Conference Summary:
2017 Global Conference on Women in Cocoa
Accra, Ghana
February 16-17, 2017
Dear Colleagues,

February 16 - 17, 2017 were an incredible two days in Accra. World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) hosted the first ever 2017 Global Conference on Women in Cocoa (“GloCo” for short) with close to 80 participants from around the world.

When we first envisioned GloCo, we wanted to identify priority actions that cocoa stakeholders can take together on women’s empowerment. Our desire was to facilitate the sharing of learnings, innovations, and opportunities in a new and energizing manner. Importantly, we also hoped to use the event to help to frame a longer-term gender cocoa strategy that WCF will be writing later this year and leading on behalf of cocoa industry. Women’s empowerment is a broad topic, so we also decided to narrow the focus and scope of GloCo to two topics that are among the most pivotal to the future sustainability of cocoa: women’s economic empowerment/financial inclusion and land tenure.

We were thrilled by the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity that filled GloCo. The meeting opened with an inspiring speech by the Ghanaian Minister for Gender, Children, and Social Protection Hon. Minister Otiko Afisa Djaba and substantive and engaging contributions of Mr. Emmanuel Opoku of COCOBOD and Madam Rosemarie Tanoé and the Conseil du Café Cacao representatives. This was followed with numerous thought-provoking and rich presentations and panels, and of course through the active and optimistic group discussions from governments, ministries, research institutions, industry, non-governmental organizations, and development organizations. There was a clear sense of excitement and imperative to work together on these issues. We hope to keep the momentum built in Accra going over the course of the year, especially through the six areas of important work and commitment identified by the group as the top priorities (see page 14 of this report for more details and next steps).

We hope that you enjoy this summary of the 2017 GloCo, and look forward to the year ahead.

Warm regards,

Nira Desai
Director, Strategy & Learning
World Cocoa Foundation
Day 1

Welcome Ceremonies and View from Origins

The Global Conference on Women in Cocoa (GloCo) kicked off with welcome and opening statements from Mil Niepold and Nira Desai. Present at the conference were the Hon. Minister Otiko Afisa Djaba, Ghanaian Government representatives from the Ministries of Youth and Sports, Local Government, Education, Food and Agriculture, and Finance, representatives from COCOBOD, representatives from Le Conseil du Café-Cacao, ANADER, industry members of CocoaAction and the World Cocoa Foundation, leaders in the chocolate and cocoa sectors, civil society organizations, and other development partners. The Master of Ceremonies expressed her profound gratitude for the overwhelming participation by the Ministries.

Mr. Emmanuel Opuku opened the discussion with a presentation of the Ghanaian Government’s view of women’s empowerment in cocoa and what collaborative opportunities exist amongst sector stakeholders. He articulated that a major challenge faced by women is land acquisition, which is linked to Ghanaian patriarchal systems. As a solution, he encouraged women’s involvement in farmer business schools to acquire additional skills and the promotion of literacy for women. Mr. Opuku emphasized the government’s commitment to making gender equality a priority, and informed the group that COCOBOD is currently developing institutional capacities for effective gender mainstreaming, for example through integrating gender in extension services to ensure equal access to services. In addition, COCOBOD is setting up a Gender Desk at CHED.

Mme. Rosemarie Tanoé presented the Ivorian Government’s views of women’s empowerment in cocoa and what collaborative opportunities exist amongst sector stakeholders. He articulated that a major challenge faced by women is land acquisition, which is linked to Ghanaian patriarchal systems. As a solution, he encouraged women’s involvement in farmer business schools to acquire additional skills and the promotion of literacy for women. Mr. Opuku emphasized the government’s commitment to making gender equality a priority, and informed the group that COCOBOD is currently developing institutional capacities for effective gender mainstreaming, for example through integrating gender in extension services to ensure equal access to services. In addition, COCOBOD is setting up a Gender Desk at CHED.

Mme. Rosemarie Tanoé presented the Ivorian Government’s views of women’s empowerment in cocoa. She encouraged a change in mindset in cocoa farming households, whereby decisions would be made by both partners, male and female. The Ivorian Government also recognizes land tenure as a very sensitive issue that requires further sensitization of women in cocoa-growing communities. Mme. Tanoé praised the National Federation of Women Producers of Coffee and Cocoa of Côte d’Ivoire (La Fédération Nationale des Femmes Productrices de Café-Cacao de Côte d’Ivoire), which has been incredibly supportive to women’s rights and called on the stakeholders present to support the Federation further through organizing more gender trainings, developing literacy skills for women, ensuring flexibility in land tenure laws, and training cooperatives to support women with loan acquisition.

Keynote Address – Renewing Hope and the Cocoa Gender Imperative: Why a Conference on Women in Cocoa and Why Now?

The Hon. Minister expressed her profound gratitude to be invited to speak at this innovative conference on the topic of renewing hope and the cocoa gender imperative. In her presentation, she shared that her Government is committed to the promotion of policies and interventions that will ensure women’s empowerment. She dedicated 2017 to opening a new chapter to support women in cocoa. She also stressed that women have control over their lives when they are economically empowered, and thus there is a need to put in place strategies to ensure this. The Hon. Minister reiterated that the Government plans to reactivate the mass spraying program to assist cocoa farmers with pesticides, also mentioning that solo cocoa spraying machines were first introduced into the country by her father himself a cocoa farmer who insisted that she receive an education which gave her the opportunity that she has today to empower women.

In her final remarks, she stressed the importance of seeing women’s empowerment as a critical issue that is not just a women’s issue, but a national issue. She encouraged giving women equal access to education, training, and capacity building opportunities and challenged parents to build confidence in their girls to enable them to take up challenging roles in society.
Accelerating Sustainability: Opportunities, Challenges, and Priorities from the Cocoa Industry

Ten of the cocoa and chocolate companies were featured to highlight key insights or barriers that they have encountered in their individual work. Some of the main challenges encountered by the companies were male dominance and unwillingness to participate in gender trainings, high illiteracy rates amongst women, time constraints faced by women, unequal access to resources and markets, women’s status as cocoa farmers and a fear of social rejection, and land ownership and tenure issues.

Although there are many different individual approaches taken by companies, there is some agreement on what the main challenges are in women’s empowerment. Companies generally agree on the best steps and types of roles for industry to play, especially around creating gender awareness among all community levels. Several members of the cocoa industry also encouraged the government partners present to support women’s empowerment efforts and provide realistic approaches to livelihoods empowerment.

Main Challenges

- Existence of male dominance
- Unwillingness to participate in gender trainings
- High illiteracy rates
- Time constraints
- Lack of resource and market access
- Women’s cocoa farmer status
- Social rejection
- Land ownership and tenure issues

Key Insights and Successful Approaches

- Providing gender sensitization trainings for the entire community
- Encouraging gender inclusion by mainstreaming women into activities which involve men
- Building women’s leadership, entrepreneurship, and business skills
- Promoting food security
- Improving land tenure security
- Increasing women’s access to finance
- Increasing women’s decision making capabilities
- Providing women to women training to encourage adoption
- Promoting women’s organizations

Moving the Needle: Outcomes of Empowering Women in Labor & Productivity

The differences and inequalities that women face in cocoa productivity become apparent when the many societal norms involved in cocoa-growing communities are considered. Generally, boys’ education is prioritized, women tend to do house chores while men prepare the land, men control the forests and the land acquisition process, and men receive most of the trainings and have access to resources. Thus, men are often the ones who make the decisions in the households. These inequalities can lead to conflicts, but to break the cycle men should involve their wives in the trainings and encourage joint decision making based on shared knowledge. Additionally, communities and leaders of coops need to be trained on gender sensitivity, and women need to be coached to be change agents.

In labor and productivity, gender is a cross-cutting issue and when it is mainstreamed by including gender goals and policies in programs, it improves outcomes not just for women but also for men. To do this, the knowledge and role that women have in cocoa production should be valued. Policies must also be developed that will ensure and promote gender equality. This can be done through advocacy, public awareness raising, and networking. For example, voluntary quotas of women in farmer cooperatives can have a powerful impact. If more women are trained to be extension agents, this can help to create a pipeline which will lead to more women in leadership positions and government roles. There is a link between what women do in the community and then what happens at the national level. Through the greater inclusion of women, institutions are strengthened, alternative livelihoods for women are created, and voluntary women’s groups are formed which can further these goals.

Finally, what happens and how are women farmers especially affected when increases in cocoa yields are seen? The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) recently conducted a study on Increased Cocoa Yields in the Labor Market and one of the key findings of the survey suggested that there is a higher hazardous child labor risk amongst women farmers than there is among men farmers. In Ghana, women were also more affected than men by the high cost of labor, which is higher in cocoa-growing communities than the national average. Men also had greater access to inputs and training as compared to women. These characteristics combined show how drastic the disparity is between men and women farmers, which was found to be especially pronounced in Ghana, and how important it is to have these disparities top of mind when designing programs and policies to empower women cocoa farmers in labor and productivity.
Unlocking the Door to Financial Inclusion: Policy Pathways in West Africa and Emerging Good Practices in Women’s Economic Empowerment

Although women can be significant clients of financial savings products (at Advans, 70% of their clients are women), women have a higher vulnerability and associated risk level and can therefore have difficulty receiving loans through financial institutions. However, many are beginning to develop specific projects to target women, such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), which train women farmers on savings and help them to progressively qualify for loans. Including women does not take some of the “pie” or services and give them to women instead of men, but rather makes the “pie” bigger and includes more women in it.

Agriculture-businesses are also powerful paths to women’s empowerment and financial inclusion activities for women. A good strategy for financial inclusion of women should continue to expand credit options, providing gender inclusive financial training, ongoing business training, and hosting sharing and learning events at coops where women can learn from and support each other. An innovative approach in providing agri-business financial support to women was seen through Oxfam’s R4 microinsurance program in Ethiopia. This program provided an index insurance, so if the weather conditions forecasted a certain environment, the insurance would pay out before a major weather event happened. This helped to mitigate the effects of climate change, helped the women to better manage their resources, and to save greater amounts. Through this program, productivity was increased by 28% and women were better able to re-invest in their farms.

Although it is important to support and encourage women in agri-businesses, most of the financial needs of women are not specifically agri-related, so many different services need to be considered. Innovations such as “SMART” accounts allow women to open savings accounts instantly, without a photo, using only a one page form. This solves a common barrier of a lack of identification among women farmers. Mobile banking solutions have also been developed, although it can take time to build women’s trust in the system. This makes it imperative for mobile systems to be reliable, and mobile money projects that have a lending component are extremely valuable. Additionally, it is important to collect gender metrics and conduct gender-specific research in cocoa, which Root Capital is doing in 2017.

Finally, to make progress on financial inclusion for women, knowledge needs to be shared. Oxfam is starting a new multi-stakeholder initiative in Ghana to get actors working on women’s empowerment and financial inclusion to come together. There is a lot of commitment and good work happening, and panels put out a call to be open and share success stories, as well as failures, which are also valuable learning opportunities.

Action Session: Financial Inclusion

Conference participants broke out into small groups to discuss the central themes and key takeaways from the financial inclusion presentations. Each group identified priority actions and made design recommendations for programs that would strengthen communities and inspire renewed hope through greater financial inclusion of women in the cocoa sector. Some of the top recommendations included:

**Policy**
- Develop policies to lower interest rates faced by women cocoa farmers on loans
- Encourage governments to push financial institutions to develop products for cocoa farmers
- Encourage the formation of women’s groups to assist and advocate for financial inclusion

**Implementation/Actions**
- Collaborate on platforms to share data
- Scale up the VSLA models
- Increase financial literacy of women
- Provide training on vocational skills and income generating activities
- Financial institutions should prioritize issues and request that information and data to better serve women
- Develop risk mitigation and repayment scorecard efforts on an individual basis
- Encourage savings and pensions: short, mid, and long term
- Increase mobile banking infrastructure
- Provide women with skills needed to access loans
Creating Child Protective Communities: It Starts with Women’s Empowerment

Why is a child protection approach important? Wendy Blanpied addressed this question and explained that a child protection approach is important to safeguard the rights of women and children as they are most vulnerable and most likely not to have equal access to resources and opportunities. There are several key steps needed to protect children, including development of a national child protection system, a child-friendly justice system, local preventative and responsive services, and raising children’s own voices. To do this, the context of the community needs to be well understood, there should be partnerships and links to other systems, and activities should be designed in ways that can benefit all in the community. To create sustainable systems and scale them up they must be grounded in evidence.

Child protection should also be approached on a case-by-case basis. The child who may be participating in child labor should be looked at within the context of the child’s household and within the whole community. There is no one size fits all solution, but rather for each child and community the solution will vary. However, it is universal that child protection starts with the family. If women in the family are empowered, then women can have a voice in the decision-making process within the household. Women are more aware of the risks and are financially capable, and are therefore better able to protect their children. This adds a layer of protection. The more protective the community is, the more opportunities and people will be available to protect the child, making it a safer place for children. This also means government strategies and referral systems need to be in place for larger issues.

By creating protective environments, there are both short term and long term benefits. Children who grow up in protective environments are not only protected as children, but grow up to be better members of the community where they will protect others.

“THERE IS NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL SOLUTION, BUT RATHER FOR EACH CHILD AND COMMUNITY THE SOLUTION WILL VARY. HOWEVER, IT IS UNIVERSAL THAT CHILD PROTECTION STARTS WITH THE FAMILY. IF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY ARE EMPOWERED, THEN WOMEN CAN HAVE A VOICE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD.”

Now and Then: WCF Current Efforts Underway

WCF presented an update on the approach to gender, insights, and learnings from the Cocoa Livelihoods Program (CLP) Women’s Income Survey, The Cameroon Market Assessment, the Walmart Foundation Grant within CLP, and an M&E update.

The CLP Women’s Income Survey’s aim was to provide insights into household income and expenditure, and examine how capacity building efforts have contributed to higher income for farmers, especially female farmers. The study found that in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria, cocoa remains the main source of income, with food crops as the secondary source. While there is still a traditional dominance of men in cocoa, women constitute a large portion of the labor force and contribute to the household income especially through food crop production. Although gender equality issues in the study area were still present, most women did take part in household decisions, especially when decisions focused on food crops. Trainings were particularly cited to support empowerment. Food crops are a good area for women’s empowerment, although high costs of inputs and labor remain challenges.

The Cameroon Market Assessment study aimed to understand the challenges women face in local processing of cocoa. The study found that some of the main challenges are poor road networks which are especially difficult to navigate for women who live far from the farm. Another challenge is the lack of storage facilities for cocoa beans. When processing the beans, only 4% of the women surveyed used some form of equipment and the rest do all processing by hand. Many of the farmers’ associations have been trained, but there is no effective way to share learnings. Therefore, some recommendations from the study are to combat the distance and infrastructure challenges with transport solutions, support loans for equipment purchases and push for local information sharing systems among farmers.

The Walmart Foundation, in partnership with the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) resulted in learnings on women’s empowerment under CLP. A main theme was that with government prioritization of gender, gender mainstreaming becomes easier. If women’s empowerment is linked with a premium, then it becomes a priority. Even if women are interested in decision-making and leadership opportunities, few exist for them at the coop level. If we want women to lead, there need to be structures created to do so.

“ONE SOLUTION IS THE MENTORSHIP OF YOUNG GIRLS FROM AN EARLY AGE. IN GHANA, THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LINK YOUNG GIRLS IN SCHOOL WITH “QUEEN MOTHERS” IN THE COMMUNITY AS MENTORS.”

WCF’s M&E focus is also on incorporating gender into program development and measurement. WCF’s sustainability strategy CocoaAction has specific focus on women’s empowerment, with all data collected gender disaggregated. Through WCF’s programs such as CLP and the African Cocoa Initiative, WCF measures gender interventions across five pillars: policy and government outreach, cocoa productivity training, farm management, food security, and gender capacity building and leadership. This work allows us to start identifying trends in how the work is leading to results on the ground.
Now and Then: Partner Presentations on What’s on the Horizon

The “Now and Then” partner presentations featured a rapid-fire format for implementing partners to provide updates on important gender initiatives through “lightning presentations.” The initiatives included:

- Promoting Inclusive and Gender-Sensitive Producer Organizations and Agricultural investments in Cocoa and Coffee Value Chains: Presented by Caleb Stevens, was an event held in Rome to highlight and share good gender practices within coffee and cocoa, foster collaboration, and identify needs and opportunities. The overall message was that change is possible, and there is clear evidence of the benefits of gender-sensitive practices including quality of product, productivity, income generation, and the well-being of the household. The issue of land tenure was highlighted as one of the major challenges, and the next steps are to finalize a system of good practices in partnership with KIT.

- System Innovation for Women’s Economic Empowerment (SIWEE): Presented by Helen van Hoeven, is an initiative that seeks to learn from other groups and innovate to address the structural barriers women face in agricultural value chains. To do this the solution is to collaborate more, to build national action plans, bring in expertise, and map supply chains to define and pilot appropriate interventions, all while learning together and scaling faster. The aim is for women to have easier access to value chains and resources, as well as increased and stable incomes and improved working conditions.

- Demystifying the Cocoa Sector in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana: presented by Anna Laven, is an upcoming study that seeks to understand that cocoa farmers produce more than just cocoa, but the data is not always easily available at scale. The research will focus on gender relations at the household level, diversity amongst households, and income diversification. Hopefully the research will allow the matching of program realities to farmers. Once the research is completed in September, the data set and findings will be made public to avoid duplication of efforts.

- Improving Tenure Security to Support Sustainable Cocoa: Presented by Caleb Stevens, is an activity partnership with the Hershey Company and ECOM. The average age of cocoa trees in West Africa are quite old, and farmers face many constraints in replanting. USAID will work to provide resources to help farmers reach an agreement on land lease issues between the farmer and the land owners, while ECOM will provide microfinance to help the farmer while the trees are being replanted. The program is looking to integrate gender and is open to hearing suggestions of best practices to achieve this.

Ploughing the Seeds for Land Tenure:
Policy Pathways and Best Practices in West Africa

It can be difficult to create a holistic national level policy on land tenure since there is no single answer and often so much of land tenure depends on local dynamics. Important areas to pay attention to in land tenure policy include land documentation and registration, acquisition procedures, clarification of land rights, financial and geographical accessibility to regional offices, resources where there are disputes, and land use planning.

Women in particular face challenges when it comes to land tenure. There is no public access to information on land, and this disproportionally affects women. Culturally, in some cases, women cannot approach a chief without her husband, and the husband is in control. People in rural areas do not know about the laws, and no one knows the actual costs (which can be high), time required (which can be lengthy), or the value of going through the process to get a land title certificate. As Dr. Mercy Asamoah noted, her research shows that most farmers don’t worry that their land will be taken away and are used to following customary laws, which do not require registration and documentation. These root causes that enable unequal access to land need to be addressed. Sensitization on land rights and current laws should be done, and there is also the need to create documentation so that the knowledge in the communities is standardized and shared.

Private companies can also choose to focus on completing the documentation needed for land registration, collecting land tenure data, and collaborating with governments on registration. Finally, an innovative USAID project approached the issue through collaborative mapping of the community land through Google maps, which involved those who are not normally part of the decision making and ultimately allowed for women to negotiate for small parts of land.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Attention is needed to clarify confusion around land tenure
- Clarification on land rights should be the focus
- Land tenure is complex but not impossible
- Collaboration with public sector agencies should be continuously sought through sensitization and raising awareness
- Policy makers should think globally yet act locally
- Interventions should be designed and applied in regional settings
- Initiation of changes in policies that increase female membership in farmers’ groups and form new women’s groups tied to land ownership are essential
**Action Session: Land Tenure**

Conference participants broke out into small groups to discuss the central themes and key takeaways from the land tenure presentations. Each group identified priority actions and made design recommendations for programs that would strengthen communities and inspire renewed hope through greater land tenure for women in the cocoa sector. Some of the top recommendations included:

**Policy**
- Fully translate into local languages the land tenure policies (at all levels of institutions)
- Inform policies through a bottom-up approach at the producer level
- Develop a simple, clear, and decentralized policy that will guide land documentation by Governments
- Enact policies to remove land ownership barriers for women (such as allowing them to register and claim land without husbands and be the sole owner of land)
- Create an opportunity for the cocoa sector actors to contribute to the Ghana Land Bill

**Implementation/Actions**
- Educate chiefs
- Create joint community action on land inventory
- Convene a roundtable or platform of relevant stakeholders and ministries to share land data
- Commission a research study into land tenure and policy issues within the cocoa sector
- Map existing research and initiatives on land tenure
- Conduct an information campaign which will lead to actors coming together to bring solutions
- Hold consultative sessions for different stakeholders to break down the complexities associated with land tenure
- Document the efforts on land rights and link these to other services such as financial services
- Sensitize women on land rights and issues
- Leverage existing data, map surface areas, and link this to producers of cocoa
- Conduct land tenure sensitization through farm extension agent networks

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**Future is Now: Advancing Cocoa Sector Improvements through Women’s Empowerment**

To summarize the meeting, Dr. Rose Mensah Kutin presented a short reflection. She noted that over the course of the two days she heard a lot of interconnected discussions on key issues for women in cocoa. The case studies shared by partners were very useful for collective learning, and it was heartening to see how the industry is prioritizing gender. This was something that everyone at the conference had in common and can work together on.

After hearing the sessions on labor and productivity, Dr. Kutin summarized that it is important to value women’s work in cocoa. In financial inclusion, a key point revealed was that revolutionary practices are needed to move things forward. In child protection, we should work on issues of violence against both children and women and see how they are connected. In land tenure, the rights of the people need to be used, and we should seek intersectionality at all levels of government, looking at both informal and formal options and solutions.

Going forward, documentation and sharing of good practices needs to be prioritized. There should be an emphasis placed on relevant research to contribute to this. Additionally, it is important to remember that the area of development in cocoa is not neutral ground and there are always power dynamics at play, making it imperative to ensure that women’s interests are protected. While patriarchal authority is still paramount, as we amplify female voices we need to also remember that the male perspective is relevant.

**Closing Commitments**

Participants, having reflected on the full array of presentations and discussions over the two days, shared key actions they would like to commit to both individually and as a group. Individuals wrote down three commitments on GloCo notecards, which will be mailed to them in six months’ time. The group ideas ranged from involving more men in gender discussions, to increasing farmer education on land rights, to collaborating on research and data sharing between stakeholders, to providing scholarships for the children of cocoa farmers, and finding solutions to financial inclusion for women and making the processes clearer. The group agreed on six interesting, innovative, and implementable commitments to work on together in the coming year. These include:

**Women’s Economic Empowerment & Financial Inclusion**

- Increase financial literacy for women
- Increase farmer education on land rights
- Develop a strategy for creating parity for interest rates between men and women
Next Steps
Following the meeting, WCF will seek to appoint a champion for each topic area and create task forces, made up of interested participants who can commit to efforts of time, research and collaboration on each topic. In 2018, at the second annual Global Conference on Women in Cocoa, these priority areas will be returned to and the results of the task forces will be discussed.

Meeting Close
Rosemarie Tanoë thanked WCF for hosting the first ever Global Conference of Women in Cocoa. She reflected that collaborative efforts are key in achieving the conference objectives, and thanked everyone for their participation.

Questions & Our Commitment to Continuous Learning
WCF is committed to creating a shared space for dialogue and learning on the most important issues in cocoa sustainability, including gender. We welcome your questions on GloCo or contributions on gender in cocoa in general. Please reach out to Nira Desai at nira.desai@worldcocoa.org.