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May 19, 2010

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World Cocoa Foundation Holds 17th Partnership Meeting on Cocoa Sustainability

Meeting held in Association with Rabobank Foundation and Rabobank International

Utrecht, the Netherlands – The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) today began its 17th Partnership Meeting in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The two-day meeting on cocoa sustainability, held in association with the Rabobank Foundation and Rabobank International, is attended by over 200 representatives from the cocoa and chocolate industry, cocoa-producing countries, government agencies, development organizations and civil society.

In their welcoming remarks, WCF and Rabobank International representatives announced that they will explore opportunities for collaboration. Potential areas for collaboration could include: farmer access to credit/financing, strengthening of farmer organizations, and impact measurement.

“Our clients in the cocoa sector have to deal with sustainability issues in their business operations. Rabobank wants to support sustainable practices. Sustainability being defined in economic, social and ecological terms. The philosophy behind our policy is collaboration and engagement. A constructive dialogue with clients and partners to identify and resolve CSR issues and to meet challenges for a sustainable future,” added Sipko Schat, member of the Executive Board of Rabobank.

“We look forward to working with the experts at Rabobank to explore opportunities for closer collaboration,” said WCF President Bill Guyton. “We share a mutual interest in cocoa sustainability and improving the livelihoods of the millions of smallholder farmers that grow this important crop. This meeting’s spotlight on farmers and finance is a first step in what we hope will be an ongoing dialogue.”

The keynote address was delivered by Hans Hoogeveen, the director general of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Finance and farmer access to credit will

be important topics of discussion during the meeting, along with the role of standard systems in cocoa sustainability.

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About the World Cocoa Foundation

Established in 2000, the World Cocoa Foundation is a leader in promoting economic and social development and environmental stewardship in 15 cocoa-producing countries around the world. With over 70 member companies from the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa, the Foundation actively supports a range of farm-level programs harnessing sustainable agriculture practices to improve the quality of life for the millions of smallholder farmers growing this unique crop. For more information about the World Cocoa Foundation, visit: www.worldcocoafoundation.org