



# COCOBOD *News*

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**REDEFINING COCOA FINANCING:  
A BOLD NEW ERA FOR GHANA'S  
COCOA INDUSTRY**

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# REDEFINING COCOA FINANCING: A BOLD NEW ERA FOR GHANA'S COCOA INDUSTRY



aims to address these challenges, streamline operations, and enhance the sustainability of Ghana's cocoa sector.

In this edition of COCOBOD News, we explore the modalities of this model and its potential to redefine Ghana's cocoa industry.

## THE NEW FINANCING MODEL: A STRATEGIC BREAKTHROUGH

The new financing model integrates traditional financial instruments with innovative mechanisms, offering a dynamic and sustainable approach to cocoa financing. By enabling supply chain actors to self-finance purchasing operations without relying on offshore loans, this approach demonstrates resilience and foresight. It also reaffirms COCOBOD's commitment to empowering stakeholders, especially the farmers who form the backbone of the industry.

At its core, the model is built on three interrelated pillars: forward sales, spot sales, and pre-financing of cocoa purchases by LBCs.

### 1. FORWARD SALES (CONTRACTS)

Forward sales enable COCOBOD to sell cocoa in advance at a predetermined price. This mechanism mitigates the risks of price volatility in global cocoa markets, providing COCOBOD with greater financial planning visibility. For stakeholders, it ensures a steady flow of resources throughout the value chain, safeguarding farmers' livelihoods and supporting LBC operations.

### 2. SPOT SALES (CONTRACTS)

Unlike forward sales, spot sales leverage prevailing market prices, allowing COCOBOD to capitalize on favourable price movements. This strategic flexibility maximizes revenue during periods of high market demand,

For over three decades, COCOBOD has relied primarily on annual syndicated loans to finance cocoa purchases.

This model has been instrumental in maintaining Ghana's reputation as one of the world's leading cocoa producers by ensuring a steady flow of funds for the smooth operation of the cocoa value chain. Since its inception in the 1992/93 Cocoa Season, syndicated loans have provided a reliable, albeit debt-intensive, mechanism to secure the working capital required for cocoa purchases.

However, as the cocoa industry evolves, this financing model has faced

mounting challenges. Fluctuating exchange rates, high interest rates, stringent conditions from syndicated banks, delays in fund disbursement, and rising global financial uncertainties have exposed the limitations of relying solely on syndicated loans.

These challenges have disrupted Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs), undermined the financial stability of cocoa farmers, and created bottlenecks in the cocoa value chain.

In response, COCOBOD introduced a bold and transformative self-financing model at the start of the 2024/25 Cocoa Season. This new approach

ensuring Ghana remains competitive in the global cocoa trade.

### 3. LICENSED BUYING COMPANIES (LBCS) AND COCOA TAKEOVER RECEIPTS (CTORS)

The process begins with LBCs purchasing cocoa directly from farmers at a guaranteed price using funds raised through equity, debt, or pre-financing facilities from off-takers. Once the cocoa is purchased, it is delivered to the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) for shipment to international buyers. Payments from buyers, made in USD, are routed through the Bank of Ghana and converted into Ghanaian Cedis.

The new self-financing model offers two main options:

**1. EQUITY AND BANK LOANS:** LBCs raise funds independently to pre-finance cocoa purchases and receive refunds through CTOR payments from COCOBOD.

**2. THE 60:40 MODEL:** LBCs secure pre-financing from off-takers, covering 60% of the sales contract value upfront. The remaining 40% is paid upon delivery, enabling COCOBOD to sustain its operations.

### WHY THIS MODEL MATTERS: ADDRESSING PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

This shift to a self-financing model resolves several inefficiencies that have hindered Ghana's cocoa sector. Under the old system, COCOBOD's reliance on syndicated loans often caused delays in payments to LBCs, disrupting the value chain. These delays strained LBCs and left farmers waiting for payments.

The CTOR payment system eliminates such delays, ensuring prompt payments to farmers and uninterrupted LBC operations. Moreover, reducing dependence on syndicated loans frees up resources for reinvestment in productivity-enhancing programmes, farmer welfare initiatives, and sustainability projects.

### EMPOWERING STAKEHOLDERS: A WIN FOR ALL FARMERS

Farmers, the backbone of the cocoa



industry, stand to benefit significantly. Prompt payments provide financial stability, allowing farmers to invest in their farms and improve their livelihoods. In an era of climate change, declining yields, and threats like illegal mining, such stability is essential.

### LICENSED BUYING COMPANIES (LBCS)

LBCs serve as critical intermediaries, purchasing cocoa from farmers and delivering it to CMC. The efficient CTOR system ensures timely payments, bolstering their operations and reinforcing trust with farmers. This reliability strengthens the entire value chain, ensuring cocoa moves smoothly from rural communities to international markets.

### INTERNATIONAL BUYERS

For international buyers, the model brings greater transparency and predictability to transactions, fostering confidence in Ghana's cocoa sector and reinforcing its position as a dependable global player.

### A VISION FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Beyond addressing immediate challenges, the new financing model is a pivotal step toward financial sustainability. By diversifying its financing mechanisms, COCOBOD reduces its exposure to external financial pressures and adapts more effectively to future challenges.

This resilience allows COCOBOD to focus on critical priorities, such as promoting environmentally sustainable farming practices, increasing local cocoa consumption, and investing in community development initiatives that uplift cocoa-growing communities.

### CHARTING THE FUTURE OF GHANA'S COCOA INDUSTRY

COCOBOD's new financing model is more than a paradigm shift - it is a bold statement of intent. It reflects a commitment to innovation, excellence, and shared prosperity for all stakeholders.

By addressing inefficiencies, reducing financial dependence, and embracing modern financial practices, COCOBOD is laying the foundation for a brighter future. This future empowers farmers, streamlines COCOBOD's operations, and ensures Ghana continues to lead the global cocoa trade with pride and purpose.

As this transformative model unfolds, it symbolizes a promise - of progress, sustainability, and shared success. The journey to redefine cocoa financing is ambitious but holds the potential to secure Ghana's cocoa industry for generations to come.

COCOBOD has taken the first step. The future of Ghana's cocoa industry is not just being secured - it is being reimaged.

# ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE COCOA SECTOR - COCOBOD CELEBRATES A PROMISING FUTURE

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has highlighted the significant achievements in the country's cocoa sector over the past eight years and forecasts a positive future for cocoa farmers. He noted that since 2017, the cocoa industry has experienced a turnaround, attributing this progress to effective initiatives and innovations.

Addressing the media at the 'Meet-the-Press' series organized by the Information Ministry, Hon Boahen Aidoo showcased the strides made in reviving unproductive cocoa farms, boosting production, enhancing sustainability and improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers.

The image of the industry today is different from that of yesteryear, for many cocoa farmers and their families who lost almost everything and were in despair, COCOBOD and this Government have given them hope and a brighter tomorrow", he noted.

He said, a survey conducted in 2017 revealed that the deadly Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD) had affected approximately 17% of the total national cocoa tree stock. The Western North Region, which produced 30% of the national cocoa output, had 67% of its farms devastated by this disease.

He further stated that management had implemented bold initiatives to reverse the concerning trend. As a result, over 74,813 farms covering 67,385.43 hectares, owned by 56,105 farmers, have been rehabilitated and are currently in various stages of growth.

He added that about 44,480 farms spanning 40,150.40 hectares owned by 28,510 farmers were yielding as of August 2024 and will soon be handed over to the farm owners. Hon Aidoo noted that the introduction and successful implementation of



various Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) such as pruning, rehabilitation, hand pollination, mass spraying, provision of high-yielding, disease resistance seedlings, as well as the premium on poultry manure to improve manure and soil health, have resulted in increased cocoa output, enhanced sustainability and long-term economic benefits for small-holder farmers.

"Today, we have a farmer in Ghana who is producing 6.7 tonnes per hectare, what once used to be like a dream. The industry has become attractive", he said.

He stressed that farmers who converted their cocoa farms to cashew farms in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions in 2017 are now back on their farms. Touching on innovation, Hon Aidoo cited the introduction of a new finance model to end the country's 32-year-long dependence on syndicated loans. The model he indicated is robust and flexible.

He also spoke about the successful completion of the Cocoa Management System (CMS) and the implementation GHANA COCOA BOARD 3 of a comprehensive integrated farmer data traceability model in line with the European Union Deforestation-free Regulation as well as other international protocols on sustainable cocoa.

He revealed that about 792,954 cocoa farmers and their entire households and other dependents have been registered into the CMS farmer database whilst 1,239.169 hectares of cocoa farms have been mapped to enable better resource allocation and improved production tracking. The system, according to him, is being enhanced to facilitate payment processes, reduce delays, and ensure accurate, direct payments to farmers.

Hon. Boahen Aidoo also mentioned other innovative programmes such as the Ghana Cocoa Traceability System and the Sustainability and Climate-Smart Cocoa Production initiatives which he noted, have yielded significant benefits across multiple dimensions.

On farmer income support, he said priority attention has been placed on the welfare of cocoa farmers, citing the implementation of the Living Income Differential, payment of remunerative producer prices, and the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme, as some of the measures aimed at improving the financial capacity of cocoa farmers in the country.

He assured cocoa farmers that the Government will continue to pursue policies and initiatives that improve the sector and enhance their socio-economic livelihood and called on them to approach their cocoa activities with entrepreneurial motive.

# COSISP TECHNOLOGIES TO ENSURE EFFICIENCY IN THE COCOA SECTOR

The Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Cocoa Sector Institutional Support Project (COSISP), Hon. Yaw Frimpong Addo, has assured staff of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) that the introduction of new technologies under the COSISP initiative will revolutionize operations within the cocoa sector.

These advancements include the provision of computers, tablets, and other modern gadgets aimed at replacing outdated devices, enabling field staff to seamlessly collect, transfer, and upload data with greater accuracy.

Speaking during a working visit to CHED staff at Antoakrom in the Ashanti Region, Hon. Frimpong highlighted the significance of this technological upgrade.

"Under COSISP, we have supplied you with computers and tablets. Instead of using phones to work, these tablets will streamline the process, making data collection, transfer, and file uploads from the field much simpler," he stated.

The visit, aimed at assessing units funded under the COSISP project, emphasized the project's role in equipping both offices and officers at the district level.

According to Hon. Addo, the initiative is designed to ensure that CHED staff stay ahead of the curve in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

By adopting advanced technologies, the division aims to enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs, aligning with the broader goal of digitalizing all COCOBOD activities, from the farm to the market.

"It is management's desire to digitalize all COCOBOD activities, making the sector more attractive to the youth, who are naturally inclined towards these modern technologies," Hon. Addo added.



Hon. Yaw Frimpong addressing CHED staff at Antoakrom in the Ashanti Region

By incorporating such tools, COCOBOD hopes to appeal to younger generations and maintain the relevance of the cocoa sector in an increasingly tech-driven world.

The Project Coordinator, Mr. Abdul Wahab Suleman, emphasized that the COSISP project extends beyond support for field staff, encompassing every department and unit within COCOBOD.

According to him, over 600 staff across various subsidiaries and divisions have already undergone specialized training aimed at equipping them with the skills required to leverage the new technologies and improve their performance.

"About 600 staff have received training in their respective fields of study under COSISP, and this will enhance their ability to approach tasks with a fresh perspective," Mr Suleman noted.

He also highlighted the successful training of nearly 270 staff within the Warehousing and Port Operations, including those from the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) and the Quality Control Company (QCC).

Mr. Suleman reiterated the importance

of capacity building as a driver for change and excellence within corporate organizations.

He expressed optimism that the training provided under COSISP would lead to a noticeable improvement in the performance and efficiency of COCOBOD staff.

"To whom much is given, much is expected. We believe that the trained staff will enhance their performance and contribute to strengthening the corporate culture and image of COCOBOD," Mr. Suleman emphasized.

As the second phase of the COSISP project progresses, with completion anticipated by 2025, COCOBOD aims to strengthen its institutional capacity further, ultimately boosting both staff performance and the organization's overall effectiveness in driving the growth and sustainability of Ghana's cocoa sector.

Through such initiatives, the Board reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that the cocoa industry remains at the forefront of technological innovation, paving the way for future generations of farmers and industry stakeholders.

# WE PRIORITIZED FARMER WELFARE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY – COCOBOD BOSS



The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo has emphasized why the welfare and sustainability of cocoa farmers have remained a key focus of his administration over the past 8 years.

According to Hon. Aidoo, every decision taken concerning the cocoa sector over the past 8 years was aimed at bringing financial relief to cocoa farmers to make cocoa farming more attractive and lucrative.

The Chief Executive made these statements when he addressed some national and regional cocoa farmer associations across all 7 cocoa regions at Kumasi ahead of the new crop season.

“The introduction of the pension scheme, introduction of PEPs, introduction of CMS, and formation of farmer cooperatives among others are all to your advantage and the sector’s growth. Therefore, I will not do anything that will tarnish my administration’s reputation,” he explained.

According to him, the government’s contribution towards the sector over the past years has been top-notch despite some human factors that continue to affect the country’s cocoa production every year.

“Our current production is around 450,000 metric tonnes. Cocoa smuggling, unfavourable weather conditions and galamsey have really caused a lot of harm to the industry”, he added.

“The 2024/2025 crop season and the years ahead look very promising in terms of production, as a lot of the rehabilitated farms will begin to produce so much, so we look forward to a more sustained sector,” he assured.

Highlighting the new financing mechanism for the 2024/25 Crop Season, Hon Aidoo stated that, the industry will finance about 60% of its cocoa purchases for the season and the remaining 40%, through syndication loans, paving the way for a brighter and more sustainable future for Ghana’s cocoa sector.

“We want to break away from the 32 years of borrowing from foreign banks to buy cocoa from our farmers. We have planned it for years and it is time to take that bold decision, if you haven’t heard of any syndication for this year it is because we are financing 60%,” he stressed.

Hon. Aidoo also stated that cocoa farmers who do not adhere to good agronomic practices in their farming operations will not enjoy increased productivity.

“Prune your farm, pollinate, apply fertilizer and also listen to your extension agent when they come to educate you, always reach out to them for clarification regarding your farming activities and see the result when it is time to harvest,” he said.

The Chief Executive encouraged cocoa farmers to show their maximum support to his administration and assured them of a brighter future and a more sustainable industry in years to come.

# COCOBOD HONOURS 2024 NATIONAL BEST COCOA, COFFEE FARMER AND SHEA NUT PICKERS



Shots of Award Winners standing by their respective vehicles

The Chief Executive of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has commended the national best cocoa, coffee and shea nut award winners for their hard work and outstanding contributions to Ghana's agricultural sector and the economy in general.

At a short but colorful ceremony held last Saturday at the Cocoa House to climax the 2024 National Farmers' Day Celebrations, the COCOBOD CE underscored the role of agriculture to the country's economy, highlighting the dedication and commitment of farmers to the success of cocoa, coffee and shea nut industry.

This year's award winners include the National Best Cocoa Farmer, Mr. Kwame Alex; the National Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer, Mad. Yaa Adjele; the National Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmer, Mr. Solomon Tohola; the National Best Shea Picker, Mad. Winifred Batabana and Mr. Victor Benefo, the National Best Coffee Farmer.

The awards are in recognition of the exceptional dedication and hard work of cocoa, coffee, and shea nut pickers who have demonstrated outstanding performance in their respective fields.

According to Hon. Boahen Aidoo, the government, under the leadership of His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo, has since 2017 demonstrated its commitment to the cocoa sector and the welfare of farmers through investments in technological advancement, improvement of cocoa farmers' welfare through periodic price adjustment and implementation of productivity enhancement programmes.

'Before the introduction of hand pollination

in 2017, cocoa trees produced less than 50 pods per tree in a season, but now, we witness the production of over 200 pods per tree in a season as a result of all the productivity enhancement programmes. This increase in productivity translates to improved revenue for farmers, which is evident on the international markets that we see today", he added.

The Chief Executive, therefore, urged award winners to lead the crusade against cocoa smuggling and illegal mining, which are the two main threats to the sustainability of the agricultural sector in Ghana, as a way of appreciating the investment the Board has made in supporting their cocoa business.

Speaking on behalf of all the award winners, the 40-year old National Best Farmer, Kwame Alex from Hunni Valley in the Western South Region, commended the Board for introducing groundbreaking initiatives which have enhanced the productivity of cocoa farms and promised to use the resources gained to inspire the youth in cocoa farming.

'I will ensure that the double cabin pick-up vehicle awarded to me will not only be used for my gratification, I promise to rather use the vehicle as an ambassador for pollination among youthful cocoa farmers and beyond", he said.

For the most sought-after award category of the National Best Cocoa Farmer, Mr. Alex received a Toyota Hilux double cabin pick-up, a standard pruner, a motorized sprayer, safety goggles, an overall respirator, ear plugs, hand gloves, a polo t-shirt, wellington boots, chocolate products and crystal plaque.

The Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer,

Madam Yaa Adjele from Asankragwa in the Western South Region, was also presented with a single cabin mini truck, standard pruner, motorized sprayer, overall, with hat, safety goggle, Respirator, ear protector, hand gloves, wellington boots, polo t-shirt, chocolate products and a crystal plaque.

In addition, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) complemented this award category with a cash prize of GH¢80,000 and a tricycle as a move to incentivise and empower women in agriculture.

This initiative of the WCF to motivate women in the cocoa sector, which is in its third year of implementation, also witnessed the presentation of a cash prize of Gh¢20,000 to each Regional Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer.

The National Most Promising Young cocoa farmer, Solomon Tohola, based in Assin-Foso in the Central Region, received a single cabin mini truck, standard pruner, motorized sprayer, overall, with hat, and safety goggles.

Respirator, ear protector, hand gloves, wellington boots, polo t-shirt, chocolate products and a crystal plaque. In the shea crop category, from West Gonja in the Savanna Region, the National Best Shea picker, Madam Batabana, received a tricycle, hand gloves, wellington boots, overall, polo t-shirt, solar torchlight, machete, chocolate products and a crystal plaque.

The National Best Coffee Farmer, Mr. Victor Benefo from Nkawkaw in the Eastern Region, was presented with a tricycle, hand gloves, wellington boots, respirators, ear protector, overall, polo t-shirt, machete, chocolate products and a crystal plaque



# COCOBOD, STAKEHOLDERS STRENGTHEN ANTI-CHILD LABOUR PROTOCOLS IN COCOA SECTOR

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), in conjunction with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) has organized a day's workshop to deliberate on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the Cocoa Sector Child Labour Monitoring System (CS-CLMS).

The workshop demonstrates yet again the commitment of the regulator of the cocoa industry to stem all forms of child labour and promote the sustainable production of cocoa. The workshop, which was led by the Anti-Child Labour Desk of COCOBOD, aimed at refining the draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the CS-CLMS.

Addressing participants made up of representatives from Licensed Buying

Companies, Chocolatiers and CSOs in the value chain, the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations, Dr Emmanuel Opoku reiterated COCOBOD's role in the campaign against child labour in cocoa farms through the formulation of pragmatic policies.

Highlighting the urgent need for all stakeholders to put hands on deck in tackling the menace, Dr Opoku said all the necessary plans and policies aimed at protecting children and safeguarding the integrity of Ghana's cocoa have been firmed up.

The operationalization of the CS-CLMS is expected to complement the national agenda for the control of child labour contained in the Ghana Accelerated

Action Plan Against Child Labour (GAAPACL), 2023-2027.

Dr. Opoku observed that, as the regulator of the industry, COCOBOD was particularly concerned about the negative tagging of the country's cocoa with child labour. Hence, there is a need to partner with all stakeholders to achieve a sustainable cocoa future.

Against this backdrop, Dr. Opoku charged participants to use their expertise and insights to improve the draft document in order to ensure its robustness in addressing child labour-related issues. 'We are committed to working with stakeholders to address this menace.

We acknowledge the significant efforts and accomplishments that have been made by the Government and stakeholders towards the attainment of this noble objective", he observed.

The Deputy Chief Executive noted further that the SOPs will provide clear and practical guidelines to stakeholders, from local communities to the national level to ensure policy consistency, accountability, and effectiveness in a joint effort to prevent, identify, and address child labour issues in cocoa farming.

For her part, Claudia Maier of GIZ emphasized the need for concerted efforts by harmonizing all the policy documents to effectively remove the conditions that trigger child labour in cocoa-growing communities.

The Head of the Child Labour Desk at COCOBOD, Mr. Simon Crown, encouraged the participants to share their practical knowledge to develop the final draft of the document. Participants were also taken through a detailed presentation on the Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS) and the European Union Deforestation Regulations (EUDR).



Dr. Emmanuel Adem Opoku (DCE, OPs)

# GHANA LAUNCHES TREE CROP DIVERSIFICATION PROJECT TO DRIVE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

The Government of Ghana, in collaboration with the World Bank, has launched the Ghana Tree Crop Diversification Project (GTCDP) to enhance economic growth, mitigate climate challenges, and promote environmental resilience across four key tree crop value chains.

The project, managed by the Tree Crops Development Authority (TCDA), is designed to improve investments in farmer productivity, strengthen value chains, enhance market access and support sustainable growth in cocoa, cashew, coconut, and rubber production.

At the launch on November 14, 2024, themed "Sowing the Seeds of the Future: Unlocking Ghana's Tree Crop Potential for Inclusive and Sustainable Transformation," the Minister of Food and Agriculture, Dr Bryan Acheampong, emphasized the pivotal role of the tree crop sector in Ghana's economic diversification and development agenda.

"Ghana's tree crop sector is vital to agriculture and the economy, generating income for over two million farming households, including commercial producers. This sector offers significant opportunities for economic diversification, job creation, poverty reduction, food security, foreign exchange earnings, and a substantial contribution to our nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)," Dr. Acheampong stated.

He highlighted the project's role in advancing climate-smart agriculture to combat deforestation and climate change. He noted the government is committed to modernizing the sector through institutional strengthening, capacity building, public-private partnerships, and policy reforms.

"The success of the Ghana Tree Crop Diversification Project will be measured



Shots from the stakeholder meeting of the Ghana Tree Crop Diversification Project (GTCDP)

not only by economic outcomes but by the positive impact on the lives of our farmers and communities. Together, we can build a resilient tree crop sector that supports farmers, protects the environment, and fosters sustainable growth for future generations", Dr Acheampong remarked.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, said the GTCDP complements COCOBOD's Cocoa Sector Development Strategy II, which aims to boost productivity, enhance traceability, and address challenges such as the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD).

"We are glad to note that the Tree Crops Diversification Project is designed to contribute to the efforts above of COCOBOD through investments for strengthening COCOBOD's institutional

capacity and digital transformation; ... assisting small scale and artisanal manufacturers to increase value addition and create jobs in cocoa processing as well as protecting children and other vulnerable groups within the selected cocoa landscapes."

The World Bank Country Director, Mr. Robert Taliencio O'Brien, commended Ghana's agricultural transformation agenda. He described GTCDP as a landmark project. Through this project, the World Bank, with a US\$200 million credit facility from the International Development Association (IDA), will support key value chains ...by providing critical resources, knowledge, and expertise, Mr. O'Brien remarked.

The six-year project aims to benefit over 52,000 farmers and create thousands of jobs, prioritizing the inclusion of women and youth.

# LOTTE GROUP CELEBRATES 50TH AND 60TH ANNIVERSARIES IN GHANA - SUPPORTS COCOA FARMERS WITH NURSERIES

Lotte Group, the renowned Japanese and Korean confectionery company, has marked its 50th and 60th anniversaries of sourcing premium Ghanaian cocoa for South Korea and Japan with a significant contribution to cocoa farmers.

The group has donated \$40,000 to support the establishment of cocoa nurseries in Suhum and Manso Amenfi, two vital cocoa-producing districts in Ghana's Eastern and Western South Regions.

In a ceremony held at Otwebediadua in the Suhum Cocoa District, Lotte not only announced its financial support for the nurseries but also provided educational supplies to Otwebediadua MA Basic School, showcasing the company's commitment to uplifting local cocoa-growing communities.

In his brief remarks at the event,

Dong Bing Shin, Chairman of Lotte Group, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the empowerment of Ghanaian cocoa farmers and the long-term sustainability of the cocoa industry.

He also extolled the good relationship between Ghana's cocoa and the Lotte Group, adding that this has been highly beneficial to both parties.

Rev. Edwin Afari, Executive Director of the Cocoa Health & Extension Division, speaking on behalf of COCOBOD's Chief Executive, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, lauded Lotte's enduring partnership with COCOBOD. He highlighted the positive impact of Lotte's ongoing support in strengthening cocoa-growing communities and enhancing farmers' livelihoods.

'This partnership has not only bolstered Ghana's economy but also created

shared value for the communities and farmers whose dedication sustains the cocoa industry," Hon. Aidoo said.

He further praised Lotte's efforts to promote Ghana's world-renowned premium cocoa, stating, "Ghana's cocoa sets a global standard for excellence, unmatched by any competitor."

Hon. Aidoo emphasized the importance of maintaining this strong partnership between COCOBOD and Lotte, noting that it drives innovation, sustainability, and growth within the cocoa sector, ultimately benefiting farmers and their families.

For over six decades, Lotte's community-driven initiatives have reflected its core values of passion, sustainability, innovation, and excellence. These values continue to guide the company's commitment to advancing Ghana's cocoa industry and the communities that support it.



# COCOBOD REITERATES COMMITMENT TO CORE VALUES

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has held a two-day technical validation workshop in Koforidua, with a focus on enhancing operational capacity and its organizational culture.

The workshop, organized under the Cocoa Sector Institutional Support Project (COSISP), brought together directors from the COCOBOD head office, subsidiaries and divisions to validate the COCOBOD Institutional Capacity Assessment and develop a Medium-Term Capacity-Building Strategy as well as adopt a new performance appraisal system, that is results-driven.

Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah, Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Finance and Administration of COCOBOD, who addressed the directors at the event, described the workshop as a pivotal opportunity to chart a well-structured, medium-term strategy for capacity building, organizational resilience, and mission fulfilment.

"We cannot transform COCOBOD without adopting the right corporate culture," he emphasized, highlighting the need for a culture that fosters growth and innovation.

Mr. Ankrah challenged participants with a critical question: 'Is our current culture enough to drive the progress



Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah (DCE, F&A)

and development of our organization?" He reiterated that COCOBOD's core values - integrity, collaboration, and excellence - should guide every staff member's actions, interactions, and leadership.

"Our core values are the principles that shape behaviours, communications, and interactions. We must adopt a positive work culture anchored in these

values and ethics," he stated.

The Deputy Chief Executive also advocated for a collaborative work environment, urging attendees to embrace teamwork.

"We must not work in silos. We need teamwork, not a pull-him-down mentality," he added.

The workshop further highlighted the importance of navigating the political environment effectively to cultivate a positive organizational culture.

Mr. Ankrah called on participants to take ownership of COCOBOD's transformation by committing to a unified culture that supports its goals. He stressed management's expectation for the full implementation of the capacity-building strategy to ensure a meaningful impact.

Participants were encouraged to leverage the insights gained to drive transformation in the cocoa industry, with Mr. Ankrah noting, "The most successful person in life is the person with information," emphasizing the value of knowledge in achieving success.

The workshop was facilitated by Mr. Adu Boahen, an HR consultant, who led discussions on COCOBOD's medium-term capacity-building strategy.



A group photograph of directors of COCOBOD Head Office, Divisions, and Subsidiaries.

# COCOBOD CE HIGHLIGHTS COCOA'S ROLE IN CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION



The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon. Boahen Aidoo, has underscored the vital role cocoa farming plays in addressing climate change.

Speaking at a meeting with a Korean delegation at Cocoa House in Accra, Hon. Aidoo detailed how climate change, particularly the recent El Niño phenomenon, has severely impacted Ghana's cocoa production during the 2023/2024 Crop Season.

'Ghana's cocoa production for this past season dropped significantly due to the El Niño effect, as well as other human activities such as illegal mining (galamsey) and smuggling,' he noted.

In response to these challenges, Hon. Aidoo outlined the measures COCOBOD has introduced to combat climate-related impacts and revitalize cocoa farming. He emphasized the importance of intercropping practices that not only enhance biodiversity but also improve carbon sequestration,

which is crucial for climate change mitigation.

He added that the annual syndicated loan and recent increases in cocoa prices would provide essential financial relief for cocoa farmers.

'It is crucial to intensify vertical productivity to recover cocoa production to 650,000 metric tonnes. Additionally, the increase in farm gate prices will make cocoa farming more attractive, and the syndicated loan will ensure that we can purchase produce directly from farmers,' he explained.

Looking ahead, Hon. Aidoo expressed optimism about the 2024/2025 crop season, citing favorable weather conditions due to the anticipated La Niña event, the opposite of El Niño.

He also highlighted ongoing efforts to restore diseased farms and promote good agronomic practices (GAPs), such as pruning and hand-pollination, as part of COCOBOD's Productivity

Enhancement Programme (PEPs).

'The upcoming season will be a better one because we expect favorable weather, and with the restoration of many of our farms, along with good agronomic practices and the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs), we will see a significant boost in production,' Hon. Aidoo stated.

Furthermore, he emphasized cocoa's broader environmental benefits, including its role in reducing carbon emissions, preventing soil erosion, and maintaining soil moisture levels. He encouraged farmers to adopt agroforestry practices, which integrate trees into cocoa farms, to further enhance these environmental gains.

With these strategies in place, COCOBOD is committed to ensuring that cocoa farming remains a key driver of sustainability and growth in Ghana's agricultural sector, helping to combat climate change while securing the livelihoods of farmers.

# GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO COCOA FARMERS

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has affirmed the resolve of Government to improve the lives of cocoa farmers in the country, recognizing the pivotal role they play in the nation's economy and global cocoa production efforts.

According to him, the Government of Ghana has since 2017 introduced and implemented several policy innovations and interventions that have improved the lives of cocoa farmers across the country.

He said policies like the hand pollination, cocoa farm rehabilitation, pruning and other on-farm services have over the past 7 years supported and enhanced the livelihoods of farmers and ensured the sustainable growth of the cocoa industry.

Hon. Boahen Aidoo observed that notwithstanding the global market and weather challenges coupled with the deadly swollen shoot virus diseases which had ravaged several thousands of hectares of cocoa farms, cocoa farmers have enjoyed relatively better conditions under the current regime.

Speaking at the 2024 Cocoa Festival of the Brong Ahafo Women Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Central Union (BAWCOF) held at Goaso in the Brong Ahafo Region, the COCOBOD CE commended the women farmers for their remarkable contribution over the years to the cocoa industry.

He noted that whilst recognizing the dedication, strength, resilience and passion of women in the sector, it was important to align them with the development of the youth in agriculture in order to propel the industry to a higher notch.

Acknowledging the importance of cooperatives in the cocoa industry, Hon Aidoo noted that the NPP administration revived cocoa farmer cooperatives as part of its transformational agenda for the sector



Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo addressing female cocoa farmers at the durbar

and added that currently there are about 8,696 functional farmer groups and cooperatives with membership of about 583,660 farmers out of which 202,834, representing 34.76% are women.

'The formation of the cooperatives has been of tremendous benefit in terms of efficiency and effectiveness to the members, men and women alike, and

to the industry at large, facilitating delivery of inputs and services, and the sharing of new ideas and appropriate agronomic practices, experiences, skills, and support for one another" he emphasized.

The COCOBOD CE disclosed further that 74,813 farms, covering 67,385.43 hectares, which were affected by the cocoa swollen shoot virus disease had



A shot of the some female cocoa farmers present at the durbar

been rehabilitated and were in various stages of growth.

He again revealed that 44,480 farms, approximately 40,150.40 hectares owned by 28,510 farmers were yielding as of August 2024 and would soon be handed over to the farm owners.

He said through the period of the rehabilitation, COCOBOD provided stipends of GH¢1,000 per hectare each to affected farmers with funding from the African Development Bank, as a means of supporting to farmers whilst also providing free seedlings and plantain suckers to the beneficiary farmers.

Hon Boahen Aidoo therefore charged members of the union to strictly adhere to all the good agronomic practices being implemented by COCOBOD through its district offices and communities, stressing that, 'you should never abandon the fundamental 4Ps which are pruning, pollination, pest management and poultry manure in order to ensure significant yields per acre'.

The Chairperson of BAWCOF, Mrs. Martha Addai emphasized the cooperative's commitment to its members' financial well-being, stressing that achieving that goal requires the establishment of a credit union to mobilize savings to support the association's projects and programmes.

Whilst commending management of COCOBOD for their support, Ms. Addai appealed for assistance for the union in soap making, bead making, and handmade chocolate among others as alternate sources of income for members and by extension, the association.

The Administrator at the Sunyani Office of COCOBOD, Mr. Michael P.K Asumanu said the formation of the cooperatives had tremendously benefitted women cocoa farmers in the region in terms of access to inputs and other services.

Meanwhile, BAWCOF is a union made up of over 7,000 women engaged in cocoa farming and other activities along the cocoa value chain. With a total cultivation size of 6,857.82 hectares and an average annual production of 82,923 bags, BAWCOF serves as a trailblazer of women empowerment in the cocoa sector, providing leadership and guidance to women engaged in cocoa farming in the Brong Ahafo Region.

The cooperative launched its annual Cocoa Festival in 2023, as a way to take stock of its activities, celebrate achievements and promote fellowship and loyalty among members of the union. This year's ceremony was held under the theme 'Growing a Gender-Equal Future: Empowering Women and Youth in Agriculture'.





## COFFEE HOLDS POTENTIAL TO COMPLEMENT COCOA GAINS - DEPUTY CE

The Deputy Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in charge of Agronomy and Quality Control, Dr. Ebenezer Owusu, has stressed that coffee holds enormous potential to generate as much foreign exchange as cocoa brings to the country annually.



Dr. Ebenezer Owusu (DCE, A&QC)

The cocoa sector's chief agronomist called for equal attention to be given to crop investments in coffee production to complement the gains being made

from cocoa, the country's leading export commodity.

He acknowledged the underdevelopment of the coffee sub-sector compared to cocoa and noted that this presents significant opportunities for stakeholders to invest in coffee production, given its high global demand.

Dr. Owusu made these observations when he delivered a speech on behalf of the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon. Joseph Boahen Aidoo, at the launch of Ghana Coffee Week in Accra.

According to him, efforts to revamp coffee are strenuously being considered, citing a collaborative effort between COCOBOD, the Coffee Federation of Ghana and the International Trade Centre to promote the consumption of coffee.

He added that COCOBOD, through its subsidiaries and divisions, is also involved in scientific research, grading and certification, extension services, development and distribution of coffee planting materials to out-growers free of charge.

Dr Ebenezer Owusu urged the government to intensify efforts in attracting strategic partners to fully harness the potential of coffee, thereby

reducing the country's over-reliance on cocoa.

The National Coordinator for the Alliance for Action programme, Mr. Larry Attippoe said the global value of the coffee industry was estimated at US\$ 223.78 billion and was expected to grow at 5.7% annually.

The National Coffee Week, which commenced on October 21, has been instituted under the auspices of the International Trade Centre, Coffee Federation of Ghana, the International Coffee Federation, Alliance for Action and other partners to celebrate the global significance of coffee as an international commodity, promote local consumption and explore innovative ways of developing Ghana's coffee sector.

This year's edition was under the theme, "Boosting Ghana's Coffee Sector for Sustainable Economic Growth" also focused on the implementation of the ACP Business friendly Programme, funded by the European Union, to bolster Ghana's coffee.

Other activities include visits to major coffee-growing areas in Kwahu and the Volta Region and engaging the youth and women in coffee production.



# COCOA FARMERS CALL ON KOA IMPACT TO EXTEND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE

A group of National Best Cocoa Farmers has called on the management of KOA Impact at Akim Achiase to expand its sustainability programme, currently implemented in Assin Akrofuom and Akim Achiase catchment areas, to other cocoa-growing areas.

Speaking on behalf of the cocoa farmers during a facility tour at Akim Achiase in the Eastern Region, Nana Kwadwo Amoako, the 2021 National Best Cocoa Farmer, commended KOA for its innovative initiative aimed at providing additional income streams for cocoa farmers. He urged the company to consider implementing pilot projects on the farms of the best national cocoa farmers, particularly those with exemplary annual production records, to serve as models for the wider farming community.

‘We the best farmers undoubtedly have proven records of producing more cocoa every year and that means you can get more cocoa juices from our cocoa even from just one farm if you decide to bring your moving van or set up to our regions’, he indicated.

The delegation leader, Mr. David Oduro Asare, encouraged KOA’s management to consider funding the construction of fermentation facilities in communities where the company operates to support farmers in fermenting the beans after extraction.

‘From the look of things there is the likelihood of the farmers forgoing the prescribed fermentation processes since the beans appear conspicuously clean after the extraction so, I think KOA must lead in educating farmers and supporting them to observe the fermentation processes taught them by COCOBOD’, he said.

Addressing the sentiments raised by the delegation, Mr. Daniel Otu, Director of Operations and Production at KOA, emphasized the company’s commitment to fostering strong partnerships with cocoa farmers. He stated that KOA is open to discussions



A group photograph of National Best Cocoa Farmers and Management of KOA Impact

with farmers to identify potential areas of collaboration, ensuring the company’s initiatives remain relevant to the needs of cocoa farmers and their communities.

‘Research precedes whatever we do. This is because it is only through research that we can make realistic decisions. Our factories are built to enjoy continuity of operations so any finding that indicates a potential threat to the lifespan of our factory will be taken keenly into consideration when we are deciding to set up our factories anywhere’, he explained.

Mr. Otu said KOA pays an average of Ghc4,500 for every tonne of cocoa to their farmers. According to him, the company has budgeted Ghc14 million for this year’s pulp/juice purchases and hopes farmers will take advantage of that decision.

‘What KOA does is to constantly take our farmers through the good agronomic practices with an emphasis on good fermentation to guarantee beans quality’, he disclosed.

Nana Asiedu Samuel, one of KOA’s over

12,000 partner farmers whose farm the delegation visited at Yaw Nkran near Achiase, expressed his excitement about the company’s support. He highlighted how the additional income provided by KOA has been instrumental in covering essential farming activities such as weeding, pod breaking, and other routine operations, significantly easing the burden on farmers.

‘We are proud to be part of this project because we get extra income while drying our beans. After the juice has been extracted, we take the beans back to ferment them through the processes we already have,’ he explained.

The Swiss-Ghanaian company entered the Ghanaian market in 2017 with a mission to empower communities in West Africa through innovative food solutions. Starting its operations in Akrofuom in the Central Region, the company recently expanded its footprint with the establishment of a \$10 million factory at Akim Achiase.

Looking ahead, the company plans to manufacture biochar from cocoa husks, a sustainable initiative aimed at enhancing cocoa production.

# HON AIDOO'S THANK YOU TOUR IN PICTURES





# COCOBOD CHIEF CHAMPIONS LOCAL EXPERTISE IN GHANA'S TREE CROP DIVERSIFICATION INITIATIVE

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has emphasized the importance of local expertise and sustainable practices in the implementation of the Ghana Tree Crop Diversification Project.

Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo urged the Project Implementation team to tap into home-grown knowledge and skills, stating, "Utilizing local expertise is crucial for the sustainability of our cocoa industry."

Hon Aidoo was speaking at a meeting at Cocoa House in Accra, where the Project Implementation team met with the management of COCOBOD to update them on the progress of implementation and the upcoming launch event.

Scheduled to launch on November 7, this initiative aims to support the transformation of Ghana's cocoa sector through productivity improvement and climate resilience while also boosting the production of cashew, coconut, and rubber.

The COCOBOD Chief Executive also called for collaboration to tackle present challenges, especially the Cocoa Swollen Shoot Virus Disease (CSSVD), which is threatening cocoa production.

The Project Coordinator, Mr. Wahab Suleman, presented the various components of the project, stressing the need to strengthen COCOBOD's capacity to implement policies that promote sustainable development across the cocoa sector.

"In strengthening COCOBOD, the project will ensure that all stakeholders are well-equipped to contribute to the growth of the cocoa industry," he explained. He added that this includes

transitioning COCOBOD to a paperless operational system and implementing targeted training programmes for staff.

Additionally, he said the project will support farmers by introducing innovative agricultural practices and rehabilitating farms affected by the virulent CSSVD. He said attention will be placed on improving post-harvest management, adding value to cocoa products, and enhancing market access.

Three cocoa districts, Essam and Adabokrom in the Western North Region and Asamankese in the Eastern Region, selected for their potential impact, have been identified as beneficiaries of the project.

A significant highlight from the meeting was the announcement of the establishment of a new, fully equipped laboratory for the Cocoa Research

Institute of Ghana (CRIG). This facility will enhance research capabilities, particularly in tackling issues like the CSSVD, which is a perennial threat to the cocoa sector.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from management to fully support the project's implementation.

Meanwhile, the Tree Crop Diversification Project, an initiative of the government of Ghana and the World Bank, is set to be implemented over the next six years.

With a total investment of \$227.5 million, with 27.5 being a counterpart contribution of COCOBOD, the project, which has COCOBOD and the Tree Crop Development Authority as joint implementing agents, is expected to mark a significant step forward for Ghana's agricultural landscape—reducing the country's over-reliance on cocoa.



Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo addressing Team members of the Tree Crop Diversification Project

# SEED PRODUCTION DIVISION INAUGURATES SIX INTERIM EXECUTIVES FOR SPD LADIES CLUB



The Seed Production Division of COCOBOD has inaugurated Six(6) Interim Executives for the SPD Ladies Club in a colorful ceremony at the division's premises.

The chairman for the occasion Dr. Alfred Arthur, Deputy Executive Director, SPD explained that the club is not only for networking but rather an avenue to foster effective collaboration and support the sustenance of the sector.

"Today we have witnessed a very important ceremony that will foster growth and commitment to the division going forward," He said.

According to Dr. Arthur, the club is established to advocate for women inclusion and addition of women in managerial positions in the sector.

Dr. Arthur further added that the administrative work is not the sole responsibility of the executives but rather a collaborative effort to ensure the success of the club in every activities along the value chain.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the Human Resource Director, Mrs. Esther Omari Mireku, Deputy Human Resource Manager added that, the club leaders

should empower members through discipline, networking, and career development to be able execute any assigned task.

"empowerment make us stronger, more confident and ensure that we can stand for our right and deliver when called upon", she said.

Adding on, Mrs. Mireku stated that, the cocoa sector present wider opportunities to all genders and it is up to the executives to identify and present to members of the club to utilize them.

According to the Dep. Human Resource Manager, every member of the club irrespective of status plays a significant role in the sustainability of the cocoa sector, emphasizing the need for all ladies club in the industry to be each other's keeper to help contribute significantly to the affairs of the industry.

"we all play an important role in the industry, never feel down, never underestimate your capabilities in your various offices, but rather seize the opportunities surrounding you," she emphasized.

Mrs. Omari further charged the leaders to committed and dedicated to the purpose of the group, adding that, the views of the members should always be considered and treated with urgency.

"Do not use the position to misbehave or look down on your members, rather protect their interest and present yourself to them any time they need answers", she emphasized.

The executives are Mrs. Lady J.W.E Mensah (President), Mrs. Emilia Ahulu ( Vice President), Mrs. Charity Dogbey (Organizer), Mrs. Abena Afrifa (Organizer) , Mrs. Felicia Offei (Secretary) and Mrs. Abena Korankyi (Treasurer).



Pictures from the inaugural ceremony

# STAFF ENCOURAGED TO FOSTER POSITIVE WORK ETHICS

The Deputy Chief Executive Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in charge of Finance and Administration, Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah has advised staff of the Board to desist from negative tendencies that undermine the cocoa sector.

Mr Ray Ankrah expressed these sentiments when he addressed unionized members of COCOBOD in Accra.

‘It is important to be mindful of the things that come out of your mouth outside the walls of COCOBOD and certain negative actions taken during working hours because these things, which we may not regard as important, threaten the progress of the industry’, he emphasised.

According to Mr. Ankrah, staff from the various subsidiaries and divisions of the sector should consciously uphold and protect the core values of the industry at all times to ensure its growth.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded staff that every company across the globe has core values that strengthen and protect the organization and called on all to play a role to integrate these values into how things are done in the offices.



Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah (DCE, F&A) addressing unionized members of COCOBOD

‘Integrity, Collaboration, and Excellence (ICE) should be recognised by every staff member from the subsidiaries and divisions across the region as COCOBOD’s core values, which must be upheld in high esteem’, he stressed.

He urged staff to be honest in their relationships with colleagues during working hours and desist from spreading false information about the industry.

‘Be sincere, truthful, and honest during working hours. Stop cutting corners for favours, stop leaking our letters for selfish gains. If the industry goes down today, the whole of Ghana goes down because cocoa is the oxygen of the country’, he cautioned.

On the essence of collaboration and the need for excellence, the Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the need for staff to work as a team and share ideas to move the cocoa sector forward. He further added that paying attention to detail and maintaining a positive attitude towards assignments are key factors in achieving excellence for the industry.

‘Stop working in silos at your offices. Stop mediocrity to gain favours from your bosses. These are all factors that threaten the growth of the industry. Learn to appreciate and complement each other’s contributions towards the sector’, he added.

In all, over 200 staff members from the subsidiaries and divisions, including some management staff, were present at the meeting.



# STAFF OF COCOBOD TRAINED ON COST CONTROL AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT



Mrs. Paz Owusu, (Deputy Director, HR) addressing staff at the training programme

The Management of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has organized a 2-day capacity training programme on Cost Control and Project Management for staff at the Accra City Hotel.

The training programme is in line with HR policies aimed at enhancing and improving the skills of staff in their respective fields of operation, contributing to the sustainability of the cocoa sector.

Addressing participants at the opening session, the Deputy Director of Human Resources at COCOBOD, Mrs. Paz Owusu, explained that the training is necessary for staff in fields such as accounting, auditing, procurement, and others, to help manage the company's expenses more sustainably.

"In terms of HR requirements, organizing training on cost control and project management are key factors in controlling the company's expenses on projects and helping safeguard the cocoa sector from overspending," she said.

According to the Deputy Director, it is crucial to equip staff with modern practices in their fields of operation to remain competitive in the job market. Mrs. Paz further stated that the cocoa sector and all key stakeholders are evolving with modern standard operating procedures (SOPs) and advanced technologies to deliver accurate results.

"The cocoa sector is growing every day; therefore, COCOBOD staff also have to catch up with more advanced work ethics in their respective fields to contribute positively to the sector," she emphasized.

Mrs. Paz Owusu expressed confidence in the participants, stating that the knowledge acquired will have a positive impact on the sector and add value to their work.

Mr. Moses Nkuah, the Director of

Maxim Service Limited, who led the training, highlighted key management objectives that will ensure the sector's expenditures align with the company's project plans.

"Aligning expenditures with project plans, providing accurate cost forecasts, and keeping stakeholders informed about budget performance will create more transparent financial details," he added.

He further outlined the fundamental cost control cycle, which involves setting a plan, tracking performance, forecasting, analysing results, taking corrective actions, and verifying outcomes. This cycle will increase productivity and minimize costs.

Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to enhance their knowledge in cost and project management, believing it will contribute to increased productivity and profitability at COCOBOD.

In all, 40 participants from the General Services and Finance Departments benefited from the training programme.



A cross-section of COCOBOD staff present at the training

# WOMEN URGED TO SERVE AS AMBASSADORS OF BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

The President of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) Ladies Club, Madam Margaret Esi Nai has urged women to lead the charge in the fight against breast cancer as part of their contribution toward global efforts aimed at reducing the spread of the disease.

Madam Esi Nai made these remarks on the inaugural day of the 2024 Pink Month, held at Cocoa House in Accra. According to her, breast cancer awareness is a collective effort that requires the active participation of all women.

She urged members of her club to take to the streets to sensitize women and visit hospitals and marketplaces to spread awareness about safety precautions against the disease.

'Every year, in October, we celebrate breast cancer and educate you on the prevention, and early detection but it is not just for you. It is rather for you to spread the education to the less privileged ones on the streets, in our

hospitals, market areas, churches, etc." she said.

According to the President, the health of staff in the industry is paramount to the management of COCOBOD. As such, the club's contribution to raising awareness about breast cancer will significantly support management's overall goal of maintaining a healthy workforce.

'It is paramount to also contribute our quota as active ladies in the industry to ensure every woman is comfortable, secure and in good health to continue working for the organization", she added.

Madam Nai stated that breast cancer is predominantly associated with women, emphasizing the need for every woman to be courageous in embracing the fight and vigilant about recognizing its signs and symptoms.

'It is very important to remind ourselves that breast cancer is real and any of us

here can be a victim of it. So, we have to be on guard when we detect it early, we can find a solution to it early before it spreads", she emphasized.

She noted that societal rejection and stigmatization of women affected by breast cancer can lead to serious mental health challenges.

'People with breast cancer already have unstable health issues so if we neglect and reject them in our society, it poses great danger to their wellbeing. Husbands, show them love them, support them throughout their treatment process and they will live longer than expected", she stressed.

She explained that societal rejection and stigmatization of women with breast cancer can cause mental health issues and urged her colleagues to ensure regular checks for early detection and treatment.



A group photograph of COCOBOD's Ladies Club at the inaugural day of 2024 Pink Month





# CHED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE INSPECTS FARMS IN THE EASTERN REGION

The Management Committee of the Cocoa Health & Extension Division (CHED) has conducted a field visit to cocoa farms in the Asamankese and Bawdua Cocoa Districts in the Eastern Region as part of their quarterly review plan.

The purpose of the visit was to assess current production prospects and provide customized solutions to address specific on-farm challenges.

The Chairman of the Committee, Professor Annor Frimpong, expressed satisfaction with the impressive condition of the cocoa trees and encouraged farmers to plant additional economic shade trees to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

"Cocoa cannot be a driver of deforestation, so continue planting more economic shade trees alongside your cocoa to provide shade and create better environmental conditions for both the cocoa and the climate," he said.

Professor Annor emphasized that effective pest management is crucial for protecting cocoa pods and called for more intensive measures to minimize their negative impact on productivity.

He highlighted the importance of timely farm spraying and strict adherence to good agronomic practices as essential strategies for boosting productivity per acre.

"I urge you to form voluntary spraying gangs to help spray your farms in a contiguous manner, while CHED will provide you with all the chemicals needed to protect the pods on the trees. Without proper pod development, production will decline," he emphasized.

The Chairman further highlighted the importance of youth-in-cocoa farming, stating that recent policies and programmes of the board have made cocoa farming more lucrative and attractive.

"I am happy to see more youth present; it shows how the sector has evolved over the years. As cocoa prices continue to appreciate, the lives of cocoa farmers improve, ensuring the sustainability of the sector," he said.

The Executive Director of CHED, Rev. Edwin Afari, expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the farmers for their commitment to adopting best practices that have led to increased cocoa yields. He acknowledged that the farmers' hard work and contributions to the

sector cannot be overstated. Rev.

Afari further noted that the successful implementation of the 4Ps-Pruning, Pollination, Poultry Manure, and Crop Protection was made possible by the farmers' cooperation.

He encouraged them to continue maintaining high standards, collaborate closely with extension officers, and embrace new technologies to further boost their yields.



# PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATING GHANA'S COCOA HERITAGE

Olivia Ayive Owusu General Services (Civil Works).

Since the inception of the chocolate day in 2005 by the late Jake Obetsebi-Lamprey, then Minister of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, Chocolate Day has been celebrated annually, with the Ministry of Tourism, Ghana Cocoa Board, and the Cocoa Processing Company leading the festivities.

Over the years, this celebration has evolved into Chocolate Week, a vibrant series of events honoring Ghana's rich cocoa heritage. As part of these festivities, the management of Ghana's Cocoa Board has introduced engaging activities designed to educate and inspire the youth about the cocoa sector.

This year, the celebration took on a flavorful twist with the introduction of a cooking competition alongside the traditional quiz. Each subsidiary was tasked with creating a dish using cocoa products, showcasing the versatility of Ghana's prized commodity.

This competition aimed not only to encourage innovative culinary expressions of cocoa but also to reinforce its nutritional and economic significance.

The event commenced at 2 PM, drawing enthusiastic participants and spectators eager to witness a battle of intellect and culinary skill.

Each team comprised two representatives for the quiz and three for the culinary competition, with participants from Cocoa House/Cocoa Clinic, Seed Production Division (SPD), Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED), Quality Control Company (QCC), Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC), and the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA).

The culinary showdown set the stage for an exciting day, with teams given an hour to prepare their dishes before the quiz began.

The quiz unfolded in two challenging rounds, igniting fierce competition among the teams. The first round was



a nail-biter, with CMC, QCC, and Cocoa House/Cocoa Clinic each scoring 6 points, while SPD and CHED stood out with 9 points each. As the second round commenced, the stakes soared higher.

Teams showcased impressive knowledge and quick thinking, with CMC pushing ahead to 15 points, QCC following closely at 12, and Cocoa House/Cocoa Clinic at 16. However, it was CHED that stole the spotlight, clinching 21 points, while SPD secured 18 points.

SPD reigned supreme in the culinary competition, demonstrating exceptional skill in presentation and adherence to time constraints. Cocoa House/Cocoa Clinic secured a commendable second place, showcasing their culinary creativity, while QCC impressed the judges with their innovative dishes, taking third place.

As the evening drew to a close, the atmosphere was charged with a sense of community. Participants exchanged stories of their culinary creations and

quiz victories, fostering new friendships and strengthening existing bonds. This tapestry of shared experiences would be cherished long after the event had ended.

Reflections of the day lingered in the air, a celebration not just of chocolate, but of the dedication and passion that drive the cocoa industry. This year's Chocolate Week served as a vibrant reminder of the power of collaboration and creativity, leaving participants inspired and eager for future celebrations.

With hearts full and spirits high, everyone departed with a profound sense of fulfillment, eagerly anticipating what next year's festivities would bring. The event not only honored the sweet legacy of cocoa but also highlighted the rich tapestry of talent and knowledge within the management of Cocobod.

Ultimately, it was a celebration of tradition, innovation, and the sweet joys of life, promising an even brighter future for all involved.

# UNCOVERING THE UNTAPPED TOURISM POTENTIAL IN GHANA'S COCOA SECTOR

By David Asare Oduro, Public Affairs

Cocoa is often viewed solely through an economic lens but a closer look reveals an untapped tourism potential waiting to showcase the stories, innovations, and rich heritage embedded in cocoa's journey from farm to export. Key sites, historical landmarks, and institutions across the country provide reference points to discovering the tourism potential of Ghana's cocoa sector.

This article explores promising opportunities within the cocoa sector to enhance tourism.



## COCOA HOUSE: A TOWERING SYMBOL OF THE NATION'S COCOA HERITAGE

Standing proudly in the bustling heart of Accra's central business district, the Cocoa House is an architectural gem. Built in 1947, this edifice serves as the headquarters of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), standing as the tallest building in its vicinity and symbolizing the nation's commitment to cocoa.

This historic structure not only houses the operations overseeing Ghana's cocoa economy but is also a landmark that beckons visitors with its historical significance. It epitomizes how cocoa revenue has sculpted Ghana's infrastructural and economic landscapes, drawing both locals and international visitors into its magnificence.

## MAMPONG: THE TETTEH QUARSHIE MEMORIAL FARM – THE BIRTHPLACE OF GHANAIAN COCOA

To truly understand Ghana's cocoa journey, one must start at the



beginning. The Tetteh Quarshie Memorial Farm in Mampong, Akuapem was founded by the legendary Tetteh Quarshie in 1879. This farm is a birthplace of Ghana's cocoa heritage. Here, Quarshie cultivated the first amelonado cocoa seedlings, launching Ghana's commercial cocoa industry.

Today, the farm offers more than just cocoa trees. It features a museum that preserves historical regalia and artifacts used by Quarshie himself.

## THE JUBILEE COCOA FARM:

Established as part of the commemorative activities of Ghana @ 50, the monumental Jubilee Farm located a stone's throw away from the Tetteh Quarshie Farm received astute dignitaries, particularly those who visited Ghana during its Jubilee celebrations. Here in this farm, the personalities immortalized their visits by contributing to the farm's legacy, planting cocoa trees tagged with their names.



This tradition further enriches the farm as a cherished site for honouring heads of states and other invited guests who graced the country's jubilee celebrations. The well-maintained

farms serve not only as an ecosystem, but a tourist destination equipped with lovers' bench and other recreational spots. Be counted among the patrons and add to the trees!

## AKYEM TAFO'S COCOA RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF GHANA: WHERE INNOVATION MEETS TRADITION

Nestled in the Eastern Region, the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) is a hub for scientific and agricultural innovation. Originally established in 1944 as the West African Cocoa Research Institute (WACRI) and later renamed, CRIG has expanded to conduct research on other crops, including coffee and cola. Its divisions, specializing in soil science, entomology etc contribute valuable insights to sustainable cocoa cultivation.



CRIG's natural dam and its preserved forest areas offer a unique glimpse into biodiversity conservation while model cocoa farms and experimental plots showcase sustainable cocoa farming techniques and scientific adventures, while the new product development outfit continuously yearns for partnership with strategic industries to exemplify how recent product innovation hold the potential to reshape Ghana's cocoa sector.

## BUNSO COCOA COLLEGE: A LIVING CLASSROOM FOR COCOA KNOWLEDGE

For visitors interested in the educational and developmental side of cocoa, Bunso Cocoa College offers a hands-on experience. This institution,



which initially was built to solely train extension service agents, is now a diploma-awarding body in the Eastern Region.

Knowledgeable instructors share valuable insights about cocoa, coffee, and other crops with tourists, providing an interactive educational experience.

Just nearby, the Bunso Arboretum and its famous canopy walkway and serene ecosystem invite visitors to explore the region's lush greenery and biodiversity, while a cosy resort provides a relaxing space to savour cocoa-based refreshments, rounding off a perfect educational retreat, probably with a special person.



### TEMA: THE COCOA PROCESSING COMPANY - FROM BEAN TO BAR

In Tema, the Cocoa Processing Company invites visitors to follow the fascinating journey of cocoa from raw bean to chocolate bar. Once a subsidiary of COCOBOD, this facility allows tourists to experience the entire processing chain, gaining insight into how Ghana's premium cocoa is transformed into products enjoyed worldwide.

### PORT OPERATIONS TEMA

Also, a crucial part of the cocoa journey, offering visitors a view of the state-of-the-art warehousing and the



distinct processes and quality control mechanisms that ensure every bean meets high standards. Through careful tracking and tagging, warehouses reflect Ghana's commitment to quality and traceability. Visitors whose interest lie in these areas are rest assured of getting to apprise themselves with what makes Ghana's cocoa top-notch in quality.



### AKUAFO HALL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA: COCOBOD'S LEGACY IN EDUCATION

Often overlooked, the Akuafo Hall at the University of Ghana is a lasting symbol of COCOBOD's contributions beyond agriculture to supporting tertiary education delivery. As one of the largest halls on campus, it underscores COCOBOD's longstanding support of education in Ghana.

The Board has also funded the construction of numerous basic schools at remote cocoa-growing areas to remove precipitation conditions to child absenteeism and other social vices.

### COCOA HEALTHCARE CENTERS

Our health centers speak volumes and demonstrate how responsive we are towards healthcare delivery to all manner of persons.

The Tetteh Quarshie Memorial Hospital in Mampong, currently under the auspices of the Ghana Health Service continues to serve the health needs of our farmers and Ghanaians.

The six COCOBOD-subsented Cocoa Clinics across the regions also provide essential health care to the public to complement government's efforts at making health care accessible to all.

This legacy of social impact highlights COCOBOD's role not only as an economic entity but also as a champion of social development, enriching lives across Ghana.



### TIME WITH AN AWARD-WINNING COCOA FARMER

Yes, each year, COCOBOD awards distinguished cocoa, coffee and shea nut farmers for their hard work. The farms of these award-winning farmers have remained tourist sites and learning areas for tourists.

These farmers pass various tests, including adherence to environmental and social conditions. They are also involved in community development projects. Their mentorship prowess in their communities make them very influential figures of change. To this effect, our distinguished tourists will have the opportunity to interact with them and exchange knowledge.

### A FUTURE OF BLISS FOR COCOA TOURISM

Ghana's cocoa sector has much to offer beyond its renowned beans; it is a cultural, historical, and educational goldmine that can draw visitors from around the globe. By investing in infrastructure, promoting these landmarks, and integrating them into the nation's tourism strategy, Ghana has the potential to redefine its cocoa legacy.

With every visit, a new chapter in the story of Ghana's cocoa journey is shared and this ensures that the world sees not just the chocolate but the heritage and heart behind it.

This promising path could transform Ghana's cocoa sector and creating more opportunities for economic growth, cultural exchange, and a broader appreciation for the sector. The support of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture, Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana Investment Promotion Centre and district assemblies is very necessary to position the sector as a driver of tourism.

Tourists and visitors are warmly welcome to join us learn more and explore the beauty of Ghana's heritage, cocoa.

# MULTI-PURPOSE OFFICE COMPLEX INAUGURATED FOR CHED

The Walmart Foundation, in collaboration with PROFOREST and its partners, has donated a multi-purpose Rural Service Centre to the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) in the Dadiesoaba District, located in the Brong Ahafo Region.

The facility, equipped with modern amenities such as training centers, administrative offices, and dedicated spaces to support local farmers' activities, was made possible through a partnership involving Dadiesoaba CHED, the Hotspot Intervention Area (HIA), and PROFOREST under the Climate Change and Emission Reduction Program (REDD+).

Explaining the purpose of the office complex in an interview with COCOBOD News, the Executive Director of CHED, Rev. Dr. Edwin Afari, said the office would go a long way to support the

operations of CHED, particularly in coordinating activities under the Cocoa Management System (CMS) and the Ghana Cocoa Traceability System (GCTS).

According to him, farmers can have easy access to extension service delivery, as well as other forms of training to enhance their on-farm activities.

‘This is a laudable initiative that will bring farmers closer to CHED staff and enhance their daily interactions with farmers at Dadiesoaba and its environs. Farmers can have access to the right sources of inputs at highly subsidized fees which will also solve the problem of farmers having to procure adulterated chemicals to apply on their farms’, he emphasized.

Rev Afari further underscored the importance of building relationships

with community-based groups and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), stressing that such collaborations would help assuage the huge responsibility on Government and COCOBOD in providing resources for cocoa farmers.

The Brong Ahafo Regional Manager of CHED, Mr. Kingsford Kabutey urged management of the Service Centre, CREMA, to give off their best in the day-to-day running of the facility.

Present at the official commissioning of the project were representatives from the PROFOREST, CHED (Dadiesoaba), the Traditional Council, Community Resource Management Area (CREMA), World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and Tropenboss. Traditional leaders from surrounding communities were also in attendance



# EMMANUEL SOMUAH & EMMANUEL ANUM SOWAH RETIRE AFTER 36 YEARS



Left: Mr. Emmanuel Somuah, Right: Mr. Emmanuel Anum Sowah / A photograph of staff of the of the procurement department and retirees

The Procurement Department of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has held a colourful send-off ceremony to honour two of its astute staff who have spent the past 36 years working with the Board.

The retirees, Messrs. Emmanuel Somuah and Emmanuel Anum Sowah, who were often described as ‘the Emmanuel Brothers’ coincidentally joined the Board in the same year.

The duo were eulogized for their significant contributions towards the sustainability of the sector at the regional office in Tema.

In his address, Mr. Eric Nti, Deputy Human Resource Manager at COCOBOD, highlighted the significance of their long-term dedication to the organization. He stated that their exemplary service is proof of COCOBOD’s effective human resource policies designed to support and protect its staff.

‘It is a great honour to serve one company for 36 years. This means the company is doing something

meaningful that others may not be doing, or it has policies in place that protect its staff and create a conducive working environment,” he said.

Mr. Nti further explained that cultivating a positive work culture that prioritises employees’ well-being fosters long-term service, allowing the employer to maximize the potential of its staff while also helping the company thrive in all departments.

‘You can get the best out of your staff if the work environment is free of toxic attitudes. Also, when staff are well-taken care of, these things help to bring out the best in them,” he added.

Mr. Nti noted that the 36 years of service highlights the vital role of the human resource department in nurturing employee growth, the development of the company, and staff retention. According to him, the Human Resource Department ensures that employees are motivated and supported throughout their careers.

‘Mr. Somuah and Mr. Sowah are examples of the positive environment

COCOBOD provides for its staff. If you are privileged to be part of this family, ensure that you remain dedicated to your work. When it’s your time to retire, good things will be said about you,” he added.

In a farewell message on behalf of the Procurement Department, Mr. Seth Nagai, Manager extended his appreciation to the retirees for their immense contributions, which made the department stand out.

‘Despite the challenges you encountered during your work, your reports were always cleared at the port, regardless of the time frame. These traits are highly commendable,” he said.

He also emphasised the need for staff in the Procurement Department to build upon the legacy of Mr. Emmanuel Somuah and Mr. Emmanuel Sowah.

The two iconic staff served as temporary staff from ‘1988 to 2003 and were regularized in 2004 as Procurement Clerks’, part of the citation read.

# COCOBOD CEO URGES WOMEN COCOA FARMERS TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board(COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has urged women in cocoa farming to rally behind the government to do even more for them after the December polls.

Hon Boahen Aidoo was speaking at the launch of the Eastern Women in Cocoa Cooperative in Koforidua when he made this passionate appeal.

The cooperative aims to empower women in cocoa farming, improve their livelihoods, and provide opportunities for economic growth.

According to him, the NPP government has over the years provided various support services for women, adding that, ..' right from the days of former President John Agyekum Kufuor's introduction of the Free Maternal Care policy through to the present day with President Akufo Addo's Free SHS policy and the promise by the next NPP administration under Bawumia's policy to cater to the university fees of children of cocoa farmers in the country'.

Hon Aidoo said these are very important policies that would go a long way to support women's contribution in the cocoa value chain.

He expressed excitement about the launch of the cooperative and disclosed that for the first time in over three decades Ghana has adopted a new cocoa purchases model without going for the syndicated loan.

According to the COCOBOD CE, the cooperative is expected to benefit women and their children, and promised that the next administration will implement scholarships to university students programme if cocoa farmers support Bawumia's presidential bid.

Osahene Bofo Ansah III, Akuapem Krontihene, emphasized the importance of involving women in cocoa farming, citing their caregiving skills



and ability to handle responsibilities as some notable qualities required for maintaining cocoa farms.

He encouraged cooperative members to work together, promote peace, and avoid greed and selfishness.





# DO IT YOURSELF (DIY): COCOA SKINCARE ROUTINE

By Yaa Tweneboah Opoku Bandoh, Public Affairs

Cocoa butter is a powerhouse ingredient for skincare, known for its deep hydration, soothing properties, and ability to improve skin elasticity.

Here's a simple DIY skincare routine using cocoa butter that you can follow at home:

## STEP 1: CLEANSE: COCOA BUTTER CLEANSING BALM

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons cocoa butter
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- A few drops of essential oil (optional, e.g., lavender or tea tree)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Melt the cocoa butter and coconut oil together in a double boiler.
- Add the essential oil and let the mixture cool slightly.
- Massage a small amount onto your face to dissolve makeup and impurities, then rinse off with warm water or wipe with a damp cloth.

## STEP 2: EXFOLIATE: COCOA & SUGAR SCRUB

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon cocoa butter (melted)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon honey

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Mix the ingredients into a paste.
- Gently massage onto damp skin in circular motions, focusing on dry or rough areas.

- Rinse thoroughly with warm water.

## STEP 3: Tone: Cocoa & Rosewater Mist

### Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup rosewater
- 1 teaspoon cocoa powder (unsweetened)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Whisk the cocoa powder into the rosewater until dissolved.
- Pour into a spray bottle and shake well before use.
- Mist onto your face for a refreshing, antioxidant-rich toner.

## STEP 4: Moisturize: Whipped Cocoa Butter Cream

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup cocoa butter
- 2 tablespoons almond oil or jojoba oil

- A few drops of vitamin E oil

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Melt the cocoa butter and almond oil together in a double boiler.
- Chill the mixture in the refrigerator until it begins to solidify.
- Whip with a hand mixer until light and fluffy.
- Apply a small amount to your face and body, focusing on dry areas.

## STEP 5: TREAT: COCOA BUTTER LIP BALM

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon cocoa butter
- 1 teaspoon beeswax
- 1 teaspoon coconut oil

### Instructions:

- Melt all ingredients together in a double boiler.
- Pour into small containers or lip balm tubes and allow to cool completely.
- Apply as needed for soft, hydrated lips.

This is a great way to leave your skin looking radiant and fresh without breaking the bank!

# MENTAL DISORDERS: DEALING WITH THREATS THAT HINDER A FULFILLING LIFE IN THE AFRICAN WORKPLACE CONTEXT

By Abigail Ahorgba

## INTRODUCTION

In the modern workplace, particularly in African contexts such as Ghana, understanding and addressing mental health challenges is crucial for maintaining productivity and enhancing employee well-being. Mental disorders, including anxiety and depression, have a significant impact on individuals and organizations alike.

According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report, in 2019, approximately 970 million people were living with mental disorders (GBD Results Tool, 2019).

In Ghana, the Ministry of Health estimates that 3.1 million Ghanaians are affected, with 16,000 suffering from chronic conditions. As a key employer, the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) faces these challenges like any other organization.

## UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH AND WORKPLACE IMPLICATIONS

Mental health goes beyond the absence of disorders to include a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Misconceptions such as "mental health is only a concern for those diagnosed with disorders" hinder proactive efforts to maintain workplace wellness.

Mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression, can impair decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and productivity—key attributes for employees in critical sectors like agriculture, public services, and industry.

For COCOBOD and similar organizations, poor mental health among employees can lead to operational inefficiencies, absenteeism, and even unsafe practices. The cocoa sector's demanding work environment and



Ghana ranks as 4th most stressful country for workers in Sub-Saharan Africa - Image Source: My Joy online, May 3, 2024

external pressures such as fluctuating commodity prices and climate change can exacerbate stress and anxiety levels among staff and stakeholders, including farmers.

Statistics and Impact on the Workplace Globally, over 300 million people suffer from depression, making it the leading cause of disability (Camacho-Rubio et al., 2022). Anxiety disorders affect about 4% of the global population, with many individuals experiencing both conditions simultaneously.

In Ghana, the stigma surrounding mental health continues to prevent people from seeking timely intervention. This stigma often spills over into workplaces, where employees may hesitate to disclose struggles for fear of discrimination or job loss.

In terms of economic impact, studies estimate that depression and anxiety cost the global economy approximately

\$1 trillion annually in lost productivity (Deady et al., 2024). Within COCOBOD, mental health challenges among staff could impede the effectiveness of initiatives like farmer education programs, research activities, and administrative operations.

## COMMON SYMPTOMS AND PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN WORKPLACES

In December 2024, the Public Affairs Department of COCOBOD demonstrated commendable dedication by launching a week-long social media awareness campaign on mental health. This initiative reflects a proactive approach to educating employees and stakeholders about mental health, reducing stigma, and promoting a supportive work environment.

Workplace environments can either exacerbate or mitigate mental health challenges. Factors such

as heavy workloads, poor communication, lack of support, and job insecurity can contribute to poor mental health.

Employees experiencing mental disorders may display symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, irritability, trouble sleeping, or physical manifestations like heart palpitations.

To foster a positive work environment, organizations in Ghana, including COCOBOD, must prioritize mental health awareness. This includes:

- **Education on Mental Health Conditions:** Regular workshops and sensitization programs can help dispel myths and promote understanding (Shanmugapriya, 2023).
- **Creating Safe Spaces:** Establishing an open-door policy where employees feel safe discussing their struggles without judgment.
- **Training Managers:** Ensuring supervisors can identify signs of mental distress and provide appropriate support or referrals (van Hees et al., 2022).

#### Strategies for Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace

- **Implementing Support Systems:** Organizations like COCOBOD can introduce Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) to provide counseling and resources for mental health management.
- **Reducing Stigma:** Employers should lead by example, openly discussing mental health to normalize conversations and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help (Ramírez-Vielma et al., 2023).
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Allowing flexible hours or remote work for employees struggling with mental health issues can help them regain balance.
- **Regular Health Checks:** Including mental health screenings as part of routine medical check-ups for staff can ensure early identification and intervention.



#### Treatment and Self-Care Strategies

While organizations play a crucial role, individuals must also adopt practices to protect their mental health. Evidence-based treatments, particularly cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), are effective for managing anxiety and depression (Alonso et al., 2018). Employees can also integrate self-care strategies into their routines:

- **Developing Healthy Habits:** Regular exercise, adequate sleep, and mindfulness practices can significantly reduce stress.
- **Seeking Professional Help:** Consulting therapists or mental health professionals for tailored guidance.
- **Building Support Networks:** Strengthening family, workplace, and community relationships to foster emotional resilience.

For instance, COCOBOD could complement its wellness programmes with periodic workshops on mindfulness or stress management tailored to its workforce, including farmers who might face unique stressors like fluctuating incomes, climate change problems, and crop failures among others.

#### CONCLUSION

In Ghana's workplace landscape, particularly within organizations like COCOBOD, addressing mental health is not just a moral imperative but an economic necessity. Organizations can foster healthier, more productive work environments by promoting awareness, providing support, and reducing stigma. For employees and employers alike, investing in mental health ensures a sustainable path to personal fulfillment and organizational success.

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# 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