

ROUND TABLE ON A SUSTAINABLE WORLD COCOA ECONOMY, ACCRA, 3-6 OCTOBER 2007

Outline of the presentation "Prospects for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy – a View from an NGO".

A Changing Landscape

An NGO view for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman. I am really very honoured to present a view from an NGO at the ICCO Round Table for Sustainable Cocoa. First of all I would like to congratulate the ICCO with this challenging event bringing together different stakeholders from all over the world to discuss a sustainable cocoa economy.

In 2001 I was involved in a sustainable cocoa project funded by the Dutch Ministry of Environment. The International Cocoa Agreement just introduced the concept of a sustainable cocoa economy. In the project we organised a workshop with 25 participants of the industry, government and civil society. One of the conclusions was to make it an international multi stakeholder forum and if we look around today the ICCO has managed to realise that. In 2003 I had the privilege to come to Ghana for the first time. The aim of the sustainable cocoa field research was to get an impression what sustainable cocoa meant in a cocoa producing country. In Ghana I met 25 stakeholders ranging from the government/ Cocobod, farmers, research institutes and civil society. One of our main observations was that sustainable cocoa was perceived differently according to position in the cocoa chain. The farmers wanted a higher price, the government was interested in sustainable production flows and civil society focussed on social or environmental issues.

Today I have been asked to present a view from an NGO. In order to do so Oxfam Novib, the Coffee Coalition and CREM organised a 2 days workshop prior to the conference. It is an honour for me to present the view from this NGO coalition at the Round Table for Sustainable Cocoa.

1. A Sustainable Cocoa Economy

Driven by the process of globalization, rising consumer awareness and unsustainable agricultural practices, the ICCO has organised this dialogue to build a consensus amongst an increasingly broad range of stakeholders. The idea of the Round Table is to develop a road-map to allow stakeholders to articulate a vision of a sustainable cocoa economy and to agree on a plan of actions towards that goal.

The Continuous Improvement Model and Indicators for improving the sustainability of the world cocoa economy are central to the ICCO's proposed model for the cocoa industry. The choice for indicators was made to **understand the present situation** and to allow for **measurement of improvements** towards a more sustainable world cocoa economy. Understanding the present situation is important in order to take the next steps in this ambitious agenda.

A collective understanding of the historical development of the current cocoa value chain together with the will to change is the starting point for developing activities and indicators towards a more sustainable cocoa economy.

2. Developing an NGO road map for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy.

The growth in recognition of the importance of sustainability amongst producers, governments, companies, NGOs and consumers has put the cocoa sector at a crossroads. The different initiatives and programs dealing with specific pieces of the sustainability puzzle do not link the three pillars of sustainable development. With respect to the main initiatives sustainability is focussed on child labour, environmental conservation and agricultural production practices. Examples include the agricultural programs of the WCF and the ICI to ban child and forced labour along the cocoa chain. The Round Table for Sustainable Cocoa is the first open multi-stakeholder initiative to facilitate an integrated approach to sustainability. The Round Table offers a unique opportunity to discuss the pieces of the sustainability puzzle with all stakeholders in the cocoa sector.

The objectives of the Round Table are to build a consensus on a sustainable world cocoa economy through a participatory and comprehensive approach. In order to provide a meaningful contribution to this process an NGO-conference was organised on 1 and 2 October in Ghana. The aim of this meeting of human right, environmental and trade NGOs, labour unions and farmer organisations is to come to a common understanding of the basic principles of a sustainable cocoa economy, to identify the main challenges and to develop a shared vision on a sustainable cocoa economy. 24 representatives from 12 countries and 4 continents exchanged their experiences, their knowledge and ideas for a brighter cocoa future in a participatory way (stand – up). We concluded that an open and efficient Round Table presents opportunities to jointly identify and promote constructive actions necessary to maintain and enhance a sustainable cocoa economy. The main challenge is to identify the real causes and jointly work on solutions to create a dialogue and bridge the gaps in understanding the key issues of sustainability. We concluded that the main aims of a Multi Stakeholder Initiative are:

1. To understand eachothers' interest and develop ownership and a shared vision
2. and to facilitate communication and avoid miscommunication

One prerequisite to facilitate this process is a joined collaboration of civil society. We have made a first step during the pre-conference and we will present specific recommendations in the sub groups for farmers, industry and government tomorrow and Friday. However in order to collaboratively work towards a sustainable cocoa economy a transparent plan for funding and coordination of funding mechanisms is required.

We are aware of the challenges and obstacles faced on the road to a sustainable cocoa chain. During the consultation process we developed a physical NGO road-map in which the interpretations of and strategies towards a sustainable cocoa economy are visualised. This map provides a blue print of the actual landscape for a sustainable cocoa economy and acts as a visual tool to understand the dynamics

within and between the stakeholders in the cocoa sector. The brown stream represents the cocoa chain with farmers in the north and the consumers in the South. The mountains represent a barrier and the Round Table is visualised on the summit. We will continue to develop the NGO Road map and we hope it facilitates all stakeholders to understand the present and the key issues of sustainability.

3 A Changing Landscape

The ICCO embraces the Brundtland definition of sustainable development being “a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Initiated by the process of globalization and growing consumer awareness, the ICCO paper also introduces “the duty of mankind to take good care of the resources of planet earth.”

In order to initiate a paradigm shift to sustainable behaviour we need to understand that we have already lived unsustainably for thousands of years. Slavery for example has existed, in one form or another, throughout the whole of recorded human history (~1800 BCE) — as have, in various periods, movements to free large or distinct groups of slaves. Attempts to redistribute capital and reduce extreme inequalities of wealth go back to at least the Roman republic in the third century B.C. when laws were passed limiting the amount of wealth or land that could be owned by any one family.

So in order to achieve a realistic change we need a strong commitment combined with a flexible approach and a deep acceptance that we all need a win-win situation to maintain motivation for a long period of time. As the Ghana/Akan proverb says - Whimwhim ade ko sorosoro - (Anything that comes quickly disappears just as quickly). To achieve collective motivation we need a concept of "oneness". A concept on how we can actually live and support each other regardless of religious, cultural and social habits. If we want to create something new, something that does not lead us back to the habits that date back thousands of years we need a central point where global and personal responsibility come together.

The ICCO Round Table for a Sustainable Cocoa Economy provides an excellent opportunity to start a multi-stakeholder process for a sustainable cocoa economy. This week 24 representatives from 12 countries and 4 continents shared their experiences and participate in the Round Table. You will meet them in the subgroups and we invite you to engage with us and our NGO Road map towards sustainability. Furthermore we would like to present you our first contribution to bridge the information gap and I am pleased to present our stick with the cocoa collection 2007 – limited edition - to the Minister of Finance and Economic planning, the Chief executive of the Ghana Cocoa Board, Mr Vingerhoets of the ICCO and Mr. Vernooij, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture.



"The Atomium symbolizes this age of ours in which men of science have deepened our knowledge of the structure of matter. It is, they say, composed of condensed energy, which if man so desires, can be applied for the greater benefit of a civilisation based on technical achievement bent to the service of humanity. The Atomium symbolizes also the strength which comes through union." A. Waterkeyn, Burg. Ir U.I., Maart 1958.
<http://www.atomium.be>

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