer.

Welcoming the farmers to the KOA facility, Mr Anian Schreiber, Managing Director and Co-Founder of KOA, highlighted that cocoa pulp offers an additional income stream for farmers, with many already participating in the initiative.

In appreciation of the work being done by KOA in Ghana, Peter Paintsil noted that he would encourage his fellow farmers to view cocoa farming as a viable business.

He also expressed gratitude to the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) for their various interventions that have

significantly improved yields. "The interventions introduced by COCOBOD have enabled us to increase our yields," he acknowledged.

The team also visited the Olam Food Ingredients (OFI) and Barry Callebaut, a global leader in cocoa processing and value addition, where they learned about the intricate processes involved.

The farmers also toured the Lindt Chocolate Museum to learn about the history of chocolate, from its origins with the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica; the entire process of chocolate production, from cocoa bean to finished product, as well as, tasting stations where they sampled different types of chocolate and learn about the art of chocolate making.

They were particularly excited about how Ghana Cocoa is featured as a model for sustainable cocoa farming.



# GHANA'S NEW COCOA PRICE: SUSTAINING INCOMES, LIVELIHOODS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

By Rhoda Onyiah, Public Affairs - Accra

Ghana recently announced a landmark increase in the price of cocoa for the 2024/2025 Season, raising the price to GH¢48,000 per tonne - a staggering 129% increase from the previous season. At GH¢3,000 per 64kg bag, the cocoa sector regulator, Ghana Cocoa Board says the price aligns with global cocoa price trends.

Analysts say, this move, by the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, holds the potential to reshape the cocoa industry in multiple ways, particularly in improving farmer livelihoods and addressing the chronic issues of cocoa smuggling across borders, and the increased illegal mining activities.

## FARMERS AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

Cocoa farming has long been the backbone of Ghana's agricultural sector, with the livelihoods of over 800,000 smallholder farmers tied to its success. Even though some farming inputs are supplied at subsidized rates by COCOBOD, with Ghana's economic downturn, farmers have complained about increasing costs of farming inputs.

Adding to the challenges farmers face is the drastic change in weather patterns, and the upsurge in the rate of infection of the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease which has eroded farmers' efforts and incomes, destroying about 500,000 hectares of cocoa.

At the back of this, the higher prices announced this crop year are expected to have a transformative impact on rural cocoa-growing communities, where majority of the country's small-holder farmers (the backbone of the sector) reside.

## EMPOWERING FARMERS

1. Improved Livelihoods: The price hike is a major step towards improving the income of cocoa farmers, who have long been denied their due earnings, due to the lack of commitment of big industry players to pay the Living Income Differential set up by Ghana and the

Ivory Coast to augment cocoa price. With this increase, farmers can better support their families, invest in their education, healthcare, pension, and reinvest in their farms to improve upon yields.

2. Incentivizing Production: By offering better and remunerative prices, the government is encouraging farmers to stay in the cocoa sector and invest in sustainable agricultural practices. This move aims to increase productivity and ensure that cocoa farming remains attractive, especially for the younger generation. This will also encourage expansion of the production side through farmers' investment in productivity enhancement activities that would improve the sustainability of a sector that is reeling under the sweeping impact of climate change.

3. Alleviating the Effects of Inflation: The increased cocoa price is expected to help to counter the rising cost of living in Ghana, as the global economic meltdown has resulted in high inflation, affecting the purchasing power of cocoa farmers. This financial boost is essential for cushioning the economic pressures on farmers.

## BATTLING SMUGGLING

1. Discouraging Cross-border Smuggling: Cocoa smuggling from Ghana to neighboring countries like Côte d'Ivoire has been a persistent issue due to the price differentials between the two countries. Already, a third of Ghana's production for the 2023/2024 season, estimated at 160,000 tonnes, was lost to smuggling. It is hoped that the new price will help to close this gap, making it less lucrative for middlemen to sell their cocoa across our borders. This will help to retain more cocoa within Ghana.

2. Strengthened Border Enforcement: Alongside the price increase, the Ghana COCOBOD has committed to enhancing border patrols to reduce the movement of cocoa to neighbouring countries. This approach, coupled with better prices, is expected to curtail the incentive for smuggling.

## COMBATING ILLEGAL MINING (GALAMSEY)

1. Deterring Land Conversion: One of the factors contributing to the decline of cocoa production has been the encroachment of illegal mining (locally known as galamsey) on cocoa farms.

The price increase offers farmers a more profitable reason to keep their land for cocoa production rather than selling for mining activities, which have caused significant environmental degradation.

2. Government Crackdown on Mining: The government is not only raising cocoa prices but also intensifying efforts to combat illegal mining operations. By providing economic incentives to stay in farming, it is believed that farmers will not have reasons to sell or lease their land to miners. This will preserve agricultural land and promote environmental sustainability.

## Broader Economic and Social Impacts

•Supply Chain Stability: The new pricing structure is expected to enhance stability within Ghana's cocoa supply chain, reducing supply shortages caused by smuggling and land loss to mining. This, in turn, should solidify Ghana's position in the global cocoa market.

•Sustainability Goals: Higher prices may also enable farmers to adopt more sustainable farming practices, such as agroforestry or organic farming, which could improve cocoa yields and contribute to long-term environmental conservation efforts. COCOBOD has already invested in plantain agroforestry to help diversify farmer incomes and the improved income security will help farmers to sustain this practice.

In conclusion, Ghana's new cocoa price is a strategic move to empower farmers, discourage smuggling, and address the pervasive threat of illegal mining. These efforts could lead to a more sustainable cocoa industry while improving the livelihoods of farmers and protecting vital farmland and the ecosystem from environmental harm.



Chocolatiers and instructors participating in the inaugural Cocoa Origin Masterclass programme made their second visit to the Cocoa House in Accra. This visit aimed to deepen their understanding of Ghana's current cocoa trading strategies and efforts to enhance cultivation standards, ensuring sustainability while generating more value for farmers.

Organized by Cocoa Masterclass in collaboration with Three Mountains Cocoa, the Cocoa Origin Masterclass offers an immersive experience for chocolatiers worldwide. Participants explore the intricacies of Ghana's cocoa industry, renowned for its high-quality and flavorful cocoa beans. The year's programme attracted participants from the United Kingdom, the United States, India, Brazil, and Ghana.

At the Cocoa House, chocolatiers engaged with experts from the marketing department of the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) and the research department of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to gain insights into the latest industry developments and initiatives.

During their engagement with CMC, participants were introduced to the mechanisms of cocoa trading, including the floor price determination process, market access, and the role of government policies in shaping the industry. The session highlighted the importance of the measures in place to support farmers and protect them from market volatility.

Additionally, participants were

# CHOCOLATIERS GAIN INSIGHTS INTO GHANA'S COCOA SECTOR AT COCOA ORIGIN MASTERCLASS



guided through the post-harvest quality control protocols that ensure cocoa beans meet purchase contract standards. These protocols include maintaining proper storage conditions to prevent moisture reabsorption, pest infestation, and mould growth, ensuring bean quality and flavour.

Emphasis was placed on maintaining the high standards and integrity of Ghanaian cocoa in the global market, fostering trust and satisfaction among international buyers. This ensures that Ghanaian cocoa remains competitive and highly sought after, benefiting farmers and the economy.

The research department, during the second session, delivered a presentation on the significant milestone accomplished by meticulously mapping out polygonal details of all cocoa farms in Ghana, as well as the adoption of the African Regional Standard (ARS 1001) by Ghana as the national benchmark for sustainable and traceable cocoa

production. These strategic steps are set to elevate cocoa cultivation standards within the country significantly.

The implementation of the ARS 1001 standard ensures adherence to rigorous certification criteria comparable to existing programmes like Fairtrade. It also integrates diverse jurisdictional trade requirements, including the European Union's EUDR, ensuring transparency and traceability along the supply chain.

Participants were enthusiastic about the insights they gained and the opportunities to apply them in their own practices. They also discussed potential collaborations between Ghana, chocolatiers, and craft chocolate makers worldwide to showcase the uniqueness of Ghana's beans, their premium quality, and superior flavour. Such collaboration is seen as a potential avenue to derive fairer economic value from global consumers.



# GHANA NATIONAL BEST COCOA FARMERS TOUR MARS WRIGLEY FACTORY IN SLOUGH, UK



Mars Wrigley, the world's largest chocolate manufacturing company recently hosted a delegation of National Best Farmers from Ghana at their factory in Slough in the UK, as part of the group's educational tour of key establishments in the global chocolate industry.

The tour provided the farmers with practical knowledge of chocolate manufacturing processes, opportunities to interact with Mars Wrigley staff, and a platform to share their experiences.

Welcoming the delegation, Ms. Ellen

Jacobs, Global Corporate Affairs Manager for Cocoa at Mars Wrigley congratulated the farmers on their achievements and highlighted the critical role cocoa plays as a primary raw material for Mars Wrigley.

She emphasized the company's commitment to helping create a more modern, inclusive, and sustainable cocoa ecosystem through its Cocoa for Generations programme.

'One of the ways Mars does this is through cocoa science and technology research, which we believe can tackle

some of the problems farmers face in cocoa production" she added.

Mr. Fiifi Bofo, Head of Corporate Affairs at COCOBOD and leader of the delegation expressed gratitude to Mars Wrigley for hosting the farmers and providing a hands-on visit to the Mars Chocolate School.

He commended Mars Wrigley's commitment to research to support the cocoa sector and called for further collaboration with COCOBOD to develop breakthrough solutions to pests and diseases plaguing the sector.



# REBIRTH AMIDST THE RUINS: COCOA COMMUNITIES THRIVE THROUGH COCOA REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

By David Oduro Asare, Public Affairs

In the fertile lands of Western North, Ghana, where cocoa is more than just a crop but a way of life, a remarkable transformation has unfolded with a sign of relief for thousands of cocoa farmers who, years ago, saw no hope in their main source of livelihood, cocoa farming.

Once abandoned due to the devastating effects of the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD), cocoa farms across the region are now being restored, thanks to the determined efforts of Ghana's cocoa sector regulator, Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

The step of faith which began in 2018 by Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire on that rainy day at Pillar 34 sparked a fresh commitment by the two West African cocoa producing giants to combat the CSSVD in a back-to-back approach.

The CSSVD, a destructive disease, wreaked havoc across the cocoa-growing regions, particularly in Western North, leaving behind a trail of 'burnt farms', barren lands and deserted farmhouses, stripping many farmers of their livelihoods and hope. However, a dawn of turning the hopeless state into a beacon of hope and bliss emerged with COCOBOD's rehabilitation programme aimed at revitalizing these once-prosperous farms.

Through this programme, COCOBOD has not only revitalised the cocoa farms but also rekindled the spirit and dreams of the farming communities. Today, as you walk through the rehabilitated farms, a sense of joy and the certainty of the future is the obvious experience.

The once barren fields are now covered with vibrant cocoa trees, bearing the promise of a fruitful harvest in the next foreseeable years.

With these visible scenes, farmers who

had left their homes in despair in search of hope elsewhere are now returning, rebuilding their old farmhouses, and reclaiming their heritage which was whisked from them by the deadly, CSSVD. A most heart-warming aspect of this transformation is the rebuilding of these farmhouses.

These structures, which once stood as silent witnesses to the struggles of the farmers, are being restored, symbolizing a fresh start and renewed hope. Families are moving back following the resurgence of their farms.

In 2018, COCOBOD News chanced upon Nana Samuel K. Tabiri, constructing his farm house near Pillar 34. He said, 'I lost everything to the cocoa disease but when later I was informed that COCOBOD had cut and replanted my diseased farm, I am back to stay on this farm again.'

At Yaw Kaliba in the Essam District near Yawmatwa, we visited Nana Kwabena Ayim who also returned to take over his treated farm. He has successfully roofed his farmhouse made progress in plastering the exterior of his abode.

According to him, because the weather has been favourable, he has been harvesting enough pods from his 3-year old farm even during off season. 'Anytime I wake up to see my farm, I feel high appreciative to COCOBOD. The rehabilitation programme is the best way to save the cocoa sector,' he said.

## TESTIMONIES

The testimonies of Opayin Duku, Opayin Kwaku Adu, Opayin Kwabena Gyapong and thousands of other beneficiary farmers largely indicate, how the rehabilitation programme is reshaping lives in rural communities in Ghana where cocoa is cultivated.

This revival is not just about the

economic benefits but also the social and emotional upliftment of the communities. Children who once faced an uncertain future are now back in school, their parents able to afford education thanks to the revitalized cocoa farms. Community life is being restored as families come together, united by their shared triumph over adversity.

The rehabilitation programme's success in Western North and other cocoa regions testifies the resilience of the Ghanaian cocoa farmers and the strategic interventions the Board in securing a better cocoa sector.

It also underscores the importance of investing in cocoa, the mainstay of Ghana's economy and the enormous impact such initiatives can have on communities.

As the world continues to face challenges in the supply of cocoa, the story of Western North and other cocoa regions in Ghana where the rehabilitation has become successful serves as a inspiration of hope. It is indeed a great reminder that with the right support and determination, even the direst situations can be turned around.

There is therefore every reason for farmers from areas heavily affected by the CSSVD who were compelled under the circumstances to move to the cities in search of non-existent jobs or to engage in menial jobs to return to take over their farms and enjoy a decent living.

Today's handing over ceremony of rehabilitated farms will go down in the annals of the cocoa sector as one of the most remarking achievements within the cocoa sector.

Congratulations to our farmers.



# GHANA SHIPS FIRST BATCH OF TRACEABLE COCOA

The first batch of cocoa purchased and graded through the Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS) has been successfully shipped, marking a significant milestone in the country's commitment to adopting digital technologies for tracking cocoa from the farmgate to the final consumer. This achievement highlights Ghana's dedication to ensuring transparency and accountability in its cocoa supply chain.

Addressing a delegation from GIZ, the European Union, the Swiss and Dutch Embassies, and the World Cocoa Foundation during a two-day monitoring tour of the traceability project, Mr. Emmanuel Kwabena Yamoah, Regional Manager of the Cocoa Marketing Company Ltd. at the Takoradi Takeover Centre, revealed that approximately 77.25 tons of cocoa, equivalent to about 1,236 bags, had been received, certified, warehoused and dispatched to various destinations successfully. "We have taken over, received it successfully and evacuated it successfully," he said.

The Ghana Cocoa Traceability System is an initiative aimed at ensuring the transparency and accountability of the cocoa supply chain in Ghana.

Mr Farouk Kwansah Nyame, of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) who is the leader of the Ghana technical team explained that the system is designed to track cocoa beans from the farms where they are grown to the point of export and allows the consumer to do a reverse tracking to source.

"This traceability ensures that each batch of cocoa can be traced back to its origin, allowing for greater transparency in the supply chain," he added.

He further noted that the system helps in verifying that the cocoa is produced under ethical conditions, including fair labour practices, zero tolerance for forest encroachment among other sustainable farming.

Describing the project as a novelty in the cocoa sector being piloted in the Assin Enclave, Mr Farouk said the initiative is increasingly important for meeting international standards and consumer demands.

Celine Pudhomme, the EU-Ghana representative, expressed satisfaction after monitoring the entire traceability chain, from farm tagging through to the depots and takeover centers. She noted that her expectations had been fully met and urged the technical team to ensure a successful rollout of the system.

Magdalena Wust, the Acting Head of Cooperation at the Swiss Embassy in Ghana emphasized that traceability is crucial for companies in Switzerland, aligning with their commitment to ethical cocoa sourcing.

"My impression is very good. It is very interesting to see from the beginning to the port, all the step of the traceability systems; for me, it is really good to go through the field to see with my eyes," she indicated.

Inge Tenninglo, the representative from the Netherlands Embassy emphasized the importance of a good traceability system in the food value chain for companies in her country and EU that trade with Ghana. She was elated at the various distinct stages within the traceability system, right from the farmgate. "I am very impressed at what saw today," she noted.

The GCTS project is being implemented by COCOBOD and GIZ with funding support from European Union and German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Claudia Maier, Country Coordinator of GIZ – SCISP, expressed satisfaction with the pace of work and the partnership between her organization and COCOBOD in making the GCTS a reality. She was optimistic that the interoperability of the various systems within the system would be done timely to have a fully digitized system to track flow of beans and flow of cash. She urged the private sector to deepen their collaboration with COCOBOD to make the system much more effective.

With 2nd September 2024 set for Ghana to go full purchase of cocoa through the traceability system across all cocoa-growing communities, the technical team is collaborating with farmer cooperatives and licensed cocoa buying companies to tirelessly meet the deadline to put the country on the map towards producing traceable cocoa.

The Central Regional Chief Farmer, Nana Kwasi Ofori who joined the monitoring team in his region was highly satisfied with the system and indicated that the farmers have been adequately sensitized to enable them adopt it.

According to him, the GCTS has come to help cocoa farmers by addressing the issues such as input distribution, pension scheme and also middlemen who take advantage of them. He urged all farmers to cooperate with COCOBOD in the exercise in their own interest.

The feat made in the GCTS assures buyers of Ghana's cocoa that their purchases are ethically sourced, while also boosting consumer confidence. As a leading producer of premium cocoa, Ghana's bargaining power and image will be strengthened globally as the country aligns its cocoa operations with global sustainability standards, reinforcing its position in the international market.





# BENEFICIARIES OF COCOA REHABILITATION PROGRAMME CONSTRUCT NEW MATERNITY BLOCK

By Rhoda Onyinah, Public Affairs



Farmers and chiefs in Nsowakrom, a cocoa-growing area in the Western North Region who benefitted from incentives under the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme, have ploughed back the compensation and royalties they received from Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to support community development efforts.

They have invested in constructing a new maternity ward, funded by voluntary contributions from their COCOBOD compensations.

Cocoa Extension Officer for Nsowakrom, Emmanuel Asomani, said the community has become an example to neighbouring communities following the numerous benefits the cocoa rehabilitation programme has brought to them.

He noted that the success of the programme has prompted other cocoa farmers, who initially refused to participate, to now request the implementation of the programme in their own communities.

The Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme, an initiative by COCOBOD, aims

to enhance the productivity and sustainability of cocoa farms by providing financial support and resources for farmers and landlords who willingly released their farms for rehabilitation.

The intriguing story of these selfless beneficiaries of the programme came to light when COCOBOD visited the community on a recce to inspect the state of their newly established farms.

The newly completed maternity ward is already making a significant impact, providing essential healthcare services to expectant mothers in the community. This development marks a substantial improvement in maternal and child health care, which was previously a significant concern for the community.

Akosua Kyerema, a mother and cocoa farmer, expressed her gratitude for the new maternity ward, highlighting how it significantly aided in the smooth delivery of her third child.

‘When the officers spoke to us about plans for the rehabilitation programme, I was reluctant to allow them to cut down my farm but after participating

in the programme, not only did I get compensated, I also benefited from the maternity ward we contributed to build. I had my baby here. There was no need to travel a long distance to the next clinic when I was in labour,’ Akosua Kyerema said.

Building on this success, the community has embarked on constructing a new clinic. Contributions from local cocoa farmers are being used to fund the project, showcasing the spirit of cooperation and collective responsibility among the residents.

The clinic is expected to offer a range of medical services, further enhancing the overall health and well-being of the inhabitants of Nsowakrom and its adjoining communities.

Traditional leaders have expressed their pride in these achievements, emphasizing the importance of using resources from the cocoa sector to drive sustainable development. They believe that investing in healthcare infrastructure is crucial for the long-term prosperity of their community.

‘The Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme has not only improved our farms but also enabled us to invest in our community’s future, especially in the education of our children,’ Nana Tabuah, queen mother of Nsowakrom disclosed. ‘The new maternity ward and the upcoming clinic are testaments to what we can achieve when we work together for the common good,’ she added.

This initiative serves as an inspiring example of how agricultural interventions like the Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme can have far-reaching positive impacts beyond the immediate economic benefits, fostering community development and improving the quality of life in cocoa-growing communities.



# TARKWA-NSUAEM MUNICIPAL CO-OPERATIVE 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 Addoteye, 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.





# CMC BOARD CHAIRMAN CALLS FOR STRONGER COLLABORATION WITH CRIG



The Board Chairman of the Cocoa Marketing Company Ltd. (CMC), Dr. Joseph Essibu, has called for a continued working relationship between the company and management of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG).

The collaboration, according to him, will foster decision making processes for optimal production and marketing of good quality cocoa beans for Ghana to maintain its position as the world's best exporter of premium quality cocoa.

The CMC Board Chairman made the call when he led a team of staff from his outfit to pay a familiarization visit to the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) at Tafo in the Eastern Region to gain insights into the operations of the Institute and chart new pathways for the collective interest of both subsidiaries.

According to Dr. Essibu, CRIG is a centre of excellence with great research tradition and, if followed to the latter, will ensure stable cocoa productivity, adding that there was the need for Management and staff of CMC to regularly visit the Institute to equip

themselves with updates on research activities that will foster decision making processes to inform the marketing of Ghana's cocoa.

The CMC Board Chairman therefore expressed gratitude to Management of CRIG for the warm reception and commended the scientists for supporting the sector's distinguished role as a key contributor to the country's economic growth.

In his welcome remarks, the Executive Director of CRIG, Dr. Francis Padi thanked the team for the visit and subsequently took the opportunity to present an overview of CRIG's research activities to them.

Dr. Padi stressed that in order to maintain a high level of productivity, efforts to increase soil carbon are essential as the forest is exhausted and climate change continues to impact negatively on cocoa.

He added further that other factors such as the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD) and illegal mining are seriously militating against efforts at increasing cocoa production in Ghana.

Dr. Padi underscored the potential benefits for all subsidiaries of COCOBOD to work together toward a common direction in addressing the bottlenecks to productivity.

According to him, the collaboration will provide a formidable front for knowledge sharing to promote the fortunes of the industry.

At the meeting were Dr. Richard Adu-Acheampong, Deputy Executive Director, CRIG, Mr. Paul Isaac Kwofie, Deputy Managing Director CMC in charge of Operations, Mrs. Yvonne Essuon, Deputy Director of Finance CMC, Dr. Barnett Quaicoo, Head of Special Services, CMC, Mr. Eugene Baah-Duodu, Head of Marketing of CMC.

Others were Dr Esther Gyedu Akoto, Head of Physiology/Biochemistry, CRIG, Ms Winfred Kumi, Scientific secretary CRIG, Mr. Richard Amissah-Ocran, Montoirng & Evaluation Manager, CMC, Richard Berchmans Armah, Principal Public Affairs Officer CRIG, Gifty Twum-Dei, Legal CMC and Geoffrey Opoku-Darko, Public Affairs Officer, CRIG.



# COCOBOD EMPLOYEES SUPPORT GREEN GHANA DAY TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE



species as such the benefit of the exercise carried out by staff is for both the present and future generations.

‘Our commitment to sustainability and environmental conservation is unwavering, and initiatives like today’s tree planting exercise are evidence of our dedication to preserving our natural resources. Each tree we plant today is a symbol of hope, a promise of a greener and healthier tomorrow’, he added.

Mr Boafo reminded staff of the need to plant the seedlings with care, stating that what they have decided to do today will have a lasting impact on the world in several ways.

‘Together, let us make a difference, one tree at a time. Your participation and support in this important national effort have been great. Let us continue to work together to create a more sustainable and flourishing future for all’, he advised.

The planting exercise was organised in collaboration with the Forestry Commission of Ghana, which supplied the seedlings whereas the Cocoa Health and Extension Division of COCOBOD offered expertise and guidance on selecting tree species and planting techniques.

Employees of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and its subsidiary companies across the country have embarked on a tree-planting exercise in support of this year’s Green Ghana Day.

Approximately 600 seedlings, including fruit and ornamental trees, were planted by volunteer employees in Accra, Hohoe, Takoradi, Tafo, Koforidua, Kumasi, Dunkwa, Agona Swedru, Sefwi Wiawso, and other locations.

The planting took place in their homes,

on cocoa farms and in other designated areas, including locations at COCOBOD offices and hospitality centres across the cocoa regions.

Deputy Public Affairs Director of COCOBOD, Fiifi Boafo, praised the unity and spirit of volunteerism exhibited by the employees of the Board towards the preservation and enhancement of the environment.

According to him, trees are the lifeblood of our planet, providing us with clean air, water, and a habitat for numerous





# WORK HARD TO SAFEGUARD COCOA INDUSTRY - TUC BOSS

By Geoffrey Opoku-Darko, Public Affairs - CRIG

The Secretary-General of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Dr. Anthony Yaw Baah, has admonished cocoa industry workers to safeguard the sector through hard work and commitment to duty.

He made this call at the 2nd Quadrennial Delegates Conference of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana Workers' Union Congress (CRIWU-TUC), an affiliate of the Trades Union Congress, at New Tafo-Akim in the Eastern Region.

While commending the staff of the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) for their continuous research into cocoa and other related crops, he also urged the workers, especially the scientists to research more into other areas, including those that specifically address environmental conditions that hold the potential to affect the sustainability of the cocoa industry.

'I entreat the workforce of Ghana Cocoa Board and CRIG to contribute their quota with research and policies for sustainable cocoa production to steer the economy out of the current challenges', he advised.

He assured staff that the Union will stand by them in all matters relating to their conditions of service, adding that the Union has dedicated and hardworking executives who seek their interest and welfare.

He congratulated the newly elected CRIWU executives on their successful election and encouraged them to be disciplined and hardworking and support the board's programmes and policies.

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo emphasized that cocoa has served as the backbone of Ghana's

economy for over 130 years. However, he expressed deep concern over the adverse effects of illegal mining, deforestation, and other activities.

Hon Aidoo highlighted experts' warnings that if left unchecked, these factors could lead to the extinction of cocoa in the country by 2050. Consequently, he urged unions within the cocoa sector to unite in supporting efforts aimed at combating these threats.

'These human activities do not only destroy plant life, but also the microorganisms and even the rainfall patterns have also changed, affecting the sustainability of cocoa production in recent years', he said.

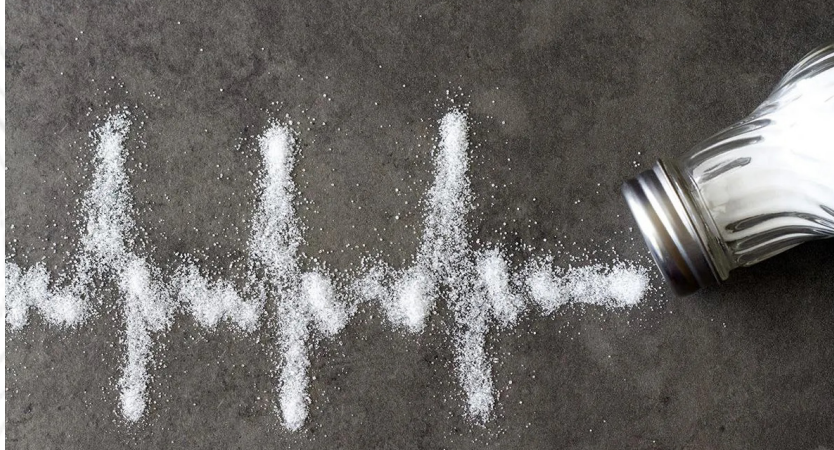
He urged staff of the board and its subsidiaries, cocoa farmers, and stakeholders to work diligently to consolidate the gains made over the past few years.





# THE SALT WARS WILL NEVER END!

## Is Salt ENEMY NUMERO UNO?



I do not have a precise answer to this question but salt is definitely revered in the company of killers. When heart and blood vessel diseases claim about 18 million lives each year worldwide and hypertension is one of the leading modifiable risk factors (the other factors are uncontrolled diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, lack of adequate physical activity and cigarette smoking) for heart and blood vessel disease then I leave you to work the math since added salt is very often associated with hypertension.

Not everyone reacts to salt in the same way but for the majority of us anything more than half a teaspoon of salt a day (includes what we cook with, those in our snacks and processed food).

No one is born with a craving for salt, we learn this as we grow and keep eating more salt by the day. Many of us eat much more salt than we need and we are "rewarded" with high blood pressure, heart failure and other inconveniences related to fluid retention.

Do you add extra salt to cooked food? Do meals prepared at home come out of a box or can? Do you eat out of home often? A yes answer to any of the questions could mean you may be having too much salt. Is it not time to shake off this salt habit? You are probably counting your calories to lose weight and exercising as well so why not watch your salt intake? It could be the cause of your difficult to control blood pressure.

Salt like many other things is only useful when taken in moderation; we can't live without it but too much brings a host of troubles. Salt may be obvious as in what we cook with but often times it is hidden. Who would have thought that many processed foods including canned foods such as corned beef, ketchup and some salad dressings contain loads of salt?

Two elements; Sodium and Chlorine make up salt and the sodium is often the centre of controversy. Excess sodium stays in body tissues and holds extra water causing swelling and raising blood pressure. The elevated blood pressure then puts a strain on the heart. You may be aware that increased blood pressure affects almost all organs and this includes: the eyes, the brain, the kidneys and even the blood vessels.

Invariably people who eat a lot of salt have a

high probability of developing hypertension and that may also be another reason for having high blood pressure running through some families. The answer may be quite simple; most family members have similar eating patterns or tastes so everyone may be prone to an increased-salt diet leading to elevated blood pressure over time.

Many artificial flavours that we use in cooking also contain sodium, so imagine the harm you do when you add some of these flavours to food that you have already added your usual amount of "salt". The salt story does not end here. Excess salt intake has been linked with osteoporosis, dementia/forgetfulness and even Alzheimer's.

It is interesting to watch people eat in restaurants and at home; some people will actually sprinkle salt over their food after almost every bite. People eating in restaurants will use the salt on the table aggressively probably making sure they are recouping every pesewa spent on the meal. Be careful you may be paying more on medication soon.

If your food tastes like there is a salt shortage, thank God and eat as-is. It is an outright CRIME to add salt to already cooked food no matter how bland it may taste. This last statement lays the fact bare; all restaurants that leave extra salt on a dining table are involved in crimes against humanity.

You are not a killer only when you draw a gun or knife to kill, you may use a "slow poison" such as a daily dose of extra salt. We will probably need some human rights activists to help us fight this war. I am really looking forward to the day that salt on restaurant tables will be banned. No matter how particular you are about the salt content of the food you cook, if food manufacturers and restaurants are not regulated when it comes to the allowed salt content then the battle is only half won.

If we are able to reduce our salt intake to less than half a teaspoon a day (including all the hidden salt), it will be enough to significantly reduce the new cases of hypertension and by extension other heart diseases and complications of hypertension will also be reduced. This simple act will save our country millions if not billions of Ghana cedis each year.

### Reducing Salt Consumption

- Never add salt to cooked food
- Read food labels and avoid those with salt or high salt content (watch sodium)
- Eat a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables; they do not need added salt and they also contain potassium that lowers blood pressure.
- If you need snacks, choose unsalted ones.
- Flavour foods with garlic, onions, fresh herbs and lemon instead of salt
- If you have to add salt to food while cooking, add only sparingly.

Excess salt does not only cause diseases, it also drains our pockets as well as the national coffers as we try to control the damage it has caused. Winning the war against salt needs us to be more proactive; before you put anything in your mouth think about the salt (Sodium) content and make a smart decision. You could be saving your life and that of others as well as creating wealth just by controlling salt intake.

Now I throw the question back to you; is salt ENEMY NUMERO UNO?

\*salt in this context refers to common salt / table salt etc. Other types of salts MAY have added benefits)

AS ALWAYS LAUGH OFTEN, ENSURE HYGIENE, WALK AND PRAY EVERYDAY AND REMEMBER IT'S A PRICELESS GIFT TO KNOW YOUR NUMBERS (blood sugar, blood pressure, blood cholesterol, BMI)

Dr. Kojo Cobba Essel  
Health Essentials Ltd/Mobissel

\*Dr. Essel is a Medical Doctor with a keen interest in Lifestyle Medicine, He holds an MBA and is an ISSA Specialist in Exercise Therapy, Fitness Nutrition and Corrective Exercise. He is the author of the award-winning book, 'Unravelling The Essentials of Health & Wealth.'

Thought for the week – "The taste for salt is not inborn. Saltiness is something we've learned and eating salty foods fuels the craving".

Reference:

1. Health by Choice Not Chance – Aileen Ludington & Hans Diehl
2. Shaking the Salt Habit – Jennifer Nelson & Katherine Zeratsky





# A REHABILITATED COCOA FARM





# Reasons to Consume COCOA

Provides Energy and  
Vitality

Boosts Fertility in both  
Sexes

Inhibits dangerous clot  
formation within Blood  
Vessels

Affords Anti-Cancer  
and Cancer prevention  
properties

Promotes cleansing and  
Detoxification of the body

Improves Memory and  
general Brain functions

Promotes nourishment/  
health of Brain cells

Supplies many essential  
dietary minerals

Minimizes worrisome  
changes that accompany  
Menopause

Offers healthy levels of  
dietary fiber



GHANA  
COCOA  
BOARD

An initiative of NCPCC-COCOBOD  
Endorsed by Prof.F.K.Addai  
(Fmr. Head of Anatomy) UGMS