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## PRESS RELEASE OF THE FARMGATE COCOA ALLIANCE (FCA).

FCA URGES STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COCOA VALUE CHAIN, TO RESPECT THEIR OBLIGATIONS AND GO FOR REAL CHANGE THAT MEETS GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE GOAL.

For decades the cocoa farmers were not organized, and as a result they were not involved in sector activities. Through the years several NGO's, including certification organizations, were established with the intention to support and empower cocoa farmers in the sector. Unfortunately, instead of realizing their objectives, some of these organizations decided to play the role of the farmers.

Governments of cocoa producing countries (mainly in west and central Africa) claim to represent and speak on behalf of farmers interest, they also determine the price that farmers should get for their crop. Certification organizations on their part claim ownership of the farmers, and also claim that their certification program will bring better income for cocoa farmers and their families. Some certification organizations even go further to define a living income for the farmers.

Despite all these intensions and claims, the situation of farmers has not changed, as millions of farmers still live in chronic poverty.

In 2014 the World Cocoa Farmers Organization (WCFO) was established as a membership organization for cocoa farmers and farm workers, with the objective to defend and protect the interests of its members at national and international level.

However, regardless of WCFO (farmers) existence, some organizations, including certification organizations, continues to neglect farmers (WCFO) as they go on with organizing debates on "farmers living wage". In our view certification organizations are playing critical role in reducing farmers income, through the sale of premium cocoa beans and chocolate products. However farmers who receive a percentage of the premium, only get a tiny portion of this amount, while other farmers virtually get nothing.

FCA believes it is time for stakeholders in the cocoa value chain to allow farmers to manage their own affaire. Therefore, it is important that all stakeholders acknowledge and respect the existence of a united cocoa farmers voice, being the WCFO. FCA believes that if stakeholders really want to solve the problems and make the sector sustainable, WCFO must be a prime partner in all discussions and decisions that concerns cocoa farmers and the sector at large.

FCA believes that governments (in the capacity of International Cocoa Organization (ICCO)) and certification organizations should see it as an obligation to organize



support for farmers and thus take measures such as subsidizing and financially supporting the WCFO, to strengthen its membership, both farmers and farm workers.

### **In short**

- ICCO must support the WCFO by encouraging its member states to support and promote cocoa farmers' rights, as stipulated in the WCC 4 Berlin Declaration.
- ICCO has as a responsibility to promote the WCFO as the farmers voice, taking into consideration its International Cocoa Agreement and WCC declarations.
- FCA calls on the ICCO to invite the WCFO to become a member at the Consultative Board, so it can play a deserved role to represent and defend its members.
- Certification Organizations must support WCFO by contributing a percentage of the premium they make from the sale of sustainably produced cocoa beans/chocolate bar with their logo or trademark, taking into consideration their "Code of Conducts".
- As consuming countries demand to become 100% sustainable, it is imperative to have all relevant actors to make their meaningful contribution. Realising 100% sustainable cocoa sector won't be possible without the participation WCFO (farmers).

### **Recommendations**

- FCA calls on the governments of Ghana and Ivory Coast to include the WCFO in the discussion, that takes place on the 03-07-2019, regarding their recent pricing decision.
- FCA urges stakeholders to realize, accept and recognize that it is no more "Business as Usual" and should embrace reality in order to move the sector forward and in the right direction.
- FCA calls upon all stakeholders in the sector, including governments of producing countries, to respect the rights of the WCFO and its members (farmers) and work together for the good of their country and the sector as whole.
- FCA urges relevant stakeholders in the sector, and specifically the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) and Certification Organizations to make arrangements with the WCFO to organize subsidies/financial to support WCFO allowing it to encourage reform that will contribute to make the sector transparent, accountable and sustainable.

### **End of Press release.**

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