

# **WORKSHOP ON SOIL MANAGEMENT OF COCOA TREE STOCKS AND AGROFORESTRY APPLIED TO COCOA CULTIVATION IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

**16-18 March 2010,**

**Accra, Ghana**

Organised by the Cocoa Producers' Alliance in conjunction with the Government of the Republic of Ghana

## **FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **CONTEXT**

Cocoa was introduced as a crop to Africa towards the end of the 19th century. At the time, given a lack of suitable technical data and with research structures appearing much later, during or immediately after the Second World War in fact, the system of cultivation that prevailed, and which is still widely used, was extensive farming based on planting cocoa trees in forest clearings with little or no maintenance. To increase his production or when the cocoa tree is old and not producing enough, the farmer is forced to create new plantations to the detriment of the forest. Despite scientific knowledge acquired in the mean time which has been applied to developing other, potentially more efficient systems, production increases over the years are due more to expanding the tree stocks under the extensive method. Little or no intensification has been seen.

Analyses suggest that cocoa cultivation as practiced in the various countries involved has impoverished the soil since its introduction into Africa. In terms of yields, some cultivation systems suggested by research and applied here and there have limitations. For exports of nutrients through pod production has not always been offset by inputs of fertilizers or appropriate cultivation practices - agroforestry, anti-erosion systems, fertilizing plants, etc. - capable of enriching and/or maintaining soil fertility. Soils under cocoa tree stocks have thus become highly impoverished over the years.

This soil impoverishment is manifested today by a range of plant health problems relating in all likelihood to soil depletion and caused by the "under-nourishing" of producing cocoa trees. Adding the very advanced age of most cocoa tree stocks and the poor production potential of the widely-used planting material explains

partially the low yields noted here and there in Africa (on average between 250 and 500 kg of marketable cocoa per ha). In terms of replanting with high-performing planting material selected in a cocoa research institute, expressing its potential is clearly weakened.

Faced with this highly-alarming situation, the Alliance Secretariat has deemed it opportune to organise this workshop on Soil Management of Cocoa Tree Stocks in Agroforestry applied to Cocoa Cultivation in West and Central Africa.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The workshop aims to identify and propose solutions with the potential to restore fertility to soils underneath cocoa trees whilst protecting the environment and meeting the health safety requirements of consumers. It will also counteract the depletion of forest reserves in most producing countries by proposing strategies for using fallow land and old cocoa plantations to renew ageing or damaged tree stocks. The sustainability of cocoa cultivation in African member countries of the Alliance depends on this. No doubt the results of the workshop will be of interest to other member countries.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The meeting is aimed principally at:

- representatives of Ministries and institutions in charge of the cocoa sector,
- officers in cocoa research structures responsible for agronomic issues, cultivation systems and agroforestry,
- representatives of supervisory structures,
- representatives of cocoa farmer organisations,

## **WORKSHOP SEQUENCE**

The work will take the form of discussions and exchanges, led by a moderator/facilitator, following a keynote presentation by an expert in fertilization and a brief presentation by each country of its situation and any strategies already adopted.

## **WORKING LANGUAGES**

The working languages are French and English. Simultaneous interpretation will be available in these two languages exclusively.

## **PLACE AND DATE**

The Workshop will be held on 16-18 March 2010 in Accra, Ghana

## **ENTRY FORMALITIES**

### **a) Required conditions**

All delegates are required to have a national passport or a stamped international travel document giving them the right of entry to Ghana and valid for at least six months with effect from the date of entry in the country.

### **b) Visas**

Visas are not required for nationals of ECOWAS member countries.

Delegates from other countries are requested to contact the Ghana High Commissions and Embassies in their respective countries for the formalities in obtaining a visa.

## **REGISTRATION**

Organisations are requested to send the list of their representatives to the Secretariat at the address below by completing the attached registration form (one form per person).

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