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**COCOA AND CHOCOLATE COMPANIES TEAM UP WITH LEADING FOUNDATIONS
TO TRAIN FARMERS IN WEST AFRICA**

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 18, 2014 – More than 200,000 cocoa-farming families in West and Central Africa will be growing more cocoa and producing more food for their own tables within the next five years, thanks to a new program by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Walmart Foundation. The initiative, known as the Cocoa Livelihoods Program, will train cocoa farmers in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon about good agricultural practices and farm management skills. It will also provide them with resources to increase productivity in cocoa and food crops. The four countries account for more than 70 percent of the world’s supply of cocoa.

“WCF is proud to partner with the Gates Foundation, the Walmart Foundation and more than a dozen of our corporate members as we continue our mission to improve cocoa-farming communities in West Africa,” said Bill Guyton, president of the World Cocoa Foundation. “The private-private partnership model that we have built to support programs like these is helping to make a real difference in the lives of countless people where cocoa is grown.”

“By joining forces with WCF, we are able to bring high quality training that will help farmers, many of whom are women. We believe increased skills will lead to greater financial independence for these women and give them the opportunity to improve the lives of their families,” said Julie Gehrki, senior director of the Walmart Foundation. “This program is part of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation’s commitment to support training for nearly 1 million small farmers in emerging markets, half of them being women, by the year 2015.”

Cocoa farmers in the four countries will receive assistance in accessing agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and planting materials; have access to a growth fund that will give farmers the financial tools and credit needed to purchase critical cocoa inputs; and will receive valuable information on empowering women, who tend to care for the household and ensure food production. The training will provide cocoa farmers with skills essential for improving the quality of life and economic well-being of themselves, their families and communities.

About WCF

The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) is an international membership foundation that promotes a sustainable cocoa economy by providing cocoa farmers with the tools they need to grow more and better cocoa, market it successfully and make greater profits. WCF’s membership includes cocoa and chocolate manufacturers, processors, supply chain managers, and other companies worldwide, representing more than 80% of the global cocoa market. For more information, visit worldcocoa.org.

About the Walmart Foundation

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women’s Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Together, they have donated more than 1 billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart’s giving, visit foundation.walmart.com.

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