

Opening Remarks by Richard Scobey, President of World Cocoa Foundation

His Excellency the Prime Minister

His Excellency the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

His Excellency the Minister of State for Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries from the Republic of Congo

Mr. Chairman of the Board of Directors of Le Conseil du Cafe-Cacao

Madame Director-General of Le Conseil du Café-Cacao

Madame Deputy Mayor of Port Boo-ay

Mr. Chief Executive of the Ghana Cocoa Board

Mr. Managing Director of Cameroon's National Board of Cocoa and Coffee

Madame President of the National Federation of Women Cocoa Producers

Members of the World Cocoa Foundation

Friends from the cocoa sector, especially cocoa farmers

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you to the Annual Partnership Meeting of the World Cocoa Foundation, hosted in collaboration with the Conseil du Café-Cacao.

This is the first time that we have held our Partnership Meeting in Cote d'Ivoire, the world's largest producer of cocoa.

We are particularly honored today by the presence of the Ivorian Prime Minister, Daniel Kablan Duncan, who has provided outstanding leadership for the social and economic development of Cote d'Ivoire.

I want to extend my special thanks to two leaders who play a critical role in ensuring the sustainable supply of cocoa in the world, and have been great partners of WCF: Madame Massandje Toure Listse, who has provided outstanding collaboration as the co-host of the Partnership Meeting, and Dr. Stephen Opuni, our dear friend from Ghana.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the most important people in the room today: the cocoa farmers, whose hard work and efforts are the backbone of the entire cocoa and chocolate industry. Without you, none of us would be here today.

I joined WCF three months ago as President. As a new leader, I have tried to follow the advice of the African proverb, "*The fool speaks, the wise man listens.*"

For the past few months, I have been reaching out to many different public, private, and civil society partners in the cocoa sector to hear their advice about the most important challenges that the cocoa sector faces, and how WCF can best provide support.

Based on these discussions, I believe that the cocoa sector is at an inflection point. We face a unique opportunity to deepen our efforts to build a sustainable supply chain where farmers lives are improved, the environment is better protected, and all participants prosper and grow.

This is why we have framed this year's Partnership Meeting around the theme of "*People, Planet, and Profit in a Changing World.*"

As a newcomer to the sector, I want to share with you my admiration for what everyone here has accomplished. I previously worked for the World Bank for 30 years, and I want to attest that there is no other agricultural commodity in the world that has developed such a strong and effective public-private partnership as cocoa.

I have also never seen an industry with such a passionate and knowledgeable set of actors, where everyone in the supply chain feels connected -- from the farmer in Soubray, to the chocolate processor in Abidjan, to the chocolate manufacturer in Japan, Europe, or the Americas.

We have much to celebrate, particularly the launch of the new CocoaAction strategy that has aligned industry investment around best practices for agricultural productivity and community development in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

But we still face many challenges that require further work from all of us. I want to flag four areas where I intend to deepen WCF's impact.

First, we need to ensure sustainable livelihoods of cocoa farmers around the world, many of whom continue to live below the poverty line. How will we do this? By investing in productivity measures that will boost farmer yields and farmer incomes. Under CocoaAction, we aim to double yields per hectare, through improved planting material, fertilizer applications, and better agricultural practices.

But productivity increases alone are not sufficient, and we also need to focus on complementary measures to increase incomes. These include (1) promoting alternative income generating activities for farmers, (2) ensuring an effective agricultural policy framework that benefits farmers, and (3) more inclusive growth that empowers women farmers and engages the youth.

And we need to continue to invest in value-added cocoa processing in producing countries and grow demand for cocoa products in emerging markets. You will hear more about these issues later today.

Second, we need to scale up the reach and impact of our sustainability programs. We are on track to reach 300,000 farmers in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire by 2020 under CocoaAction. This is a huge accomplishment.

But at the same time, I want to challenge us to be more ambitious. How can we better support the 6 million global cocoa farmers involved in the value chain? To this end, I want to increase the number of WCF member companies participating in CocoaAction

in West Africa. I also want seize opportunities to scale up partnerships for cocoa sustainability in new regions, like Latin America and Southeast Asia.

I have a special message for my old friends in the international finance community. The private sector is making significant investment in these programs, and we need your co-financing to help move these innovative efforts to scale. We look forward to our continued discussions with IFC, World Bank, AFDB, USAID, and other financing partners.

The third area where I want to deepen WCF impact relates to environmental sustainability. Over the past 50 years, over half the world's tropical forests have been lost. This deforestation has been driven by a small number of agricultural commodities, primarily palm, soy, and timber.

But cocoa has also played a role in some parts of West Africa and Latin America. WCF and our Members are committed to working with the origin governments, development partners, and environmental groups to help tackle the challenges of deforestation and climate change.

With government in the lead on designing appropriate national strategies, we will support the government's efforts to promote environmentally sustainable cocoa production, with a focus on supporting increased productivity to reduce pressure on protected areas. Our session later today on deforestation will explore these issues in more detail.

My fourth and final point is to stress the importance of increased transparency and accountability of all actors in the supply chain. I want all of you in the room to hold WCF accountable for the delivery of what we promise.

I believe that increased sharing of information among us will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of both private sector investment and public sector resource allocation. The more that industry, governments, and civil society (including farmers) work together, the more likely we will get things rights and have impact on the ground.

To this end, WCF has been publicly disclosing on our website over the past few months a lot more information about who we are and what we do, including our bylaws, finances, analytical work, and new knowledge products about lessons learned and good practices. We have an interesting session tomorrow on transparency and accountability, the first time this topic has been covered in a cocoa meeting.

Let me close by again by welcoming you to the Partnership Meeting. You can see that we have developed a very full program, designed to highlight the strategic directions of WCF and emerging challenges in the cocoa sector.

There is another African proverb that says "*Wisdom does not come overnight.*" We all are on a shared journey to enhance the sustainability of the cocoa sector, and improve the livelihoods of the cocoa farmers, their families, and their communities.

On behalf of the WCF Team, I hope that the discussions over the next two days enrich our understanding, and inspire us to work harder to accelerate inclusive and sustainable growth in cocoa.

Thank you.