

Yamoussoukro, October 1, 2015

SECOND EDITION OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF CHOCOLATE AND COCOA (JNCC) SPEECH BY HE Mr. Ouattara ALASSANE

Mr. President of the National Assembly,

Mr. Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen Presidents of Institutions,

Honourable Ministers of State,

The Minister of Agriculture,

Distinguished Members of Government,

Mr Governor of the District of Yamoussoukro,

Distinguished members of the diplomatic corps,

Distinguished members of the prefects,

Mayor of Yamoussoukro,

Mr President of the Word Cocoa Foundation,

Distinguished representatives of the technical and financial partners,

Mr. President of the Board of Directors of the Conseil du Café Cacao,

Distinguished Members of the Board of Directors of the Conseil du Café Cacao,

Gentlemen Directors General of Cocoa Board of Ivory Coast, Gabon and Ghana,

Madam Director General of the Conseil du Café Cacao,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Committee and Staff of Conseil du Café Cacao,

Gentlemen customary and religious authorities,

Dear Parents cocoa producers,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I take part in this Second Edition of the National Day of Cocoa and Chocolate.

Thank you dear parents producers, to have made the trip in Yamoussoukro, as part of this event.

It is with great emotion that I meet you in these highly symbolic sites. Because, as you know, this is where lies the most illustrious farmer of Ivory Coast, the father of our nation, President Felix Houphouet The late-Boigny.

President Houphouet, as farmer and Secretary General of the African Agricultural Union has very early initiated a fight to improve prices and living conditions of farmers.

It was one of the foundations of the political commitment of President Felix Houphouet Boigny. It is in this spirit that the government and I are working to improve the lives of farmers.

Dear parents producers,

The institution of the National Day of Cocoa and Chocolate, responds to the government's desire to mark again, the economic and social importance of cocoa for our country.

It is also an opportunity to honor you, dear parents producers, for your great contribution to the development of the Ivorian nation. Yes, you are the true architects of the development of Côte d'Ivoire. Therefore, I congratulate you and say thank you.

Indeed, it is your hard work and efforts that have allowed our country to be the world leader in cocoa production. Yes dear brothers, dear sisters, we are the world's largest producer of cocoa with 45% of world production. We will set ourselves the goal of more than 50% of world production by 2020!

It is undoubtedly for these reasons that the International Cocoa Organization decided to move its headquarters from London to Abidjan. We welcome this decision.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take the opportunity offered to me as part of this event to pay tribute to the pioneers of the Ivorian cocoa-cultivation and the winners of the National Cup of Progress. These are:

- Mr. Tchimou N'DORI Léonard from Agboville,
- Mr. Bate ZOGBO from Daloa,
- Mr. Kassi KOUAME from Ayamé,
- Mrs. Maho Affo Rose from Agboville,
- Mr. Niamien Koffi from Toumodi,
- Mr. Yao Koffi from Gagnoa,

- Mr. Sassan Kouao from Niablé,
- Mr. Yao Fils Pascal from Niablé,
- Mr. Goué Pascal from Duekoué,
- Mr. Godi Joseph from Divo,
- Mr. Assanda Tiékoura from Akoupé,
- Mr. Kouamé Atsé from Akoupé,
- Mr. Yobou Antonin from Alépé.

These are indeed, all those pioneers who contributed to the Ivorian miracle in the 70 and 80. Congratulations to all of you.

I also greet the doyen, my friend Mr. Bléhoué Aka from Aboisso, excellence price in 1998 and my friend Augustin ADE Pra from Bettie.

Finally, I wish to salute the memory of all those who have left us.

Honorables invités, Mesdames et Messieurs, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

Improving living conditions of farmers and their families is a priority. It was also a campaign pledge.

This is to translate this commitment into practice as soon as I took office, I have instructed the Minister of Agriculture to undertake a reform of the coffee-cocoa sector to achieve the following objectives:

1. To improve, stabilize and provide our farmers better income per kilogram of cocoa beans,
2. To improve the conditions of life and work of the cocoa growing communities.

To achieve these goals, we have, as part of this reform, set up three main instruments:

- The Anticipated Sale Program (PVAM) for stabilizing the farm gate price;
- The Investment Funds in Rural Areas (FIMR) for the financing of basic social infrastructure in cocoa – coffee production areas;
- The Public-Private Partnership Platform to mobilize private sector resources for sustainable development of the sector.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen, Dear Parents producers

The reform initiated in 2012 is bearing fruit and we recorded successes and significant achievements, both for the sector and for you, dear parents producers.

The Minister of Agriculture has to present a comprehensive assessment of this reform. However, I would emphasize two major successes.

The first is the guarantee of the farm-gate price that has helped improve farmer incomes.

By this way we wanted to provide a solution to the instability of farm-gate prices observed for over a decade, while allowing your work which is carried out in difficult conditions must have a better pay.

So I asked that the farm-gate price is fixed at 60% of the average of the international price (CIF). This has required significant efforts by the Government in terms of taxation and incidental taxation, which experienced substantial declines. But this has contributed to a better redistribution of the fruits of growth, according to the objective that we have set since my accession to power.

I am therefore pleased that this measure was applied in all cocoa producing areas.

Dear Parents Producers,

Over the last three seasons, we also benefited from a steady increase in cocoa prices. Thus, the combined income of cocoa farmers over the last three years of reform amounted to nearly 4,000 billion CFA francs.

Recent years have therefore seen an increase in the remuneration of producers and this is only fair, "money flows into the pockets of those who provide work efforts."

The second major achievement of the reform that I would note is the contribution of the cocoa sector to the improvement of living conditions of rural populations, and in particular the cocoa farmers and their families.

Indeed, more than 32 billion CFA francs were invested by the Conseil du Café Cacao through the Investment Funds in Rural Areas (FIMR). These investments concern the rehabilitation of rural roads, construction of infrastructure in the areas of health, education, rural water supply, rural electrification and safety.

The projects financed by the Rural Investment Fund (FIMR) are supplemented by those of the State, through the National Agricultural Investment Plan (PNIA) and the Presidential Emergency Program (PPU).

In all these actions are also added those of the private sector in the cocoa sector that has made contributions amounting to 16 billion CFA francs for the sustainable development of the cocoa sector in the framework of Public-Private Partnership Platform.

I would like to thank all our development partners for their actions in order to promote a sustainable cocoa economy.

I would also note the significant progress in the fight against the worst forms of child labor through the personal involvement of the First Lady, Mrs. Dominique Ouattara.

I then congratulate and thank Madam First Lady, for her commitment in this important fight for the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire.

Considering the success of the reform of the cocoa sector, I would now like to congratulate the entire team who contributed:

- Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan, the Conductor
- Minister of Agriculture and all his collaborators;
- Madam DG of Conseil du Café- Cocoa and her collaborators who implement this reform;

I also congratulate Mr Minister of State, Lambert Kouassi Konan, President of the Board of Directors who has, once again, put his experience and undeniable human qualities, serving this sector.

But I would emphasize again that it is above all, to our Dear Parents producers that we have the good health of the cocoa sector. Yes, thanks to your work and your commitment! And the impressive results we have recorded are evidence of the effectiveness of your action.

The entire nation makes you so honor through the celebration of the Day of Cocoa and Chocolate.

Finally I would like to congratulate all the winners of this second edition of the Day of Cocoa and Chocolate and the brave pioneers who deserved tribute has been made.

Finally I would like to congratulate all the winners of this second edition of the JNCC and the brave pioneers who deserved tribute has been made.

I encourage you to continue to intensify efforts for the sustainable development of the sector. I count on you.

Dear parents producers,

I know that your needs are still great. But I want to assure you that major projects are underway. I have instructed the government, in collaboration with the Conseil du Café Cacao to expedite finalization. These will enable the harmonious development of the sector and meeting your expectations.

I would like to reiterate my firm commitment to improving your living conditions and those of all your families. We will spare no effort to achieve this.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen, Dear parents women producers and producers,

As you know, our country is the world's largest cocoa producer.

Today we hold about 45% of global market share. We do not intend to stop there.

Our ambition is to increase this market share while remaining competitive; it is also to transform more and more our production of cocoa and continue to increase your income.

To achieve this ambition, significant challenges must be addressed.

I think first of the modernization of our production system, which requires from us to be proactive in adopting innovations to help improve farm productivity.

The second challenge is linked to climate change for which solutions which protect the environment, natural resources, including forest reserves should be favored.

Regarding the preservation of forest reserves, I have instructed the Minister of Water and Forests and the SODEFOR to suggest to me relevant proposals to eliminate the illegal occupation of these forests.

The third challenge that I think is important to note is that of the creation of added value through improvement of semi-finished and finished products beans conversion rate. You will have more income per kilogram of cocoa product.

The government will take measures so that a greater amount of cocoa is processed on Ivorian soil.

We must also continue to promote the consumption within the traditional consumer countries but also within the emerging countries and the rest of Africa because the potential is enormous.

Dear parents producers,

I would finally urge you to put a definitive end to child labor in the cocoa production.

I insist, because this issue is particularly close to heart, the First Lady and me.

The place of our children is in school. It is in this spirit that the Government recently introduced compulsory education for all children of 0-16 years old.

Our kids are the Ivory Coast tomorrow and our duty is to prepare them to take our succession by educating them.

Dear parents producers,

I am aware of the crucial role you should play in our ambition to make Côte d'Ivoire an emerging country.

I know I can count on you for the realization of this ambition.

As for me, I will spare no effort to ensure continuous improvement of your income and your quality of life.

With this in mind, I am very pleased to announce that the cocoa farm gate purchase price is set at a record level of 1,000 CFA francs for the main campaign 2015-2016.

I know you were expecting this mythical figure for years. We finally give what rightfully yours. We will hold a Council of Ministers this afternoon to formally adopt this price.

Waiting to welcome you to lunch, I wish you a very good 2015-2016 cocoa season and I declare open the celebration of the second National Day of Cocoa and Chocolate.

I thank you.