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### **World Cocoa Foundation Awards Innovation Challenge Grants to Local Organizations and Institutions in Cocoa-Producing Countries**

*Eight grants totaling \$146,000 will benefit cocoa farmers through advances in laborsaving technologies, production efficiency, and education*

WASHINGTON DC – The World Cocoa Foundation today awarded \$146,000 in challenge grants that will be used over the next 12 months to design and test innovative technologies benefiting cocoa farmers and building the capacity of local extension services and farmer associations. Grants were awarded to eight research institutes, universities and farmer organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America for work focused on advancing laborsaving technologies, production efficiency, and education. The grants were announced at the World Cocoa Foundation’s 14<sup>th</sup> Partnership Meeting, being held in Hamburg, Germany.

“Innovation is the key to helping cocoa farmers fully benefit from the world’s growing appetite for this important commodity,” said Bill Guyton, President, World Cocoa Foundation. “Inefficient and labor-intensive farming practices must make way for new approaches if we are to strengthen farm families and communities both economically and socially. The grants announced today will bring this much-needed innovation to the field, making it more accessible to cocoa farmers around the world.”

Grants were awarded in the area of farm-level innovation to:

**Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana**, to explore the cost-effective and environmentally friendly use of pheromone traps for mirid insect control by small-scale, organic cocoa farmers;

**Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria**, for exploratory work in sensitizing farmers about the need to use organic fertilizers and composting to improve soil fertility, productivity and farmer incomes;

**Nong Lam University, Vietnam**, for research into simpler, more affordable drip irrigation systems to improve cocoa crop yield and quality, reduce labor and improve environmental sustainability; and,

**Duc Hiep Cocoa Club, Vietnam**, for the development of an innovative, indirect heat drying system for cocoa beans to reduce loss due to mold and improve overall quality and pricing.

Grants were awarded in the area of education innovation to:

**University of Cape Coast, Ghana, School of Agriculture**, to develop participatory learning approaches encouraging farmer adoption of artificial cocoa pollination, significantly improving productivity, yield and long-term sustainability;

**Conservación y Desarrollo (CyD)**, Ecuador, to implement an innovative “education tour” approach to promoting knowledge sharing among farmer associations, helping improve production, incomes and overall quality of farm community life;

**CATIE, Costa Rica**, for the development of a teaching module on the reproductive biology of cocoa, to help farmers better understand crop management practices and improve yields;

**Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana**, to benefit women and women’s groups economically by disseminating knowledge about quality potash and soap production from cocoa pod husks.

Over the next 12 months, award recipients will test and validate the proposed innovations. Successful ones will be reviewed further for potential scale up and will be offered more broadly for application in cocoa-producing countries.

The World Cocoa Foundation’s challenge grant program first was announced on July 18 at its Cocoa Innovations Symposium, where more than 70 experts representing cocoa producing countries, farmer organizations, research institutes, NGOs, international donors and industry reviewed labor-saving technologies and production efficiency, farm safety, education and community development, as well as monitoring innovative approaches and evaluating their impact and suitability for scale-up. Funding for the grants was provided by USAID, MC Publishing, GTZ, Mars Incorporated and the World Cocoa Foundation.

### **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 nearly 70 member companies from the Americas, Europe and Asia, 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](http://www.worldcocoafoundation.org).

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