



## Istanbul 2013

Bridging Tomorrow's Cocoa and Chocolate Markets

**For immediate release**

**Brussels, 22.09.2013**

Nearly 190 participants attended the 2013 ECA Cocoa Conference in Istanbul - a hub for business between Europe and the Middle East and one of the fastest-growing metropolitan economies in the world.

Under the theme "Bridging Tomorrow's Cocoa and Chocolate Markets", the conference brought together prominent panelists and distinguished speakers representing industry, the public sector and civil society from cocoa producing and cocoa consuming countries.

Panel discussions featured such timely topics as market opportunities in the Middle East and North Africa, supply and demand trends in emerging markets, engagement of civil society in sustainable cocoa production and the role of women in the cocoa value-chain.

In his welcome speech, Metin Tabalu of the Turkish Export Assembly discussed the booming Turkish economy noting that "GDP of Turkey almost tripled in ten years" and the "2023 target is \$500bln of exports". Turkey's "unique geostrategic position, dynamic and young population, well-trained work force and competitive industrial sectors" provide the country with a "great investment potential", said Tabalu.

The opening panel discussion "Harnessing market opportunities in the Middle East and Africa" moderated by Francisco Redruello (Euromonitor International) brought out the difference in distribution channels in the region where small shops account for 35% of retail sales of chocolate. Local confectionery traditions and culinary tastes are also fostering the development of products such as camel milk-based chocolate. Speakers included Amine Berrada of La Chérifienne (Morocco), Roy Debbas of Le Chocolat (Lebanon) and Patrick Dorais of Al Nassma (UAE). Chocolate is largely purchased in these countries as a gift and while there are important challenges in supply chain and logistics such as heat, humidity and infrastructure, there is still much scope for further expansion.

The "Supply and Demand Panel" moderated by Pamela Thornton (Armajaro Holdings) closed the first day of the conference. Euan Mann (Complete Commodity Solutions), Amit Suri (OLAM International) and Frank Day (The Hershey Company) discussed emerging cocoa and chocolate markets and their potential for future growth. They noted challenges ahead such as low cocoa prices and labour-intensive cocoa production. If cocoa prices are not high enough, farmers could potentially turn to alternative crops.

The second day of the conference kicked-off with a session on perspectives from civil society on sustainability in the cocoa supply chain. Speakers from NGOs (Antonie Fountain – Stop the Traffik, Youssouf N'djore – CARE International, Marieke Poissonier – Oxfam, and Hans Perk – Solidaridad) presented their vision of cocoa sustainability and how their initiatives address priorities on the ground. Education and communication as well as ensuring that the next generation of farmers chooses to grow cocoa are the key priorities for industry, civil society and the governments.



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Madame Massandje Touré-Litse, Director General of the Conseil du Café-Cacao (Côte d'Ivoire), delivered a keynote speech on the recent reform of the Ivorian cocoa sector and results to date. The biggest challenges for the Ivorian cocoa sector remain sustainable increase in productivity while preserving the environment, social change centered on improving farmers' livelihoods, and better coordination of private-public partnerships.

In his presentation, Richard Kooloos (ABN AMRO) discussed banking on sustainable supply chain synergies. Kooloos saw opportunities for improved livelihoods of smallholders through sustainable supply chain financing.

The conference was closed by an all-women's panel moderated by Filipa Secretin (Nederland S.A.). Esther Stevia Bissa (farmer from Cameroon), Solange Kouamé N'Guessan (UCAS, Côte d'Ivoire), Maud Clarissou (Cémoi) and Marie-Odile Burlot (Jeff de Bruges) provided their passionate and insightful views on the opportunities and challenges for the cocoa sector going forward.

"This has been a spectacular conference" said Scott Walker (the Chairman of ECA) in his closing remarks. "While Europe remains a leading player in the world cocoa and chocolate markets, it is important we all take stock and reflect on the developments that are impacting the sector worldwide. As stewards of this industry, we all need to pursue our efforts in making this sector ever more sustainable for all actors in the supply chain".

### Note to the Editor:

The European Cocoa Association (ECA) is a trade association that groups the major companies involved in the cocoa bean trade and processing, in warehousing and related logistical activities in Europe. Together, ECA Members represent over two-thirds of Europe's cocoa beans grinding, half of Europe's industrial chocolate production and 40 % of the world production of cocoa liquor, butter and powder. On behalf of its members, ECA monitors and reports on developments impacting the cocoa sector, both at regulatory and scientific levels. In addition, ECA is actively engaged in European and International fora related to the industry's contribution to a sustainable cocoa economy.

Selected conference presentations and pictures will shortly be made available on [www.eurococoa.com](http://www.eurococoa.com)

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