A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE WORLD COCOA FARMERS ORGANIZATION (WCFO) TODAY, THE 17-06-2019, IN REGARDS TO THE DECISION TAKEN ON 12-06-2019, BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GHANA AND IVORY COAST ON THE SALE OF COCOA BEANS.

In the light of the recent joint declaration between the governments of Ghana, and Ivory Coast, regarding the suspension of sale of cocoa beans with effect from crop year 2020/2021, the World Cocoa Farmers Organization (WCFO) writes this Communique, calling upon both governments to reconsider the decision that they have taken. As much as we fully understand your position to protect the interest of their citizens, WCFO has as an obligation to defend and protect the interest of its members in the sector.

That is why WCFO, hereby stipulate the following points as “major” concerns to its members (cocoa farmers and farm workers):

- Cocoa farmers, who are responsible for the production of cocoa crop, were not involved during the meeting and were not part of making this decision.
- The suspension of the sale of cocoa beans will negatively impact the lives of millions of cocoa farmers, and their families, as the decision does not provide a clear picture on the alternative for the farmers.
- It is indisputable that this decision will also directly or indirectly impact farmers from other producing countries.
- Such an important decision, that has to do with sector policy and regulation, should not have been taken without the participation of the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), who also represent governments of other producing countries, who were not invited.

Remarks:

- As much as we agree that the issue of income for farmers is a serious issue, we believe that this decision should be suspended, because we think that it is not sustainable and will not be profitable for farmers.
- Every line of the declaration talks about “farmers”, why should others decide on their behalf? That is why it is important that WCFO and other actors are part of such a meeting and decision as it concerns its members.
- Farmers must be recognized as independent business people, and therefore should be given the rights to decide how to manage their business and destiny (see the Berlin Declaration, recommending that cocoa farming must be recognized as a business).
- We suggest that the discussion on cocoa beans pricing be addressed in a more inclusive manner, which will include stakeholders, such as ICCO (Governments), WCFO (Farmers), WCF (Companies) representatives and other state and non-state actors.
Conclusion

As a consequence, the World Cocoa Farmers Organization would like to call upon the major stakeholders in the cocoa sector to open up the discussion on cocoa pricing as a matter of urgency, to include both state actors and non-state actors including the global farmers organization (WCFO) to mobilize the critical mass to champion a common and a more sustainable solution to pricing disparities confronting farmers.

WCFO, hereby call upon the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) to take its responsibility and to convene a meeting, that will comprise all major stakeholders in the sector in order to have a wider and inclusive discussion to address the issue of cocoa beans price and cocoa contracts.

Warren Sako
Secretary General WCFO

Cc to the:

▪ Executive Director of ICCO
▪ Director Le Conseil du Cafe-Cacao
▪ Chief Executive of Ghana, COCOBOD
▪ President of WCF
▪ Chief Executive Federation of Cocoa Commerce