Zurich, SWITZERLAND, October 24, 2012 – The World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO this week jointly convene a cross-section of representatives from the chocolate and cocoa industry, cocoa-producing countries, development agencies, donor groups, non-governmental organizations and cocoa certifying bodies. The gathering, themed “Innovations in Cocoa Sustainability: People, Planet, Profit”, will focus on improving efforts to boost incomes, production levels and technology for the world’s more than five million cocoa farmers. Host-country Switzerland leads all other nations in per capita consumption of chocolate.

Bill Guyton, president of the World Cocoa Foundation, said that the partnership with SECO was a natural choice for his organization. “SECO and WCF share a commitment to helping cocoa farmers improve their livelihoods. We at WCF bring industry’s perspectives to the meeting, while SECO provides the expertise and resources of a development agency. It’s a win-win for our agenda and ultimately for farmers”, he said.

Hans-Peter Egler, Head of Trade Promotion within SECO’s Economic Cooperation and Development unit, underlines the opportunity of this joint event to promote SECO’s approach towards a sustainable cocoa industry: “Our experience shows that sustainability in the cocoa value chain can only be reached with the contribution of all stakeholders. Especially governments as well as private companies do play within their mandates an essential role to create an enabling environment. SECO therefore supports Public Private Partnership projects, which aim to transfer international knowledge on economic, social and environmental sustainability criteria in supply chains to smallholder farmers in developing countries. This enables the farmers to produce higher quality and quantity and thus contributes to poverty alleviation.”

The two-day meeting, which is expected to attract 200 attendees, includes sessions on new strategies for agricultural development in the cocoa sector; defining and measuring success in programs to support cocoa farmers; direct sourcing & sustainability; the increasing role of women in cocoa farming; and efforts to address the worst forms of child labor in cocoa in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. An Innovations Symposium during the meeting will also highlight new technologies and innovations in the cocoa sector. Cocoa sustainability experts from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Bank, WCF, SECO, chocolate/cocoa companies and development agencies will serve as speakers for the meeting’s sessions.

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About SECO
The Economic Cooperation and Development Division of SECO is responsible for the planning and implementation of economic cooperation and development activities with lower middle income developing countries, with countries of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (transition countries) as well as the new Member States of the European Union. The Trade Promotion division facilitates trade that is socially responsible, environmentally friendly, inclusive and thereby sustainable. It further strengthens the export and competitive position of companies in the partner countries and facilitates imports to European markets. For more information, visit [www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch](http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch)

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 [www.worldcocoa.org](http://www.worldcocoa.org).

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