



COCOBOD *News*

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Cocoa Farmers **PENSION** **SCHEME**

Providing a Decent Pension for Our Cocoa Farmers

Reasons to Consume COCOA



Provides the Most
Powerful Dietary
Antioxidants

Reduces Blood Pressure

Delays Physical Signs
of Ageing

Fights Dental Decay

Rich in Dietary Iron
which helps to fight
Anemia

Boosts Sense of
Well-Being

Has Aphrodisiac effect

Prevents Stroke by
improving Blood
Circulation

Fights Stress

Minimizes discomfort/
pain associated with
Menstrual periods

Protects Blood Vessels

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COCOA FARMERS PENSION SCHEME

Fulfilment of Sections 26 & 27 of the COCOBOD Law

WHAT THE COCOBOD LAW SAYS

In 1984 when the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) Act, P.N.D.C. L. 81 was being considered, the drafters devoted sections 26 and 27 to enjoin the Board to, within one year after the coming into force of the Act, provide a Contributory Insurance Scheme and Farmers Welfare Fund to support cocoa, coffee and sheanut farmers in the country.

While the provisions under Section 26 required that the insurance scheme for cocoa farmers should operate within the framework of the Social Security, the Welfare Fund under Section 27 on the other hand, primarily charged the Board to roll out relief schemes to improve the living conditions of farmers through the provision of basic infrastructure in communities where cocoa, coffee and shea nut are cultivated; create the enabling condition to stimulate access to low-interest bearing loans, as well as a deliberate efforts aimed at providing refresher courses and scholarship for farmers' wards.

RECOUNTING STRIDES MADE UNDER SECTION 27

Unarguably, it can be said however that in pursuit of provisions under Section 27, over the years, revenue from cocoa trade has been utilised to support the country's health, education, infrastructure, energy, roads sectors in addition to supporting power development through granting of scholarships to deserving citizenry.

These, to a large extent, show some commitments in efforts to achieve the provisions under Section 27.

In 1951, the COCOBOD Scholarship Scheme for instance was established with an initial capital of Ghc14 million as part of the Board's welfare services to support the education of wards of cocoa farmers who have gained admissions to study in second cycle schools in the country as well as other Ghanaians who were slated for overseas education. Through this, several wards and children of cocoa farmers (including former heads of state of Ghana, Ministers of State, Parliamentarians, and Medical Doctors and a host of others) have had their education supported through the Scholarship.

It is also on record that as part of support towards community development projects, COCOBOD invested enormously between 1958 and 1996 and continues to do even more to improve living conditions in rural communities. For instance, an amount of Ghc5 million from the COCOBOD Farmers' Trust was injected into the construction of 26 secondary schools in 1958. These schools, popularly known as the Trust Schools include Apam, Yaa Asantewaa, Ghana National, Labone, Kadjebi, Sunyani, Akim Oda, Konongo Odumase, Axim and Asankragwa Secondary Schools among others. The objective of establishing these educational facilities was to

provide opportunity for the youth in rural communities and urban centres to continue their secondary school education. In addition, the Board assisted in the building of the Akuafu Hall at the University of Ghana to accommodate thousands of students who continue to gain admission to study various programmes at University of Ghana, Legon.

Similarly, within the last decade, about 14 basic schools have been established under the COCOBOD Child Education Support Programme to promote child education in remote cocoa growing areas.

Investments into improving upon road networks linking major cocoa-growing communities have increased in recent times with massive construction and expansion of road networks to increase access to remote places and, to aid the carting of cocoa from such areas to buying centres. Cocoa fund has also built six Cocoa Clinics and the famous Tetteh Quarshie Memorial Hospital located at Akaupem Mampong to provide key and essential services to promote the well-being of the citizenry.

NOW THE BIG QUESTION ABOUT SECTION 26

What has remained the biggest question over the past 38 years is 'Why was no effort put in place to actualize the provisions under Section 26 – the institution of a pension scheme for



cocoa farmers in the country? Divergent views have been expressed by various opinion leaders - mostly representatives of government and industry players. While some industry watchers blame the situation on the lack of political will by successive governments to implement the provisions, other schools of thought believe that the widely informal nature (lack of credible data) about operations within the Ghanaian cocoa sector made it extremely difficult to get the scheme rolled out.

THE HISTORIC COMMITMENT

The Kumasi Declaration on 1st December 2020 by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana will perhaps go down in history as the most fulfilling promise ever made to cocoa farmers regarding a pension package for them. The official launch of the Pension Scheme on that fateful day was characterized by an unequivocal directive to COCOBOD and the National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRO) to develop the blueprint to commence the scheme on 1st October 2021.

The launch birthed a new trajectory aimed at securing a decent pension for our gallant cocoa farmers whose tireless efforts have ensured the production of premium quality cocoa over the years.

With the strong commitment, what seemed to be a major hurdle in the implementation efforts was unavailability of a credible data on farmers. The country's cocoa regulator therefore considered the development of an accurate database on farmers and related activities as a major step to the successful implementation of Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme.

THE ROLE OF THE COCOA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Cocoa Management System (CMS) was subsequently introduced to address issues relating to a robust and integrated database system before enrolling farmers on the Pension Scheme. Through the CMS, every registered cocoa farmer will be issued with a Cocoa Card which is a key requirement for registration under the Pension Scheme.

The CMS is currently recording great successes a year after it began in the Western Region. To meet the deadline indicated in the President's directive to COCOBOD and NPRO, a pilot phase of the implementation process was carried out in the New Edubiase District, drawn

from 28 cocoa communities in 2021. The farmers, representatives of Purchasing Clerks, opinion leaders, Community Extension Agents, a section of the media etc were sensitized and the enrolment process simulated to test-run the laid down procedures within the framework of the scheme's implementation plan. Subsequently, 2,800 cocoa farmers were successfully enrolled during the 10-day exercise.

That significant event in the scheme of things of the pension scheme marked a significant milestone in the journey at its realization.

FACTS ABOUT THE COCOA FARMERS PENSION SCHEME

Similar to any other formal pension scheme, there are commitments from the parties involved. COCOBOD is the sponsor of the scheme for the benefit of cocoa farmers or their beneficiaries. Under the Scheme, a registered cocoa farmer is required to make a mandatory contribution of 5% of his/her cocoa at the point of sale of produce through a specially designed purchasing App, aided by a mobile phone and integrated into the CMS. The transactional processes for deducting the legitimate contribution is transparent and allows for cross-checking and verification of transactions into account.

COCOBOD will top-up with 1% of the farmer's produce into accounts. Within the scheme, 25% of the farmer's total contribution will be credited to the 'Personal Savings Account' and the remaining 75%, credited to the 'Retirement Account' established for every farmer on the scheme.

Under the scheme, eligibility for pension is based on the attained age of the farmer and/or years of contribution to the scheme. For instance, a farmer qualifies for retirement after having contributed for 5 years, provided the farmer has attained the age of 55. If a farmer signs on to the scheme at age 50 or below he/she is eligible to retire and receive pension benefits after age 55 whereas a farmer who joins the scheme after age 50 becomes eligible for retirement after contributing for 5 years.

A beneficiary farmer, prior to retirement, is allowed to withdraw up to 25% of their Personal Savings Account Balance after the initial 5 years. Opportunity exists for the withdrawal of up to 20% of savings made into the Personal Savings Account Balance every 2 years after the first

withdrawal. Furthermore, when a farmer is due for retirement, he /she shall be entitled to a Retirement Benefit equal to his Personal Savings Account Balance and Retirement Account Balance. The Personal Savings Account Balance shall be paid as a Lump Sum; and the beneficiary will continue to receive monthly pension payments over 15 years from his Retirement Account Balance.

Like all regulated pension schemes, operational activities of the Cocoa Farmers Scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the National Pensions Act 2008 (Act 766).

An eleven-member Board of Trustees, approved by NPRO which includes four (4) cocoa farmer representatives nominated by cocoa farmers, representatives of the Licensed Buyers Association, Academia, Actuary, COCOBOD and other industry players has been put in place to manage the affairs of the Scheme.

In addition, there are Fund Custodian, Fund Managers/Investment Advisors and a Fund Administrator providing various essential services and are independent of COCOBOD and Government.

All service providers under the scheme are registered with/by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

COCOBOD News wishes to commend Government and Ghana Cocoa Board for the bold decision to roll out a Pension Scheme for cocoa farmers in the country. We are particularly enthused that the initiative will primarily provide cocoa farmers with a decent pension so that when they retire from active farming, they are assured of a happy life. Clearly, per the scheme's nature, the longer one stays on it, the heavier the pension package. It therefore behoves the youth to redefine their perceptions about cocoa farming and take a decision to venture into it for a better future.

With the hurdle of creating a robust and clean database on cocoa farmers through the CMS almost cleared, the Pension Scheme for cocoa farmers in Ghana will see massive enrolment in total fulfilment of one of the biggest, but seemingly elusive decades old, wishes of cocoa farmers in Ghana. Let us engage with critical actors in the value chain in order to rally support from all and sundry for a successful implementation of the scheme.

Long live the Pension Scheme; Long Live Cocoa Farmers and God bless Ghana.



GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS COCOA PRODUCER PRICE FOR THE 2021/2022 CROP YEAR

Government has announced GH¢660 as the farm-gate price for a bag of 64kg of cocoa for the 2021/2022 crop season.

The announcement was made at a news conference in Accra by Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, Minister for Food and Agriculture and Chairman of the Producer Price Review Committee to mark the beginning of the Crop Season.

Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto said in spite of the fall in the world market price of cocoa, among other factors, such as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the global economy, Government had maintained the producer price at Gh¢10,560.00 per tonne, representing 87.15 % of the FOB value, as a demonstration of its commitment towards improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers.

According to him, Government is committed to sustaining the interest of cocoa farmers in the country to enable them produce more cocoa, enjoy remunerative incomes and improved

well-being.

‘The producer price has been maintained at a time other producing countries are contemplating reducing their farm-gate prices following a drop in the terminal cocoa market prices as a result of the challenges posed by the pandemic,’ he added.

Through the Cote d'Ivoire-Ghana Cocoa Initiative which saw the implementation of the Living Income Differential (LID) of US\$400 per tonne of cocoa in the 2020/2021 crop year, cocoa farmers are better-off today than their counterparts in other cocoa-producing countries.

Hon. Akoto said the implementation of the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme would add up to the government's efforts at ensuring improved livelihoods for Ghanaian cocoa farmers after retiring from active farming.

He further disclosed that the roll out of the electronic weighing scales for the 2021/2022 crop year would help

farmers to fully enjoy the benefits of their labour.

‘The weighing scales are certified by the Ghana Standard Authority (GSA). Therefore, I urge all LBCs to cooperate with GSA to set up the scales at their depots and use them to weigh cocoa to prevent cheating,’ he cautioned.

He assured that the Government would continue to support Cocoa farmers through the Board's Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) to increase yields as it did for the 2020/2021 crop year.

Hon. Akoto wished all stakeholders in the cocoa value chain a fruitful season and hoped that the 2021/2022 crop year would record another increase in production.

Meanwhile, the producer price for the 2021/2022 crop year took effect from 8th October 2021.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR COCOA FARMERS PENSION SCHEME INAUGURATED



The Licensed Board of Trustees for the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme has been inaugurated to oversee the management of the contributory scheme aimed at ensuring a decent pension for cocoa farmers in Ghana.

The compulsory Pension Scheme, which also has a welfare fund component, requires farmers to contribute a minimum of five percent (5%) amount of the cocoa beans sold at a point in time into the Scheme. Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) will then add a one per cent (1%) amount to the farmer's contribution.

The Board of Trustees comprises experts in finance, pension administration and representatives of cocoa farmers. COCOBOD will serve as the sponsor of the Scheme.

The Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, Hon. Ignatius Baffour Awuah, who swore in ten (10) out of the eleven (11) members of the Board, called the scheme 'a blessing to

Ghana". He charged the members of the Board to live up to the responsibility to prudently manage the funds of the Scheme. He asked them to fervently consider how each decision will impact the lives of the millions of cocoa farmers and work towards making the initiative a success.

COCOBOD's Deputy Chief Executive in Charge of Operations, Dr. Emmanuel Opoku, in his statement, said that the Scheme would ride on the back of the Cocoa Management System (CMS).

He advised cocoa farmers to register on the Cocoa Management System and acquire their Cocoa Cards to enable them enroll on the pension scheme and enjoy all the benefits that go with it.

On his part, COCOBOD's Deputy Chief Executive in Charge of Finance and Administration, Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah, said the Pension Scheme forms part of a broader plan to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers.

He said COCOBOD would provide the necessary support to the Board of Trustees to achieve its mandate and ensure that funds are available for transfer into contributors' accounts without any hitch.

The Board is chaired by Mr. Daniel Aidoo Mensah, the Executive Chairman & Chief Actuary of Aidoo Mensah & Associates. Other members include Mr. David Appiah Ofori, Chief Executive Officer of General Trust Company Ltd; Mr. Samuel Danquah Arkhurst, Director, Treasury & Debt Management Division at the Ministry of Finance; Mr. Peter Osei-Amoako, Director of Finance at COCOBOD; Mr. Vincent Okyere Akomeah, Managing Director of the Cocoa Marketing Company and Mr Alfred Ofori Annaye, Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations at the Produce Buying Company.

The rest are Mr. Charles Gyamfi, Mrs. Leticia A. Yankey, Mrs. Joyce Dapaah and Mr. Charles Korankye Donkor who were elected by cocoa farmers.

COCOBOD SIGNS US\$1.5 BILLION SYNDICATED FINANCE FACILITY FOR 2021/2022 COCOA SEASON



Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has signed a US\$1.5billion Pre-export Syndicated Finance agreement with a consortium of local and international financial institutions to finance cocoa purchases for the 2021/2022 Cocoa Season.

The facility, which was contracted at a competitive interest rate plus LIBOR of 1.10%, a marked improvement upon last year's 1.75%, will also be used to finance operational activities within the crop season. The signing ceremony for this year's facility took place at the Headquarters of the Standard Chartered Bank, Ghana Plc in Accra.

In his virtual welcome address, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, expressed gratitude to the financial partners for their trust in Ghana's cocoa industry for which reason they are always willing to fund the operations of the industry.

"The support we have received from our financial partners has been very consistent and enormous. Management of COCOBOD sincerely appreciates your unflinching commitment in these difficult times," he noted.

According to Hon Aidoo, despite the challenges that the cocoa industry faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country was able to achieve its

target of significantly increasing productivity per hectare, leading to the attainment of a record high production at the end of the 2020/21 crop season.

"I wish to officially inform stakeholders that through our continued implementation of the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs), at the close of the 2020/21 crop year, cocoa beans purchased stood at one million and forty-five thousand five-hundred metric tonnes (1,045,500mt), breaking the 10-year-old record set in the 2010/2011 crop year which was 1,024,526mt," he stated.

He expressed confidence in a "blissful future" for Ghana's cocoa industry and invited all stakeholders along the value chain to challenge themselves to achieve greater milestones in the coming season.

Hon. Owusu Afriyie Akoto, the Minister for Food and Agriculture, in a statement at the event, said Ghana's cocoa industry has served as an icon of good corporate governance in the sub-region and has remained vibrant because of its continued partnership with relevant stakeholders across the globe. He commended the Management of COCOBOD for the prudent leadership of the cocoa sector, especially, in the past couple of difficult years.

The Minister assured the consortium of banks that raised the US\$1.5 billion amount that the facility would be fully committed to its intended purpose, which is to ensure prompt payment to farmers for their produce at the buying centres.

Speaking on behalf of the lenders, Mrs Mansa Nettey, the Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank, Ghana Plc, said the financial institutions remain committed to a continuous beneficial relationship with COCOBOD.

She said the facility received commitments in excess of US\$1.7billion due to COCOBOD's impeccable credit profile and market relationships.

According to her, a total of 24 institutions, made up of 4 local and 20 international financial institutions participated in this year's syndication facility. She mentioned the Initial Mandated Lead Arrangers as Standard Chartered Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Coöperatieve Rabobank, MUFG Bank Ltd, Natixis, Nedbank Ltd and Ghana international Bank. The four local banks are EcoBank Ghana Limited, Standard Chartered Bank, Société General Ghana Limited and Absa Ghana Limited.

The facility is expected to be repaid in seven (7) equal instalments, from February to August, 2022.

Some senior journalists and hosts of flagship radio and television programmes in Accra have been sensitized on the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme, at the Regent Hotel in Accra. The interactive event offered the journalists the opportunity to ask relevant questions about the Scheme to deepen their understanding and provide the needed help to achieve its objectives.

Opening the session, the Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations, Dr Emmanuel Opoku lauded the indispensable role played by the media in the implementation of the Scheme and urged them to use their influences to train, educate and inform relevant stakeholders accurately about the Scheme.

'We know how indispensable you are and how you can influence the direction of the Board in the decision to roll out this scheme,' he said.

Dr. Opoku described the decision of government as 'bold and one that requires a great deal of commitment' and called on the senior media practitioners to attach a sense of patriotism to the Scheme's operations.

He encouraged them to rally behind government to ensure that it operates successfully.

He further indicated that the Scheme would ride on the successes of the Cocoa Management System (CMS) currently being undertaken to build a robust database on cocoa farmers and their farms.

The Chief Executive of the National Pensions and Regulatory Authority, Mr. Ata Krufi, gave an extensive overview of the Scheme and its operations, and said the only farmers registered by COCOBOD would be enrolled on to the scheme. He indicated that through a well-structured payment platform, a farmer shall contribute at least 5% of cocoa sold under the Scheme anytime he/she sells cocoa while the government shall support with a minimum of 1% of the value of cocoa sold.

'We have trained purchasing clerks on the use of a specialized App installed on their mobile phones and this App will aid in all deductions and transactions

JOURNALISTS APPRISED ON COCOA FARMERS PENSION SCHEME



regarding the scheme,' he disclosed.

The Chairman of the Implementation Committee, Mr. Osei Akoto explained that all contributions would be transferred into the farmers' accounts and later invested. He said although a contributor is eligible to retire from the scheme after having contributed for 5 years, farmers who stay on the scheme and build their contributions for longer years stand a better chance of enjoying a more decent pension after retiring from active farming.

He assured that the scheme was safe because all the pre-requisites regarding regulations have been followed strictly in accordance with Pensions Act and other regulatory and legal provisions.

The participants asked questions on the sustainability of scheme; security of funds; transparency in the management of the Scheme and measures taken by government to prevent data duplication in the CMS programme. Responding to these questions, Dr. Opoku assured the journalists that a Pilot Phase of the Scheme which took place at New Edubiase subjected the planned procedure to test and the result of the exercise was splendid as some lessons were drawn from the pilot and used to enhance blueprint of the Scheme significantly.

Meanwhile, the scheme has started at New Edubiase with over 2000 cocoa farmers enrolled so far and more farmers expected to get on board.

2,500 COCOA FARMERS TO RECEIVE 100 CEDIS AS PREMIUM UNDER THE KOOKOO DAAKYEPA SCHEME

Hotel Chocolat in partnership with Yonkopa Cocoa Buying Company, Horizons Foundation and Green Tropics has announced a Ghc100 premium on a bag of cocoa for some cocoa farmers in the Eastern and Ashanti Regions for the 2021/22 crop year under the new phase of the 'Kookoo Daakyepa Scheme'.

At the launch of the Scheme at Nkawkaw, the Chief Executive and Co-Founder of Hotel Chocolat Mr Angus Thirlwell lauded the efforts of cocoa farmers in Ghana at producing premium quality cocoa for the confectionery market.

He indicated that 90% of cocoa used in producing chocolates and other confectioneries by his outfit is sourced from Ghana and added that the increase in the premium to Ghc100 is necessary to motivate the farmers through improved incomes.

'It is important to make farmers feel happy because chocolate is a happy product', he said.

Hotel Chocolat is one of the fastest growing UK-based direct-to-consumer chocolate brands worth over USD \$1billion on the London Stock Exchange.

It has over 4 million online customers, operating through approximately 160 stores in the UK and Japan in addition to several on-line businesses in the United States.

According to Mr. Angus, in 2002 Hotel

Chocolat established its presence in Ghana, with focus on investments in community livelihood projects as a way of complementing government's efforts at making life in rural communities better. He indicated that the new package in the Scheme are intended to give back to support the producers of cocoa.

The initiative will be implemented by Green Tropics, working together with Yonkopa Cocoa Buying Company to reach out to farmers in Nkawkaw and Juaso for the start.

'We are targeting some 2,500 farmers in communities at Juaso and Nkawkaw and hope to scale up to 5,000 farmers in 3 years' time and do even more', he disclosed.

Mr. Angus further added that through Green Tropics, adequate quantities of economic trees would be raised and distributed to farmers and assisted to nurture them to serve as means of carbon sequestration, moisture retention and biodiversity conservation.

'Every single cocoa farmer that we are working with will be supplied adequate quantities of trees but this will depend on the size of their farms', he indicated.

The new phase will also encompass training programmes on best practices as well as financial support to help farmers defray the cost of labour for pruning.

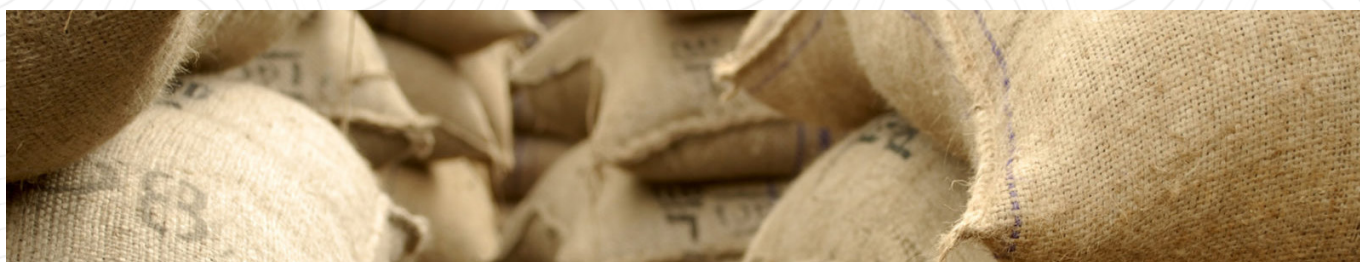
'We are paying for the full cost of

pruning for all farmers whose farms measure above 2 hectares to reduce their expenditure on fertilizers and other agro-inputs. We believe that when they see the impact of the pruning, later they can plough back the savings made in this intervention to hire extra farm hands to do pruning themselves', he said

In a solidarity message, the Chief Executive of Green Tropics, Mr. Osei Amakye expressed gratitude to Hotel Chocolat for the initiative and lauded them for the investments made in supporting rural irrigation and water supply, education delivery, and training on alternative livelihood programmes for women farmers. He also called on the youth to register with the farmer group to enable them access seed fund from the Kookoo Daakyepa Scheme to start their cocoa farming.

The Chief of Obomeng, Nana Effah Opinaman III who chaired the function used the occasion to wish all cocoa farmers a Happy Farmers' Day in advance and praised the Kookoo Daakyepa project.

There were fraternal messages from Hon Seth Acheampong Easter Regional Minister, Hon Yaw Owusu Addo – Municipal Chief Executive for Kwahu West, Hon Joseph Frempong – MP for the Nkawkaw, the Kwahu West District Chief Farmer – Nana Osei Appiah, Chief of Kwahu Aduamoah and other Queen mothers who graced the occasion.





COCOBOD BOSS HONoured AT AKUAPeM MAMPONG

Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, has been honoured by the Chief of the Akwapem Mampong Traditional Area and conferred with the title, 'Cocoa Boafopa' for his contribution to historic strides within Ghana's cocoa sector.

The prestigious award was conferred during the grand durbar of Chiefs and People of the area to climax this year's Ohum Festival.

Hon Aidoo is credited with spearheading the introduction of several laudable interventions to increase productivity and improve the living standards of cocoa farmers.

Experts say the successful implementation of the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) significantly contributed to the attainment of the over 1.045 million metric tonnes of cocoa production record.

The Akwapem Mamponghene, Osabarima Kwame Otu Dartey III, while commending the efforts by Hon Aidoo, reminded him of the Akwapem Mampong Traditional Area's pioneering role in the cocoa sector and called for more investments in cocoa projects within the area.

He cited the Jubilee Cocoa Project as one major project that needs urgent attention to turn around the economic fortunes of the area.

Deputy Chief Executive of COCOBOD in charge of Operations, Dr. Emmanuel Opoku, who represented Hon Aidoo at the function, expressed appreciation to the Chiefs and People for honouring the Chief Executive.

Dr. Opoku assured the chiefs that a proposal to turn the Jubilee Cocoa Project into a Cocoa Museum is before the Board of Directors for consideration and added that a proposal for the establishment of a tertiary educational fund for research into the cocoa sector is also under consideration.

He said COCOBOD would continue to invest in projects to build local capacity in an effort to industrialize the cocoa sector.

As part of his contribution to the development of the area, the COCOBOD Chief made a personal donation towards the building of the chief's Palace. The Board also presented cocoa products and other items towards the celebration of the Ohum Festival.



THREE GHANAIA COCOA FARMERS RECEIVE COCOA OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Ghana has won two bronze medals and one silver medal in the 2021 edition of the Cocoa of Excellence Award held virtually.

The award programme is a platform for promoting quality and diversity through a culture of excellence in fine flavour cocoa.

Mr. Charles Oppong, a farmer from Suhum in the Eastern Region and the Offinso Fine Flavour Cooperative in the Ashanti Region won Bronze medals, respectively, whereas Mr. Seth Opoku Yirenkyi from Suhum picked up a Silver medal.

Addressing the ceremony on behalf of the Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Dr. Emmanuel A. Opoku, Deputy Chief Executive in charge of

Operations, reiterated Ghana's standard for the supply of premium quality cocoa beans to the world market.

"The various stages in production and strict adherence to recommended post-harvest protocols developed by the COCOBOD to our cherished farmers has made Ghana the number one producer of premium quality beans", he said.

According to him, the introduction of the various intervention by the Board has immensely impacted on the Ghana's cocoa industry and further indicated that the country's participation in the Cocoa of Excellence awards also goes to spice up the niche the country has carved for itself in the cocoa trade.

"Our farmers are motivated by the award scheme and are becoming much more aware that quality is of essence in the global cocoa terrain. This has resulted in the increased number of farmers shortlisted for the 2021 edition", he added.

Dr. Emmanuel Opoku further emphasized that, the award programme has played a key role in capacity building of fine flavor team and global recognition for the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG)

He challenged the farmers to adhere to best practices that guarantee good quality cocoa beans that produce the finest flavour for the production of quality chocolates and other confectionery products.

COCOA FARMERS PENSION SCHEME PILOTED IN NEW EDUBIASE

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has piloted the implementation of the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme, scheduled to be fully rolled out in the 2021/2022 Cocoa Season.

The two-week exercise was used to test the planned operational framework designed for the scheme. A sample size of 2800 volunteer farmers was drawn from 28 cocoa-growing communities within the New Edubiase Cocoa District, in the Ashanti Region, for the pilot exercise.

The exercise aimed at providing hands-on experiences and relevant feedback which would be used to modify and enhance the modalities for the full rollout.

The Chairman of the Implementation Committee, Mr Charles Osei-Akoto, in an interaction with volunteer farmers explained the registration process and requirements.

"You will be required to show your Cocoa Card issued by COCOBOD during the CMS

exercise and after that, you will be assisted to complete a form, then your cocoa is weighed to ascertain the actual value. A 5% deduction is then made as your contribution any time you sell your cocoa", he said to the farmers.

Mr Osei-Akoto further noted that farmers will receive prompt alerts on their mobile devices to indicate that their accounts have been duly credited. The government will also instantly credit 1% of the value of the cocoa sold by a farmer to that farmer's account.

The Ghana Cocoa Board Law 1984 (PNDC Law 81) enjoins the Board of Directors of COCOBOD to implement a contributory insurance and welfare scheme that provides a decent pension for cocoa farmers.

Furtherance to this provision, in December 2020, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, launched the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme in Kumasi to demonstrate his

commitment to improving the welfare of cocoa farmers in the country.

At the launch, President Akufo-Addo tasked COCOBOD and the National Pensions Regulatory Authority to work out the modalities for the implementation of the scheme sooner than later.

Ahead of the rollout, COCOBOD introduced the Cocoa Management System (CMS) to create a database of all cocoa farmers in the country to facilitate the implementation of the scheme. For almost a year now, the Board has been building a strong and robust database on farmers across the country through the CMS.

Given the great strides chalked in some regions, including the Western South, Ashanti, Central and Brong Ahafo Regions, where the CMS registration exercise has been successfully carried out, the members of the Implementation Committee for the pension scheme are confident that the full rollout phase will go according to plan.

ASSESSMENT OF ONGOING PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES KICKS OFF IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN REGIONS



The Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Agronomy and Quality control at Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Dr. Emmanuel Agyeman Dwomoh, has embarked on a four-day monitoring exercise to the Central and Eastern Regions to assess progress of the Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs) of the Board during the 2021 Crop Season.

Interacting with COCOBOD officials in the Central Region Dr Agyeman Dwomoh explained that the purpose for the field visit to randomly selected farms in the Agona Nyakrom, Afumkwa, Apum, Breman Asikuma, Kade, and Twifo Praso cocoa growing districts was to match field evidence against progress report submitted by the Regional Offices to his outfit.

"Last year the Central Region for instance did very well in its production output, so I want to see whether the situation is the same on the ground this time round. The observations from the field visits will provide me with a fair idea of the cocoa production outlook this season to enable us brief management with respect to programme modifications in the current season", he noted.

In Central Region for instance, Dr. Dwomoh was briefed by officers of the Cocoa Health and Extension Division (CHED) on how far they had gone with influencing cocoa farmers to cede their diseased farms to be rehabilitated.

"As a result of resistance of some farmers to the rehabilitation drive, the district has only been able to cover just 4,000 hectares out of the 10,000 hectares yearly target set for the district.

However, with the alternative livelihood programme being propagated, interested farmers are agreeing to rehabilitate their farms and we're expected to hit our target", one officer in the Central Region indicated.

Dr Dwomoh observed the ravages of illegal mining (Galamsey) in the two regions especially in the Twifo Praso in the Central Region and Osino district in the Eastern Region, and assured that discussions with the Ministry of Lands and forestry were ongoing to find lasting solution to the menace. He also advised farmers to resist all forms of enticement aimed at luring them to release their farms to illegals miners.

Mr. Kojo Baah, a farmer who owns 1.2 hectares of cocoa farm from Apum in the Nyakrom district narrated how production has dropped compared to the previous record and attributed the development to poor rainfall pattern.

The Deputy Executive Director of CHED in charge of Productivity Enhancement Programmes (PEPs), Mr. Farouk Quansah Nyame, assured the farmers that COCOBOD was working ardously to identify suitable farms where irrigation networks could be setup to contain the impact of climate change on the crop.

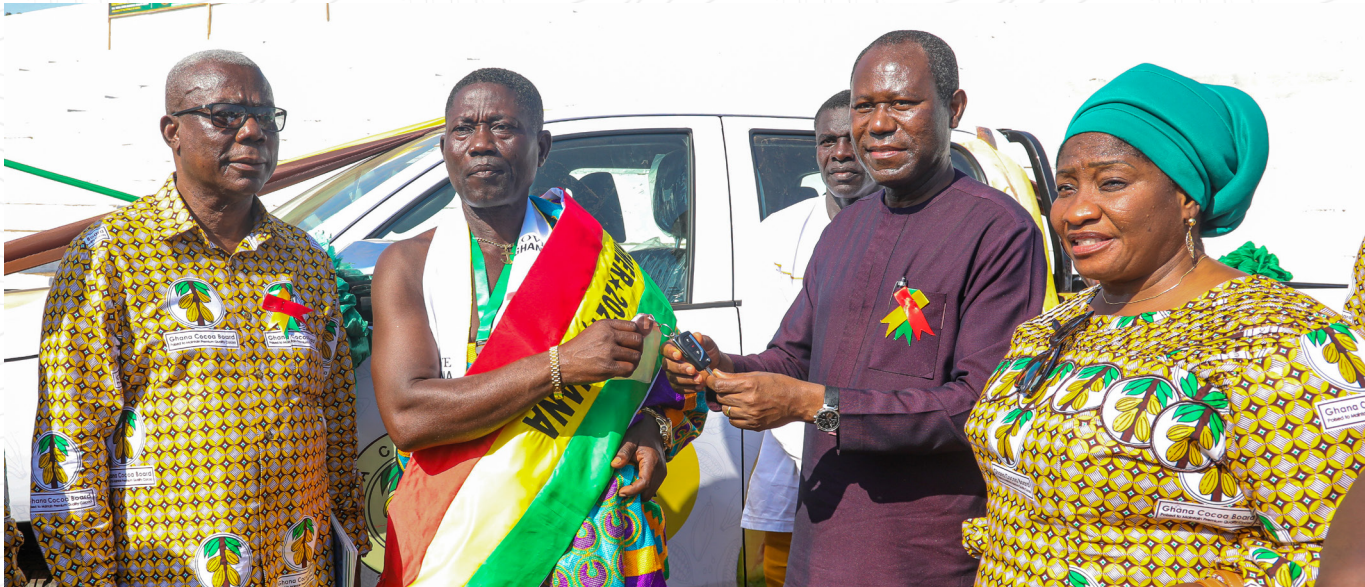
Mr. Farouk urged farmers to ensure that adequate shade trees are planted on their farms to help ameliorate the effect of climate change.

The Executive Director for CHED, Dr Nii Tackie-Otoo who coordinated the monitoring exercise, encouraged extension staff to strengthen their farmer-extension agent relationship in order to attract absentee, and reluctant farmers to return to take over their rehabilitated farms. He assured field agents of the Board's determination to support them with logistics to enable them perform better.

"1,500 motorcycles have been procured by the Board and would soon be distributed to extension agents before the end of the first quarter of 2022 to enable reach and widen their coverage with regard to their interaction with farmers", he assured.



NANA KWADWO AMOAKO ADJUDGED 2021 NATIONAL BEST COCOA FARMER



Nana Kwadwo Amoako has been adjudged the 2021 National Best Cocoa Farmer at the 37th edition of the National Farmers' Day celebration.

The 52 -year-old farmer from Manso Amenfi in the Western South Cocoa Region was presented with the prestigious award at the grand durbar of the annual event, which was held this year in Cape Coast, the Central Regional capital.

He has 6 cocoa farms which are 40 hectares in total; producing over 3020 kg/ha.

The Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, presented Nana Kwadwo Amoako with various items in recognition of his two decades plus contribution to Ghana's cocoa production and exceptional performance in the immediate past cocoa season.

His prizes included a Double Cabin Toyota Hilux Pick-up, a Dual-purpose Motorized Slasher/Pruner, a Motorized Spraying Machine, Protective Overalls, Safety Goggles, Respirators, Hats and Gloves.

In addition, he took home Wellington boots, cartons of Assorted Cocoa Products, litres of Sanitizer, Insecticides,

Fungicides, Carbolic Soaps and a Crystal Plaque.

Hon Aidoo also presented prizes to Adwoa Sintim (68), who has 25 hectares of cocoa farm at Koduakrom in the Sankore District of the Ahafo Cocoa Region and Kwame Alex (35), the owner of an 8.5-hectare cocoa farm at Bompieso in the Huni Valley District of the Western South Cocoa Region.

The two were adjudged the 2021 National Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer and National Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmer, respectively.

They were each presented with a Single Cabin Mini Truck, a Dual-purpose Motorized Slasher/Pruner, a Motorized Spraying Machine, Protective Overalls, Safety Goggles, Respirators, Hats and many other items.

In addition to these prizes, the 2021 National Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer also received a cash prize of two-hundred and fifty thousand Ghana cedis (GHC250,000.00) from the World Cocoa Foundation.

The 2021 National Best Shea Nut Picker, Mbaye Kayibee, from Bakpaba in the Nananumba North District of the Northern Region also received a

Tricycle, Protective Overalls, Safety Goggles, Boots, Respirators among other items.

Some, thirty-five (35) other award winners at the regional level, consisting of ten (10) Regional Best Cocoa Farmers, ten (10) Regional Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmers, ten (10) Regional Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmers, and five (5) Regional Best Shea Nut Pickers were as well presented with prizes.

Over one hundred and twenty (120) Best Cocoa Farmers and Shea Nut Pickers at the district level were also awarded.

COCOBOD also awarded prizes to the 28-year-old Collins Sarfo Adomako from Adansi Asokwa in the Ashanti Region, who was pronounced the National Best Coffee Farmer.

Since the inception of the Farmers' Day celebration in 1985, COCOBOD has rewarded cocoa and coffee farmers, as well as, shea nut pickers in different award categories at the national, regional and district levels for their distinguished contributions towards the sustenance of their various sectors and to spur on others to give off their best.



COCOBOD AND SWISS PLATFORM COLLABORATE ON COCOA SUSTAINABILITY

The Executive Director of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, Mr. Christian Robin has embarked on a working visit to Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) to interact with Management on how both entities can deepen partnerships to strengthen the existing relationship between the governments of the two countries regarding sustainable cocoa production.

At a short meeting with management of COCOBOD at Cocoa House in Accra, Mr. Robin disclosed that the visit was also to afford him the opportunity to discuss the 2030 New Road Map for the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa with management of COCOBOD and solicit support in that regard.

In response, the Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, commended the Swiss government for the continued relationship between the two countries in the areas of value addition, consumption as well as sustainability efforts.

Hon Aidoo added that COCOBOD, under his leadership is currently embarking on a number of projects with the Swiss Government and called on other interested agencies to partner them to improve the cocoa sector.

He further disclosed that COCOBOD among, other projects, has rolled out an integrated database infrastructure dubbed 'The Cocoa Management System' to capture all details of cocoa farmers including the location of their farms, children, farm size, as well as, physical conditions of farmers and said the system would invariably nib-in-the-bud, allegations of some negative practices associated with the implementation of Farmer-based programmes in cocoa communities.

'The Cocoa Management System will capture the data of cocoa farmers in the country and this will help to expose misconceptions along the cocoa value chain especially the allegation of child labour in Ghana, financing its implementation is quite a huge task and COCOBOD alone cannot bear the

cost,' he added.

Hon Aidoo further hinted that, Ghana is committed to maintaining itself as the best producer of premium quality cocoa and ensure that cocoa cultivation is devoid of deforestation and child labour.

In this regard, he disclosed that farmers are encouraged to practise inter-cropping farming system where other food crops and permanent shade trees are planted to provide shade to the cocoa trees and to protect the ecosystem.

He added that providing remunerative price for cocoa farmers is key in sustaining the sector and improving the livelihoods of cocoa farmers. He called on the Executive Director and other agencies to give their full support towards the smooth implementation of the Living Income Differential (LID) to provide a decent income for farmers and cushion them in the event of price volatility.



EU, NETHERLANDS AMBASSADORS PAY COURTESY CALL ON COCOBOD MANAGEMENT

Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has reiterated the industry regulator's resolve to ensure sustainable cocoa production in Ghana.

He said COCOBOD would continue its engagements with the European Union (EU) to reach a holistic and realistic approach to achieving this goal.

Hon Aidoo made these assertions when the new European Union (EU) Ambassador to Ghana, Mr Irchad Razaaly, and the Netherlands Ambassador to Ghana, Mr Jeroen Verheul, paid a courtesy call on the Management of COCOBOD.

According to Hon Aidoo, though the dialogue between COCOBOD and the EU had been insightful, the two parties still had some work to do together to reach a common understanding on some of the issues and practices within Ghana's cocoa sector, including agreement on feasible steps which can be taken to

improve sustainability.

'We want to be transparent and accountable as much as possible to our stakeholders so that Ghana can continue to supply the world with premium cocoa that is not associated with negativities', he said.

Hon Aidoo disclosed that COCOBOD had introduced various programmes and interventions to mechanise farming practices and help farmers improve productivity on their farms using a vertical farming approach and agroforestry. This, he said, was in addition to raising farmers' incomes through the US\$400.00 per tonne Living Income Differential (LID) pricing mechanism.

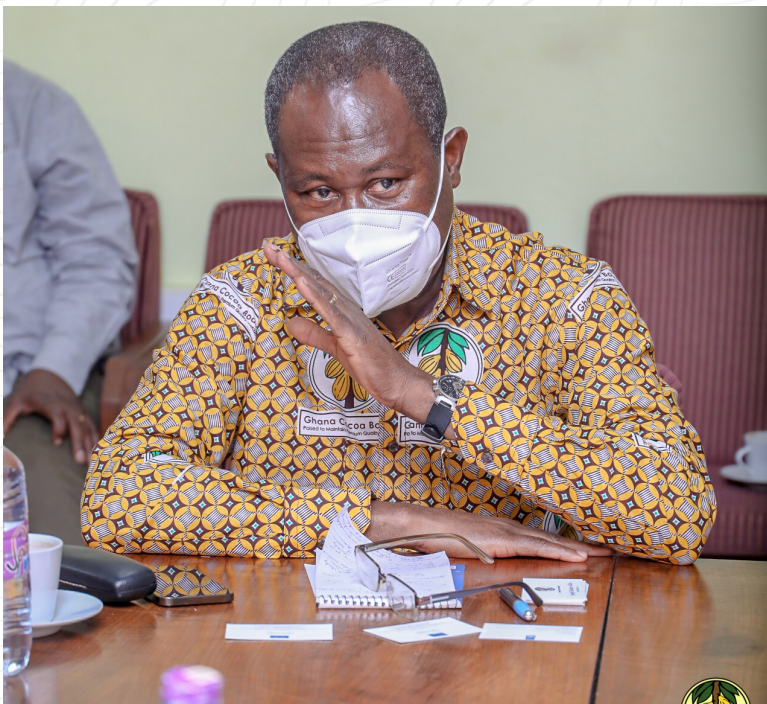
On his part, the new EU Ambassador to Ghana, Mr Razaaly, said the EU was also keen on deepening its relations with Ghana in addressing issues of common interest to both parties. He indicated that the upcoming EU regulations are in response to growing European

consumer concerns about the sources of their food.

He said the EU as such does not want to import food and other item associated with 'negative effects', hence, it would continue to engage with COCOBOD to find ways to address issues of common interest to Ghanaian and the European markets.

Adding to that, the Netherlands Ambassador to Ghana, Mr Verheul, said his country would remain an important cocoa trading partner to Ghana and play its key role in feeding the European market.

He said, as part of plans to redefine its relationship with Ghana 'from Aid to Trade', the Netherlands was much interested in greater cooperation between the two countries to improve the cocoa sector. The Netherlands, he added, could provide assistance through technology and investment as Ghana seeks to localize cocoa value addition.



NEW VICE PREZ OF BARRY CALLEBAUT IN CHARGE OF COCOA AFRICA CALLS ON CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The New Vice President of Barry Callebaut in charge of Cocoa in Africa, Mr Bertrand Remy has called on the Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo to officially introduce himself upon assumption of duty.

At a short meeting at the Cocoa House, Accra, to officially welcome him (Mr Remy) to the Ghanaian cocoa sector, Hon. Aidoo commended Barry Callebaut for the unrelenting support and partnership in sustaining the cocoa sector, as well as, improving the livelihoods of farmers.

He used the opportunity to further request for partnership in the form of sponsorship to help finance the implementation of various flagship programmes rolled out by COCOBOD to sustain the sector.

Hon. Aidoo disclosed that COCOBOD

has rolled out the Cocoa Management System (CMS) to capture comprehensive data on cocoa farmers. The data would include geographic location of the farm and household details of the farmer.

The data would also improve transparency and help correct misconceptions about the Ghana cocoa industry.

Hon Aidoo hinted further that, in order to sustain the cocoa production record of 1,040,000 million metric tonnes and its premium quality, cocoa farmers are encouraged to adopt the vertical cocoa cultivation system where a piece of land could be used to cultivate more cocoa for optimal yield to feed the world market while maintaining its premium quality.

He requested for support from Barry Callebaut in terms of sponsorship to



implement this new policy.

‘The cost implication in achieving this dream is quite enormous and I urge your outfit to support us in this endeavour’, he said.

On his part, Mr. Bertrand Remy commended COCOBOD for the introduction of good policies and programmes at ensuring the sustainability of the cocoa sector and pledged his outfit’s support to partner COCOBOD to further sustain the sector.





OACPS OFFICIALS VISIT COCOBOD TO DISCUSS COCOA SUSTAINABILITY

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) have held talks on sustainability and growth of the cocoa industry in Ghana and other OACPS member states.

The Assistant Secretary-General of OACPS, Mr. Oliveira Gomez, who led a delegation to visit the Cocoa House in Accra said, the visit was to apprise themselves with new developments in Ghana's cocoa industry.

The organization, he added, also wants to offer its resources to Ghana to address challenges in the international cocoa trade environment and support sustainability actions.

He stated that, he would also like to see Ghana leverage its leading position among cocoa producers to rally other cocoa-producing OACPS member countries into a common front to better influence the international cocoa trade and guarantee market access to consuming countries.

The Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations, Dr. Emmanuel Opoku, in his response said COCOBOD has always advanced sustainability and environmentally friendly practices on cocoa farms.

He pointed out that, besides the practice of agroforestry within the cocoa sector, various programmes have also been rolled out over the years to mechanise aspects of farming practices; help farmers improve productivity on their farms and raise their incomes, among others.

Dr. Opoku stated that another important programme presently ongoing is the Cocoa Management Scheme (CMS). The scheme involves the collection of cocoa farmers' data into a database to enable better traceability and efficient tracking of transactions within the industry.

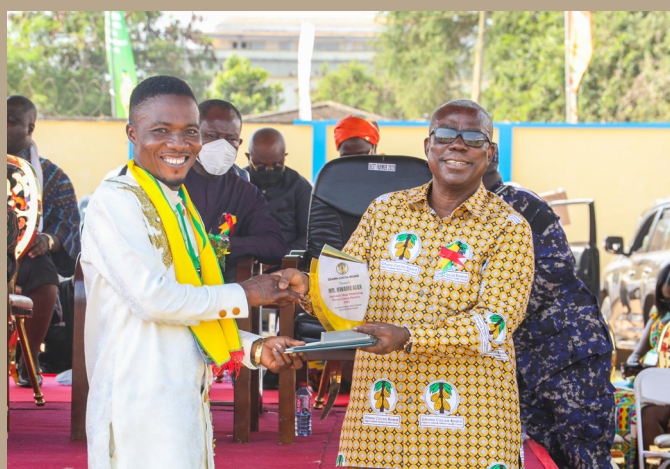
The goal is to have a comprehensive database early next year where digital tracking can be made from communities to farms and for all cocoa

transactions, he emphasized.

COCOBOD's Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Finance and Administration, Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah, who was also at the meeting, acknowledged that OACPS has good working relations with the European Commission and the European Parliament, and given Europe's position as a major cocoa consuming country, OACPS can provide some insights to further improve Ghana's trade relations.

He added that COCOBOD is open to further dialogue with OACPS and engagements with other member countries to offer its expertise when given the opportunity.

37th NATIONAL FARMERS' DAY IN PICTURES - CAPE COAST



37th NATIONAL FARMERS' DAY - COCOA HOUSE



COCOBOD HOLDS WORKSHOP ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) has organized a two-day workshop on organizational culture and business sustainability for its senior management.

The workshop was held to evaluate the ethos of the organization, inter and intra-departmental relations, corporate governance, and sustainable business practices, among others.

COCOBOD's Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations, Dr. Emmanuel Opoku, said in his opening statement that COCOBOD is on a path to reform its corporate culture and redefine its core values to keep pace with the demands of the current business environment.

He said that the dynamics of the international cocoa trade continue to change in ways that warrant modifications to COCOBOD's internal processes in response to those changes.

In addition, the cocoa industry also faces huge challenges from both internal and external sources, and COCOBOD, as a leader and regulator, is most impacted by

these challenges, he noted.

Managers of the industry, he advised, therefore, must be well prepared and willing to work together to manage or resolve challenges with precision when they arise.

'The only way we can do that is to practice the right culture and provide an environment where every staff member will fit in and be motivated to work and deliver', he asserted.

He said the workshop is, as such, a critical first step that will strengthen the knowledge of management and equip them to lead the drive towards improving the operations of the organization and creating a better working environment for all.

The Director of Human Resources at COCOBOD, Mr Randolph John Adei, said the workshop also aims to remind senior managers of principles and tools of management and engender the sharing of ideas to create a progressive corporate culture.

'Culture plays a very important role in any organization. So, at certain times, we have to wait, look at whatever we have, take out the things that we think are outmoded and introduce values that are very progressive because society is dynamic and when things change, we have to also change in order to keep pace with time,' he stated.

Dr. Edward Kwapong, the Chief Executive Officer of HR Perspective Limited and facilitator of the workshop said, 'Without an effective and healthy organizational culture a business cannot succeed'.

He said as part of the programme, the senior managers will review the core values of COCOBOD, which will in turn aid in fashioning a new organizational culture.

He urged management to form a committee to design a plan to make the revised core values and reformed organizational culture pervasive within the organization and guide its relations with partners and stakeholders

MR. SAMUEL OTOO RETIRES FROM ACTIVE SERVICE



Mr. Samuel Otoo, an Assistant Procurement Officer with the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) at Tema has retired after years of dedicated service to the cocoa industry.

Mr. Otoo joined COCOBOD as a contract staff in 1988 as a labourer and worked for 16 years at the procurement department of the Board at Tema. During his contract

period, Mr. Otoo was devoted to his work and performed every assigned task with great zeal.

By dint of hard work, dedication and good relationship with his superiors, Mr. Otoo's dream of becoming a permanent staff materialized in 2004 and was subsequently elevated to a clerk in the same year. As a Clerk, Mr. Otoo worked at Tema where he coordinated and supervised all COCOBOD properties, chemicals, jute sacks among other tasks. In 2019, Mr. Otoo was promoted to an Assistant Procurement Officer where he continued to work assiduously to the admiration of many of his colleagues most of whom described him as workaholic and a reliable staff.

A ceremony to officially end his working life with COCOBOD was held on 5th November 2021 during which various citations were read to eulogize his humility, dedication and positive relationship with staff.



LET'S DIALOGUE TO RESOLVE ISSUES - DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE F&A



The Deputy Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) in Charge of Finance and Administration, Mr. Emmanuel Ray Ankrah, has implored organized labour to endeavour to engage with employers through dialogue to address pertinent issues that affect workers' condition of service.

Mr. Ankrah gave the advice during the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected COCOBOD Local Union Executives of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) at Cocoa House in Accra.

Mr. Ankrah lauded the conduit role of the Union in assisting the Board to bring the grievances of staff to the attention of Management and urged them not to renege on that function.

He further indicated that when the relationship between Management and Staff is positive, it has rippling effects on major outcomes along the cocoa value chain and advised the

executives to stimulate continued positive engagements with staff during their tenure of office to enable them discharge their duties effectively.

'Management will do their best in responding to staff welfare but then let your people also show commitment, dedication and devotion and rally behind management's vision of sustaining the cocoa industry', he emphasized.

The General Secretary of ICU, Mr. Morgan Ayawine used the opportunity to encourage the new executives to carry out their responsibilities with fairness and respect for Management and staff.

'ICU is about peace and dialogue, not violent nor riots, so make sure in expressing your grievances to management, the appropriate channel

is used", he cautioned.

The Chairman of the Union, Bro. Eric Turkson assured of his team's determination to work closely with Management to effectively execute and resolve all issues relating to the welfare of staff of the Board. According to him, dialogue is the best approach to press home a request and assured that his administration would use dialogue effectively.

The other members of the Union are Sis. Jemima Ankomah, (Vice Chair); Sis. Saratu Mohammed (Secretary); Bro. Daniel Samari, (Assist. Secretary); Bro. Richard Nana Ampofo Kumah (1st Trustee); Bro. Terry N. Joy Nelson (2nd Trustee); Sis. Gertrude Koranteng (Executive Member); Sis. Abigail Doe Mankralo (Women Representative) and Bro. Dennis Sarpong (Youth Representative).



COCOBOD, POLICE SERVICE TO IMPROVE SECURITY IN COCOA INDUSTRY

Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Ghana Police Service have begun discussions which will enable the two agencies adopt pragmatic measures to strengthen security in the cocoa-growing regions. The move is aimed at ensuring safety on all levels of the cocoa value chain.

The initial meeting which was held at the Headquarters of the Ghana Police Service in Accra, at the invitation of the Acting Inspector-General of Police, Dr. George Akuffo Dampare, was also attended by various heads of department of the Ghana Police Service and representatives of the Licensed Cocoa Buyers Association of Ghana (LICOBAG).

Briefing the media after the meeting, the Senior Public Affairs Manager at COCOBOD, Mr. Stephen Bofo, said the issues that were discussed included a stock-taking of recent and persistent security-related incidents in the cocoa sector, adding that these issues were critical to the sustenance of Ghana's cocoa industry.

'The meeting had the opportunity

to look at crimes that are being committed within the value chain; robberies, specifically, hijacking of cars or vehicles that transport cocoa beans along our roads, forcibly taking monies that are meant for the purchases of cocoa beans, and also monies that are paid to cocoa farmers," he emphasised.

Mr Bofo said the Inspector-General of Police had given assurances of the readiness and willingness of the police force to offer all the necessary and exhaustive support that will ensure that the problems are curtailed.

'The necessary advice and interventions are being put in place to ensure that these problems do not reoccur going forward", he added.

Mr. Bofo affirmed management's commitment to continuous dialogue and collaboration with the Police Service.

The Acting Director-General of the Public Affairs Department of the Ghana Police Service, ACP Kwesi Ofori said the police administration had resolved to 'make things better" in the 2021/2022



Cocoa Season and beyond.

The Police, he said, would put in place a holistic security strategy with a grand security operation coordinated from the national police headquarters, with the involvement of Regional Commanders in cocoa-growing regions and District Commanders at the tactical level.

ACP Ofori cautioned armed robbers and other criminals to desist from their criminal acts or face the consequences.

A 5-week orientation programme for security personnel for the Special Services Department has started with the first 40 batch on 1st December, 2021 at the Bunso Cocoa College in the Eastern Region.

The workshop is aimed at deepening their understanding of the operations of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) for effective and efficient discharge of their core duties.

The participants, numbering about 220, comprise newly recruited as well as upgraded security officers, intelligence officers, assistant security officers, security assistants, principal and senior security guards and security guards who will be deployed to various regions to protect the sector's activities from miscreants and opportunistic tendencies.

Opening the session, the Director of Human Resource, Mr. Randolph Adei reminded the participants of their critical role in providing relevant intelligence to ensure the safety of lives and property and implored them to take the training seriously.

'Training is very important in every organization and to you members of the special services especially, it is important you become accustomed to the system, know the culture of the organization and protect it to enhance the image of Ghana Cocoa Board', he indicated.

Mr. Adei used the opportunity to thoroughly explain several important

human resource issues including the organogram, rules and regulations, confidentiality, corporate ethics as well as staff condition of service and advised them to carefully acquaint themselves with such matters to guide their professional conducts.

explained

He warned them against compromising the ethics of their profession, adding that sanctions would be applied on members found to have condoned and connived with criminals to steal items belonging to COCOBOD.

NEWLY RECRUITED STAFF FOR THE SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TRAINED AT BUNSO

Speaking on the highlights of the training programme, Director of Special Services, Mr. Charles Ameyaglo, said participants would have the opportunity to learn the 'Psychology of COCOBOD for an appreciation of the enormous demand and expectations from them'.

Mr. Ameyaglo further mentioned areas such as Principles of Security, Intelligence Gathering, Report Writing, Risk & Disaster Management, Fire Safety as well as a presentation on the general overview of the cocoa sector as some major areas the participants will be taken through to enable them work perfectly.

'What we will be doing over the next 5 weeks with you and your colleagues will be to take you through major issues that are of prime concern to security, intelligence, fire and general safety of staff and logistics of the Board,' he

The Deputy Director of Research, Mr. Ekow Amoah painstakingly explained the history of cocoa production in the country, touching on areas like production levels, cocoa pricing, major policies of COCOBOD, functions of Subsidiaries and Divisions and finally delving into various productivity initiatives rolled out over the past 5 years which have constituted the 'magic wands' for the attainment of the 1,047,000mt of cocoa for the 2020/21 crop year.

During the interactive sessions, Mr. Amoah addressed pertinent issues with regard to farmer incomes sustainability, processes for making complaints and arrest of crime perpetrators, protection of cocoa farms (to prevent loss of investment), value addition drive, weighing scale manipulation, galamsey etc raised by the participants.



A RE-LOOK AT HOME GARDENING: AN ALTERNATIVE WAY TO ENSURING FOOD SECURITY IN GHANA

By Josephine Dake-Abrahams, Public Affairs

Growing up as children, most of our parents had home (backyard) gardens and would usually take us there to weed and prune amongst other farm practices. Mum would usually send us to get her 'Nkontomire' from the garden. Our elder brothers would also be asked to get some cassava or harvest plantain for 'fufu' or 'ampesi'. Food was always natural and fresh.

For some, going to the farm was fun but for others, going to the farm to apply cow dung and other natural fertilizers was not interesting. Through all these, we learnt firsthand what farming was and how to feed ourselves even if we had no money.

The family time once enjoyed by families in their backyard gardens and major farms, the laughter, the chit chats, the little quarrels by siblings on segregation of duties, cooking on the farm and the family lunch times amongst others are gradually fading out because of modernization.

In recent times, back yard gardening is virtually not visible in most homes because they have been turned into modern backyard patios and other contemporary outdoor designs. For us as Africans, farming is extremely important because apart from its economic benefits, it also bonds the family together and offers the platform for parents to teach their young ones the needed virtues and life nuggets they will need for the future.

Globally, home gardening has

been documented as an important supplemental source contributing to food and nutritional security and livelihoods. In fact home gardening (food production on small plots adjacent to human settlements) is the oldest and most enduring form of cultivation.

Global population is expected to reach over 9 billion by 2050. This makes it imperative for us to continue with diverse efforts that will help increase food production and buffer stocks. For those of us in developing countries where the omnipresence of hunger and food scarcity is more acute, we have no other option than to resort to various counter strategies to meet the growing demand and to avert food insecurity and famine.

It is for this reason that conscious efforts must be made to draw national attention towards home gardens as a strategy to enhance household food security and nutrition. Home gardens are an integral part of local food systems and the agricultural landscape of developing countries all over the world and have endured the test of time.

But how can we change the narrative of farming, seen as an occupation for the old, illiterate and poor?

Perhaps we could engage the youth in a participatory venture to encourage and enlighten them on the prospects, opportunities and benefits of home gardening in particular and farming

as a whole. All we need do is to start with a handful of youth on a consistent and persistent training program and in few years, the order will change for the better.

There could be competition to see whose garden is doing well and providing food for the family. This could be a challenge for the entire citizenry with government instituting policies that will encourage backyard gardening. Scholarships could be instituted for the best backyard gardener's child in a constituency. The ripple effect of this is that food will be cheaper and more affordable, Ghana will no longer be heavily dependent on some food imports and the country will experience astronomical economic growth, amongst other important benefits.

When the child develops an interest in backyard farming, it will definitely be easy to get him into that profession as a professional farmer.

The future is dependent on us to plant and feed ourselves.

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OTUMFOUR COMMENDS MANAGEMENT OF COCOBOD FOR THE INCREASE IN PRODUCTION



His Majesty Otumfour Osei Tutu II, the Asantihene has commended Management of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) for the massive increase in production for the 2020/2021 crop year during a courtesy call by management at the Manhyira Palace, Kumasi.

According to him, this success chalked in the 2020/2021 crop year can be attributed to the brilliant introduction of the Productivity Enhancement Programme (PEPs) and the hard work of management and stakeholders along the cocoa value chain.

‘The current production represents your hard work, especially the introduction of the hand pollination exercise, when we hear this good news on our radios and televisions, we know the lives of our precious cocoa farmers will be improved’, he said.

Also, ‘I was very happy when I heard

the introduction of the Cocoa Farmers Pension scheme and the Living Income Differential (LID)”, he added.

His Majesty Otumfour Osei Tutu II further encouraged management to put up structures and implement good policies within the cocoa value chain that will improve the lives of cocoa farmers in the country.

‘The construction of cocoa roads should be handed over to the Ministry of Roads and Highways and supported with the necessary funds because COCOBOD, you don’t construct roads in Ghana”, he advised.

The Board Chairman of COCOBOD Mr Peter Mac-Manu and his team also expressed their gratitude for the good comments and stated that, Management would take action accordingly and work on every loophole highlighted by His Majesty.

STAFF DURBAR

Management also used the opportunity to address staff of the Quality Control Company (QCC) and Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) at Kaase to introduce the new Board of Directors.

The chairman, Mr Mac-Manu in his address, urged staff to support them in other to deliver effectively to sustain the current successes of the Board.

‘My team just came into office and as usual we need your maximum corporation to be able to deliver effectively’, he said

According to him, everyone within the cocoa value chain is of great importance and will pay key attention to that during his term of office.

Touching on some welfare issues, Mr. Mac-Manu indicated that, the successes attained in the 2020/2021 show the hard work of each and every staff including farmers and cocoa carriers, and assured of appropriate reward.

‘I know every member of the Organizations played a key role in the current production feat - from farmers, to staff and to cocoa carriers- and will be awarded accordingly in due time’, he emphasized.

The Board of Directors were accompanied by some Directors and Managers from the Subsidiaries and Division of the Board.





STAKEHOLDER INPUT IS NECESSARY FOR DECISION MAKING - COCOBOD BOARD CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Mr Peter Mac Manu, says the Board is keen to deepen stakeholder engagement in the industry to improve decision making.

He noted that forging closer relationships between staff, management and other industry stakeholders will enhance the sharing of ideas to reach the best solutions to challenges faced by Ghana's cocoa sector.

Mr Mac Manu said this when addressing the staff of COCOBOD at a durbar in Tema. It was the third in a series of such events held by the Board of Directors to officially introduce themselves and interact with staff. The first and second occasions were held in Kumasi and Takoradi, respectively.

He credited the attainment of the record high cocoa production volume in the immediate past season to the staff's devotion to the cocoa industry.

'I would like to extend warm gratitude to all of you for your continued dedication to the service of the cocoa industry, amidst the current global setbacks which have affected the cocoa industry severely.'

'Let me use this opportunity to assure you that we will continue from



where the previous Board left off, by instituting and implementing good policies and programmes to improve the fortunes of the cocoa industry and by extension, the welfare of staff."

Key among these policies, he said, is one aimed at stimulating the local consumption of cocoa products. Increasing local processing and consumption, he added, is the right step for raising the economic value of the cocoa industry.

He tasked the staff to become ambassadors of cocoa consumption, 'so that collectively, we can turn Ghana into a cocoa consumption country'.

The Chief Executive of COCOBOD, Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo, who also addressed the gathering said, the

Tema based staff play a critical role in ensuring the safety and premium quality standards of Ghana's cocoa.

'You, in particular, have continued to make us proud because Ghana is known worldwide for our premium cocoa; and premium cocoa means the quality of our cocoa. But for this place, there couldn't have been any way of measuring the quality of cocoa in Ghana, which has now become the yardstick for measuring the quality of cocoa across the whole world.

He acknowledged that increasing production volumes have implications on quality. He, therefore, urged the staff to be more attentive, put in more effort and strictly abide by the quality control protocols to ensure the premium quality is always assured.

S.E.L.F. CARE IS PRICELESS!

The past few years has seen STRESS take centre stage in many places and it comes as no surprise that it has been labelled 'the health epidemic of the 21st century.' Then the COVID-19 pandemic moved stress and mental health in general to another level never experienced in modern times. I dare say that never in the history of the world have so many people experienced similar feelings at the same time. What about the World Wars?

It is heart-warming that one will most likely be applauded when they state clearly how they feel and put their mental health above all others. Well, only a few people will still judge people who see the need to make self-care a priority.

Many people have proposed practical ways to manage stress but when all is said and done we have to change our mindset and realize none of us is immune to stress. We can't even achieve our lofty goals without some element of stress. As Hall and Sanders put it 'the biggest misconception about stress is that we have to beat it; when we make stress the enemy we actually create more stress for ourselves. While stress may arise from unregulated negative emotions, intentionally activating positive heart emotions such as care, appreciation, compassion and ease, decrease your stress by creating harmony. POSITIVE THINKING isn't enough here. It must be positive feelings from the heart to affect your body and brain. It all comes down to learning how to react positively from a mental and emotional standpoint to negative stressors in our lives.' Oh and I know that is no walk in the park but the benefits outweigh the downsides so let us start now.

If you are like the majority of people it may be time to set realistic expectations; continuously seeking bigger and better things in every aspect of our lives may be self-destructive as we may be setting ourselves up for

failure. I just read your thoughts; there is a fine line between continuous self-improvement and setting unrealistic goals.

Hall's acronym 'S.E.L.F. care' is extremely helpful and easy to remember as well as follow. Give it a try now and incorporate it into your activities of daily living.

'S' STANDS FOR SERENITY, 'E' FOR EXERCISE, 'L' FOR LOVE AND 'F' FOR FOOD!!

▪ Serenity

Five minutes of 'Me-Time' does a world of good to us. It reboots our mind and body and we should incorporate time in our schedule no matter how busy or 'stressed' we may think we are. It could just be sitting briefly to meditate or pray. Spending time to do deep belly-breathing, progressively relaxing our muscles, listening to music or even taking a long relaxing bath if you are lucky to have water. Well it may also be time to count your blessings.

▪ Exercise

Physical activity does amazing things to our physical and mental health and we should not short-change ourselves on this. You do not need to exercise for hours to reap these benefits; Just Do It even if it means walking for 5 minutes a day and gradually adding on to it BUT do remember SITTING for long hours is probably one of the worst things you could do to yourself.

▪ Love

When Jesus asked us to love one another He was setting us up to live a rounded, robust life. "Isolation they say kills, and community heals" and it is not surprising that having strong social ties is a major factor in longevity. The pandemic has definitely taught us that as humans we are all social animals.

We can surround ourselves with a core group of caring family or friends. Some people also believe in the power of pets

and yes there is evidence to support the benefits as well.

▪ Food

Healthy food has a way of lifting our mood but there is the risk of unhealthy snacking as well. Avoid drowning your 'sorrow' in alcohol and do not overdo caffeinated beverages.

Adding anti-oxidants like cocoa to your food is PRICELESS!

As much as possible make healthy food choices and your mood and mental health will thank you.

No one has all the answers to managing stress but I trust you will benefit from some of these. Make the choice that puts your S.E.L.F. first.

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

Health Essentials Ltd/ St Andrews Clinic/Mobissel

Dr. Essel is a medical doctor, holds an MBA and is ISSA certified in exercise therapy, fitness nutrition and corrective exercise.

Thought for the week – 'STIGMATIZATION' has no place in fighting this pandemic. It will cause people to hide and not disclose their status, seek medical care late and reduce all the benefits of protocols.

We should all be comfortable enough to tell our close contacts when we test positive for COVID-19 so that the proper measures are taken. This is extremely important if we have to win this fight." - Dr. Kojo Cobba Essel
References:

1. Special TIME edition on STRESS; 'Expert-Backed Ways to Deal' by Audrey Noble



BE BOLD TO REPORT FRAUDULENT PRACTICES - COCOBOD CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS TOLD

Dr. Kofi Koduah Sarpong, an astute business executive with an impeccable track record of managing top state institutions in Ghana, has charged chartered accountants in the country to uphold the virtues of integrity, and boldness and report instances of fraud in the practice of their trade, to ensure respect for the accounting profession.

Dr Sarpong, in an interaction with chartered accountants of Ghana Cocoa Board and its subsidiaries at the Accra City Hotel, said the cardinal goal of businesses is its survival which is a necessity in a complex and competitive environment.

'Whichever way we see businesses, the cardinal goal is to ensure the survival of the business. As accountants, you have a vital role to play in ensuring the sustainability of the business. The survival of every business should be the core responsibility of every finance person', he said.

Touching on some values needed to preserve the sanity of the accounting profession, Dr. Sarpong highlighted the need for accountants to be honest and defend standards which are central to the reputation of the profession. 'Without integrity, there is no way any business can survive', he emphasized.

He also brought to the fore, the importance of safeguarding hard work and commitment as a pre-requisite for ensuring business continuity.

Hammering on the essence of making timely account reconciliation



to eliminate chances of financial malpractices, Dr. Sarpong charged participants to be faithful in reporting through the provision of timely bank reconciliation statements and report any malpractices observed.

'When you do reconciliations timeously, the chances of identifying loop holes are high, thus enabling you to check out any possibility of financial misapplication, he indicated.



He advised them not to hesitate to expose any instances of misapplication, to nip in the bud, their widespread.

He also encouraged the participants to understand the core operations and human relation function of their organization to be able to improve on existing systems, as the role of each individual is crucial in the survival and success of the organization.

The Deputy Chief Executive for Finance and Administration, Mr Emmanuel Ray Ankrah said the forum was necessary for the participants, as pearls of wisdom from the resource person would add value to their knowledge and experiences to improve on service delivery.

'I want to see a transformed finance function at COCOBOD after these interactions, so that accountants of COCOBOD will be the benchmark for reference with respect to sound financial management in Ghana', he concluded.

EXECUTIVES OF COCOSHE INTERACT WITH MANAGEMENT OF COCOA PROCESSING COMPANY



The leadership of the Ghana Cocoa Coffee and Shea nut Farmers Association (COCOSHE) has paid a working visit to the Management of the Cocoa Processing Company Ltd (CPC) at Tema.

According to the National President of COCOSHE, Alhaji Alhassan Bukari, the visit was aimed at interacting with officials of the facility to apprise themselves with their operations and also offer some suggestions to help management in its quest to transform the company.

Alhaji Bukari extolled CPC Management for the various aggressive steps taken in recent times to put the facility in good shape and called for more collaboration between processors and producers of the crop.

Briefing the 17-member delegation on the operations of the company, the Managing Director of CPC, Nana Dr. Agyenim Boateng I lauded cocoa farmers in the country for their continuous supply of premium quality cocoa beans to support their operations. He used the opportunity to appeal to farmers to protect every single cocoa tree by resisting any form of enticement

to release their farms for illegal mining. He spoke extensively about the origin of cocoa, economic benefits of cocoa, and health advantages of consuming cocoa.

Nana Agyenim Boateng I also touched on various innovations his outfit had recently added to the company's product lines and mentioned particularly, some new brands of chocolates which have been named after major cocoa growing communities in the country as a way of motivating farmers to continue growing the crop.

He hinted again of plans to engage experts to convert cocoa husks to generate electricity to reduce the facility's over reliance on national electricity grid.

According to him, aside the importance of the initiative on the operations of CPC, jobs will be created for the teeming youth in cocoa communities and called on farmers to give their maximum cooperation as the company gears up for more innovations.

He further called on Ghanaians to use cocoa butter produced by his outfit as best alternative for cooking, frying and other cosmetic purposes, adding that the advantages of using cocoa butter far outweigh other oils and pomade frequently used especially during Christmas and the harmattan seasons.

The farmers were later taken on a factory tour to enable them fully appreciate the cocoa value addition processes at CPC.

The cocoa farmers called on CPC to ensure that their products are available at the cocoa-growing areas to enable them obtain them with ease and also benefit from cocoa's numerous health benefits.

The farmers also wanted COCOBOD to intervene pragmatically to save the cocoa industry from the ravaging effects of 'galamsey' giving the enormous benefits the country derives from cocoa annually.



28 YEARS OF CELEBRATING OUR GALLANT COCOA FARMERS

The Award; the Support; our Premium Cocoa

By David Asare Oduro, Public Affairs

Background

Cocoa, a single crop has over the past 140 years made Ghana the envy of the world due to the country's niche position of producing premium quality produce to feed the world's pharmaceutical and confectionery markets. Brought to Ghana by the iconic Ghanaian Blacksmith - Tetteh Quarshie, who returned from the Fernando Po in 1879, cocoa has remained the country's major leading export commodity, generating over \$2 billion USD in foreign exchange annually, accounting for between 20-24% of the country's earnings and contributing between 4-6% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually.

Indeed, every aspect of our economy (roads, energy, education, health etc) is affected in one way or the other by revenue generated from cocoa. The indispensable role cocoa plays in the economy unarguably is the motivation for the continued attention from successive governments to the sector through implementation of various innovative and pragmatic policies and programmes, usually spearheaded by Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) with support from stakeholders within the value chain.

Behind the strong support derived from cocoa by the country are thousands of illustrious small-holder cocoa farmers who grow the crop across the country's seven cocoa-growing regions (Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, Central, Eastern, Volta, Western South and North Regions). The toils and commitment of these hardworking farmers have ensured uninterrupted supply of good quality cocoa beans which are in high demand by major global confectionery and pharmaceutical buyers for the production of the finest and healthiest chocolates and related products.

Undoubtedly, unlike other farmers, cocoa farmers in Ghana seem to have enjoyed enormous 'pampering' from

government and COCOBOD through the provision of various free services which include hybrid seedlings, extension advice, agro-inputs, technologies and other essential services to incentivise them to give off their best and improve their yields and incomes. Probably, this is what has kept many of them in the over 140-year-old profession regardless of complaints of low income levels.

Over the years, government has constantly strived to motivate cocoa farmers to continue to grow the crop and improve yields to guarantee the needed foreign revenue which comes in to support the development agenda of government in the country.

The National Cocoa Farmers Award

One of such incentives which has withstood the test of time and experienced several metamorphosis in form and shape is the institution of the National Best Cocoa Farmers Award.

The late President Flt. Lit. Jerry John Rawlings is accredited with the vision of introducing Cocoa Farmers Award Scheme in 1993 as his government's appreciation and recognition of the invaluable and tireless efforts of Ghanaian cocoa farmers towards the development of Agriculture in the country.

Within, the first ten years after the inception of the award scheme, nine distinguished farmers were successively recognized between 1993-2003 through a selection team made up of officials from COCOBOD and the Ministry of Food & Agriculture who visited nominated farmers, observed farms characteristics and picked up useful data for subsequent decision on who becomes the best farmer in a particular year.

The Memories

Recounting memories, the only surviving farmer among the first ten (who happens to be the first to pick up the award but

currently in a critical health state as at the time of writing this story) is the 1993 best cocoa farmer, Opayin Samuel Obese of Kumkumso near Doowakrom in the Sankore Cocoa District. Nana Obese tells us fond memories of the day he was nominated for the maiden edition of the award. He mentioned a certificate, 3 pieces of clothes, 'Akasanomaa' radio set, 3 machetes, 1 knapsack, a pair of wellington boots, a gallon of DDT and an exclusive photograph with former President Rawlings as his award package for being adjudged the National Best Cocoa Farmer in that year. According to him, the package was maintained for several years with almost all the awardees in the 1990s receiving the same package.

Responding to a question on how he felt and still feels about the award, Opayin Obese said, 'At that time, nationalism was high among Ghanaians so we saw the award as a state recognition and source of pride...taking a photograph with Rawlings was a rare opportunity.

But sometimes I feel something did not go right if I look at what cocoa farmers take as their award today – the car and other items, yes, I feel that we did not get anything'.

He further said he would be grateful if COCOBOD could assist him with something small while he is alive before he dies.

The Award Enhanced in 2003 by Former President J. A. Kufuor

In 2003, the late Maame Abena Maabour from Sankore Abuom in the Brong Ahafo Region became the first female National Best Cocoa Farmer. The son of Maabour in an interview narrated an incident at former President Agyekum Kufuor's house when he (Kuffour) invited Maabour's family to a treat after the award ceremony. According to him, during the interactions, after his late mother disclosed the list of

items received (as listed above) to the former head of state, he was shocked and subsequently directed an enhanced package for such a distinguished female cocoa farmer.

This set the pace for journey of transformation in the award package resulting in the inclusion of two major items. They were: a pick-up vehicle and a cheque of Ghc5,000 (formerly Ghc50,000) for fuel and maintenance for a year. Consequently, the vehicle with registration number GW7025 was released to Maabour by COCOBOD on the orders of the Head of State.

This intervention has since given a facelift and honour to the package for our farmers and has become a source of competition and motivation to many cocoa farmers across the country who work towards improving their farm yields with the aim of winning that prestigious award someday.

Modifications to the Award Package

Since 2010/2011, the award package has continuously witnessed drastic alterations in form, and process and streamlined to provide perfect instances to motivate especially the youth to sign on to cocoa farming as a business. In 2011 for instance, a decision was taken to annul the then arrangement to give a cheque for Ghc5,000 for fuel and maintenance for a year. However, items such as a brand new Toyota Hilux Pick-up, 2 full pieces of GTP cloth, '32' inch television set, 6 machetes, a motorized spraying machine, a complete set of protective clothing, 12 litres of insecticides, cocoa products, a plaque and all-expense paid travel opportunity to a cocoa producing country to learn the use of different modern technologies of farm management practices were made part of the package to motivate farmers and also present a 'mouth-watering' incentive to attract the youth into cocoa farming.

The form of the Award has also expanded over the past few years as the introduction of District and Regional award schemes provides a grooming process for farmers who are aiming to pick up the award at the national level.

This arrangement has been very useful and provided a kind of succession plan for mentoring and

grooming farmers for the national best award.

Again, from 2012 to 2015, in an effort to encourage young people and empower women to go into cocoa production, COCOBOD introduced two additional national award schemes - Most Promising Young Cocoa Farmer and the Most Enterprising Female Cocoa Farmer Awards.

Selection process

The process of selecting National Best Cocoa Farmers has also seen tremendous improvement. It begins with the setting up of a committee usually headed by either a Deputy Chief Executive or the Executive Director of the Cocoa Health & Extension Division (CHED). Criteria for selection are also reviewed by the Committee every year and include but not limited to farmers' level of compliance and adoption of productivity initiatives, yield per hectare, level of innovation (diversity in farming i.e. alternative livelihood projects), general adherence to modern and good agronomic practices as well as responsiveness to environmental and socially acceptable standards. Also relevant to the Committee is a measure of the extent to which nominee farmers have contributed meaningfully to community development projects.

These criteria are followed strictly because COCOBOD believes that before adjudged the national best farmer, the farmer should have shown sufficient commitment to community development and also given support to advocacy drives in his operational area.

How competitive has the award been?

For the past decade, becoming the National Best Cocoa Farmer has been a prestige with most awardees being farmers from the Brong Ahafo Cocoa Region. The level of yield per hectare has taken a centre stage and farmers aiming at the award competitively work harder to achieve a production record far above the national average per hectare. Over the past 10 years, the yield per hectare among the various awardees has increased from 1,540.30 kg/ha obtained by the 2013 National Best Farmer, Opayin Abraham Adusei (size 110.73) at Sekyere in the Eastern Region to as high as 3,440.43kg/ha (size 79.99ha) recorded by Ernest Sarkodie, the 2019 National Best Cocoa Farmer at Baniekrom at Sankore in the Brong Ahafo Region.

The continuous increase in the yield per hectare has been attributed to the farmers' aggressive adoption of various initiatives of the Board such as hand pollination, mass pruning, mass spraying, fertilizer application, irrigation, as well as the adherence to good agronomic practices that support cocoa production, and some industry experts predict higher yields even as the Board scales up its interventions and support services for farmers across the country.

Opinions of others to enhance the award further

While commending COCOBOD for continually recognising the vital role cocoa farmers play in the country, some schools of thought are of the view that the award seems to benefit the awardees and their immediate families only and therefore propose an extension or review of the package to include the construction of monumental facilities such as a model school or a road network at the location of the awardees' farms as a way of immortalizing the achievement of such distinguished farmers. There are also suggestions that as part of the package, COCOBOD should adopt the farms of awardees and maintain it for a year whereas others also posit that financial support should be added to the package to enable the awardees pay for major overhead costs incurred in managing their farms.

Conclusion and future of the Award

Obviously, the award has come to stay and it is a fact that it will continue to see modifications as the years go by. Who knows, maybe in the near future, COCOBOD may be looking at building farm houses for cocoa farmers as part of the award package. But that will also come with more stringent and expanded criteria for selecting deserving farmers.

All cocoa farmers are being encouraged to continue their good work and approach their farming operations with business motive. They must also cultivate the habit of setting aside part of proceeds from their farms and plough back portions into supporting their farm management practices to continuously improve yield while at the same time taking measures to reduce the impact of their activities on biodiversity and society.

Together, we build a resilient cocoa sector with a highly motivated work force – our farmers; our support; our premium quality cocoa. Congratulations to all our awardees over the past 28 years! !



**Nana Kwabeba
Ponkoh II - 2020**



**Mr. Ernest Sarkodie -
2019**



**Mr. Charles Gyamfi -
2018**



**Mr. Yakubu Osman -
2017**



**Mr. Opoku Gyamfi -
2016**



Mr. Opoku Gyamfi - 2015
(No wards in 2014 due to Ebola outbreak)



**Mr. Abraham
Adusei - 2013**



**Mr. Agyenim
Boateng Agyepong -
2012**



**Mr. Adu Tabiri -
2011**



**Mr. Sanuel Awuni -
2010**

PRESIDENT AKUFO-ADDO INSPECTS PROGRESS OF BENCHEMA-ADJOAFUA ROAD CONSTRUCTION

H.E. the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has inspected the progress of work on the Benchema Junction to Adjoafua Road and commended the contractor for the diligent work so far done to fix and upgrade the road.

The 38-kilometre road, which is wholly funded by Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) under its Cocoa Roads programme is considered critical because it connects 14 major cocoa-growing communities in the Western North Region.

The inspection of the road was part of the president's itinerary for a 2-day tour of the Western North and Western Regions.

COCOBOD's Deputy Chief Executive in charge of Operations Dr. Emmanuel Opoku, who joined the president's entourage to the inspection exercise, disclosed that altogether, cocoa communities along the catchment area contribute an average of 100,000 metric tonnes of cocoa to the country's stock annually.

It was, therefore, important to address the transportation challenges faced in bringing agro-inputs to cocoa farmers in those communities and in



evacuating cocoa beans to take-over centres. Even ahead of its completion, the road, he added, was already enhancing socio-economic activities in the communities, easing people's access to health care facilities, and other important social services in other parts of the region.

'We at COCOBOD see this road as a crucial one because large volumes of cocoa are transported on this road yearly. We are happy it has taken shape. Before the construction, plying this road did not come with the ease we are enjoying now, and so encourage the contractor to continue work and complete it on schedule,' he stated.

Explaining the progress of work on the road, the Project Engineer of Messrs.




Amadi Construction, David Metz, said the project was 50 percent complete.

He lauded the level of cooperation with COCOBOD, the Government and inhabitants of the area and gave an assurance that the project would be completed on schedule. 'So far, we are making progress as we promised. Although some challenges are being faced, we believe that we will finish this project by June 2022.'

A resident of Saayerano, who only identified herself as Afririfa, was happy that the road had been fixed, especially, a portion that always gathered stagnant water anytime it rained.

According to her, living around Saayerano is now dignifying. 'I am happy that the contractor has fixed this road, especially, this place which used to gather a lot of water. Before the construction of the road, we had to use alternate footpaths through cocoa farms whenever it rains due to the stagnant water on many parts of the road. We even have to carry corpses and women in labour through farms amidst falling and our clothes getting soiled with mud but now we move freely on the road at all times. Life is good here at Saayerano and we are thankful to COCOBOD for helping us,' she expressed joyfully.





HON JOSEPH BOAHEN AIDOO HON- OURED WITH LIFETIME ACHIEVE- MENT AWARD

Hon Joseph Boahen Aidoo has received the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the 2021 Ghana Cocoa Awards Gala Night held at the Kempinski Hotel in Accra. The award, which was presented to him by the country's Chief of Staff, Hon. Akosua Frema Opare was in recognition of his outstanding performance as the leader of Ghana's cocoa regulator over the past 5 years.

In a citation eulogizing his footprints in the industry, Hon Aidoo was extolled for rolling out programmes which have enhanced cocoa farmer incomes, as well as, productivity and sustainability.

'In March 2017, you were appointed Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board, bringing on board, 30 years of experience from the academia, the legislature and governance at various levels. You served almost 6 years as Regional Minister and three consecutive terms as the Member of Parliament for the Amenfi East Constituency in the Western Region.

Upon assumption of office, you focused on four thematic areas to revamp the cocoa sector. They are: improved farmer incomes; increased farm yields; enhanced local value addition and the promotion of sustainable cocoa production through the rehabilitation of diseased and moribund farms.

LIVING INCOME DIFFERENTIAL (LID)

You led the country to pursue a joint action with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for the adoption of a new pricing mechanism at the world market and the subsequent birth of the ground-breaking Living Income Differential (LID), which

has since guaranteed extra \$400 income on every tonne of cocoa farmers sell. For this, you received the Commander of the National Order of Côte d'Ivoire award from the Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, in addition to the Companion of the Order of Volta national award conferred on you by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, a feat never achieved by any personality in the cocoa sector.

Motivated by your farmer centredness, you worked to actualise the Cocoa Farmers Pension Scheme, which had been in the books for more than three decades.

PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMES

Through your able leadership, Ghana Cocoa Board has successfully expanded the productivity enhancement techniques of hand pollination and pruning across the country, which have significantly improved the country's yield per hectare, with enormous effect on increased incomes for cocoa farmers. Irrigation and mechanization are the latest of your bold footprints on the cocoa sector.

COCOA REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

You spearheaded the revolutionary \$600 million AfDB Loan Facility towards the National Cocoa Rehabilitation Programme to among others, replace aged and disease-infected farms, improve irrigation systems and plant fertility, increase warehousing capacity, boost local processing and value addition, and to promote the

consumption of cocoa. This programme is set to increase Ghana's production levels well above 1 million tonnes annually from the average 850,000 tonnes in the last decade.

Honourable Aidoo, you are presently being celebrated for engineering the achievement of about One Million and Forty-Five Thousand, Five Hundred Metric Tonnes (1,045,500mt) of cocoa in the 2020/21 crop year, an accomplishment which became possible through the combined effects of the national mass pruning and hand pollination, remodeled mass spraying, subsidized fertilizer in addition to the adoption of modern and best practices that preserve the eco-system, and guarantee a thriving and sustainable cocoa production.

Honourable, if the cocoa sector today looks promising, then it is because of your selfless commitment and investment of your expertise and experience in what was an ailing sector.

Today, Cocoa Post presents this citation to you in appreciation of your invaluable contribution towards a robust cocoa sector over the past 5 years.

Congratulations!

Addressing participants at the awards night, Hon Aidoo in his key note address described the theme for the celebration - Celebrating Ghana's Historic Cocoa Production Milestone - A Golden Opportunity for local Value Addition as apt and assured of enhanced strategies by his administration to improve upon efforts at boosting local value addition of cocoa.



COCOA FARMERS PENSION SCHEME

*Providing a Decent Pension
for Our Cocoa Farmers*

MODE OF CONTRIBUTION

- 1.** Purchasing clerks are the main facilitators of the deduction process
- 2.** A farmer must provide his/her Cocoa Card as proof of identity and fill a consent form at the point of sale of beans
- 3.** The farmer must insist on the use of the electronic weighing scale by the Purchasing Clerk to ascertain the exact value of cocoa beans sold
- 4.** A minimum of five percent (5%) of cocoa sold will be deducted from the total sales and credited to the farmer's pension account using a mobile technology
- 5.** The farmer has the option to voluntarily select from 2.5%, 5% or 7.5% of the cocoa sales to add to the mandatory (5%) contribution.
- 6.** COCOBOD/Government will contribute a minimum of 1% on the total sales made by the farmer at the same time deductions 4, and 5 are being made
- 7.** The farmer will receive an alert message instantly on his phone to indicate completion of transaction
- 8.** 25% of the total contribution will be credited to the Personal Savings Account and the remaining 75% will be credited to the Retirement Account
- 9.** The farmer may withdraw 20% of his Personal Savings account balance every 2 years after the first withdrawal.
- 10.** When the farmer is due for retirement, he/she will receive a Lump Sum equal to the balance in the Personal Savings Account.
- 11.** The farmer will receive monthly pension payments from the retirement account which is guaranteed for 15 years





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