



Forum Nachhaltiger Kakao
German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa



PHOTO DOCUMENTATION
May 14-15, 2024 | General Meeting of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa: Inclusive Strategies to Achieve a Living Income | Berlin



Election of the Board on May 14

The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa held its 12th general meeting at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in Berlin. During the meeting, members elected the new board of the association:

Member Group A

- Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, represented by Dr. Artur Ickstadt (appointed member)
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, represented by Jens Busma (appointed member)

Member Group B

- Aldo Cristiano, Ferrero
- Dr. Torben Erbrath, BDSI (appointed member)

Member Group C

- Florian Schütze, Schwarz Group
- Christian Mieles, BVLH (appointed member)

Member Group D

- Evelyn Bahn, INKOTA-network



Speaker Assata Doumbia with Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and board members. From left to right: Dr. Torben Erbrath, Dr. Artur Ickstadt, Evelyn Bahn, Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Assata Doumbia, Christian Mieles, Lisa Kirfel-Rühle, Aldo Cristiano

Congratulations to all board members on their election!



Welcome:

Evelyn Bahn, Deputy Chairwoman of the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa

Evelyn Bahn welcomed the participants. In her speech, Ms. Bahn emphasized the necessity of achieving living incomes for cocoa farmers in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

She explained the current challenges, including the persistent gap to a living income and the need for investments to combat tree diseases and the effects of climate change. Under GISCO's two-year theme "inclusive strategies for a living income," the goal is to enable at least 90 percent of cocoa farming households in the supply countries to achieve a living income by 2030. In this context, she named strategies for improving income conditions, including adapting procurement practices, paying living income prices and promoting income diversification.

In conclusion, Ms. Bahn urged everyone to continue and expand their joint efforts, as this is the only way to work towards sustainable cocoa farming.





Opening:

Dr. Bärbel Kofler, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development

The event was opened by **Dr. Bärbel Kofler**, Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development.

In her speech, delivered in German, Dr. Kofler emphasized the importance of cooperation among all actors along the supply chain to achieve greater sustainability in the cocoa sector.

"For cocoa farmers to achieve living incomes, sector actors must jointly take responsibility. Therefore, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is committed to the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa and supports the cooperation of European initiatives for sustainable cocoa, the ISCOs," Dr. Kofler highlighted in her speech. *(Translated by the GISCO secretariat)*





Opening:

Video Message from Federal Minister Cem Özdemir

Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture **Cem Özdemir** emphasized in his video message to the GISCO members: "The German and European supply chain laws already require companies to comply with social and environmental minimum standards along the value chain. But laws alone are not enough – we need initiatives like this one to create a fully sustainable cocoa sector." *(Translated by the GISCO secretariat)*

Mr. Özdemir urged a stronger focus on fair production, emphasizing that it is unacceptable for cocoa prices to rise while cocoa producers continue to live in poverty.





Keynote:

Assata Doumbia, President of the ECAM Cooperative

Assata Doumbia, head of the ECAM Cooperative and cocoa farmer from Côte d'Ivoire, highlighted the situation of Ivorian cocoa farming families and the challenges they face in her speech.

She encouraged the GISCO members to implement effective strategies to improve the incomes of cocoa producers and urged them, among other things, to establish long-term and direct contracts with cooperatives, pay fair prices, and support cooperatives in digitization and the implementation of traceability.





Working Groups on Diversification

Assata Doumbia, President of the ECAM Cocoa Cooperative

The working group led by **Assata Doumbia** discussed the significant role of cooperatives in the diversification process.

Ms. Doumbia explained that diversification is a continuous learning process. Diversification should not be limited to a single strategy, such as vegetable cultivation. The key is the "diversification of diversification." This includes further processing and marketing of products as well as the combination of various activities such as vegetable farming, livestock breeding, and other cash crops.

Diversification also requires investments in support and accompanying programs to build the necessary expertise and skills. For example, knowledge about seed and soil quality, plant diseases, marketing strategies, or processing techniques. Networking among farmers and the use of digital applications are also essential. This increases the attractiveness of agriculture for young people. Cooperatives play a central role in these support measures as service providers and networkers. For instance, Ms. Doumbia's cooperative employs a dedicated team that offers advice on diversification.





Working Groups on Diversification

**Angela Bühner, Sustainability Manager,
Nestlé Germany (Nestlé Income Accelerator)**

In the second working group on diversification, **Angela Bühner** presented the 'Nestlé Income Accelerator'. The program offers incentive payments for measures such as school attendance, good agricultural practices, income diversification, and agroforestry. Promising results have been achieved in all four areas so far, and the program is set to be further expanded.

During the group discussion, the central role of women in the distribution of cash payments was particularly highlighted.



Participants shared their experiences on how income diversification can lead to additional workloads for women in the cocoa sector. It was emphasized that households should be offered various options for income diversification to find individual solutions.

GISCO could support this by, for example, placing greater emphasis on the importance of gender equality and establishing stronger connections with the governments in the producer countries.



Working Groups on Sustainable Procurement Practices

Oliver von Braun-Dams & Florian Studer, Management, SCHÖKI AG

In the first working group on sustainable procurement practices, **Oliver von Braun-Dams** and **Florian Studer** presented their approach. With "SusChain," SCHÖKI has developed an open-source software that enables a 100 percent transparent and traceable supply chain for all products. Additionally, the software allows for premium calculations and direct payments to cocoa farmers.

The group discussions highlighted that essential elements for sustainable procurement practices include long-term relationships, traceability, strong standards through organizations like Rainforest Alliance and Fairtrade, support for cooperatives and producing countries through, for example, digitization, and the payment of fair prices. It is also crucial to engage in dialogue with buyers to understand their specific needs for sustainably sourcing cocoa.

GISCO could support these efforts by offering further exchange formats and engaging with government organizations in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, as these regulate payments to farmers.





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Working Groups on Sustainable Procurement Practices

Guilherme Pizzi, International Sustainability Manager, ALDI SÜD KG

In the second working group, **Guilherme Pizzi** presented the collaboration with Tony's Open Chain, through which ALDI SÜD pays the Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) for cocoa volumes sourced according to the five sourcing principles. Scaling and the recent cocoa price increase are central challenges. For the living income strategies of GISCO members, expanding approaches for living incomes and involving procurement departments are crucial steps.

The discussion revealed that from a retail perspective, scalable approaches play a central role. Additionally, the necessary transparency of supply chains, particularly regarding the traceability of financial flows and the protection of trade secrets, remains a topic of discussion.

GISCO could contribute primarily by promoting collaboration along the supply chain and coordinated commitments and timelines among members. More spaces are needed for meetings in compliance with antitrust regulations. Furthermore, communication towards consumers could be strengthened, and a guideline for sustainability departments could be created, allowing sustainable procurement practices to be presented to procurement and management as a strategic issue rather than merely a compliance matter.





World Café on Support for Living Income Roadmaps

In the World Café, members discussed support for the Living Income Roadmaps, which need to be developed by GISCO members by the end of 2024.

Participants exchanged ideas in mixed groups at various stations. They prioritized proposed commitments, suggested changes, and developed additional ideas.

These valuable contributions will be considered in further discussions and in the development of support measures.





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IMPRESSIONS





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