

Presentation WCC: Gender and the Cocoa sector (draft June 5): Frank Mechielsen, Oxfam Novib

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, my name is Frank Mechielsen and I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this panel on behalf of Oxfam

Will chocolate be an expensive product for the elite in 20 years time? As it was 200 years ago? How can we get and keep the next generation of cocoa farmers motivated to grow cocoa and not to leave to the city or move to other commodities like rubber or palmoil.

Many cocoa farmers are women. In Côte D'Ivoire, for example, women provide an estimated 45 percent of the labor on cocoa farms. Meanwhile, their contribution is highly under valued. They receive lower wages, receive less training, have scarcely access to land ownership, lack financial assets, and are underrepresented in farmer cooperatives.

Oxfam integrates gender equality in our cocoa programs. In Nigeria we work with Continaf and farmer organization FADU to train 3500 farmers to improve quality and productivity, we aim for 30% participation of women farmers. We monitor to what extent women benefit from training, input provision and cocoa sales. Besides, we develop special activities for women, such as a Mama Cocoa Award for best producer. Oxfam Novib also uses a gender tool WEMAN, a community-led empowerment methodology aiming for constructive transformation in gender relations at family and community level.

In 2013, Oxfam launched its campaign Behind the Brands, which is part of our broader GROW campaign, which aims to build a better food system, one that sustainably feeds a growing population and empowers poor people to earn a living. More than 100,000 supporters urged the 10 biggest food companies of the world, and especially the big chocolate companies Nestlé, Mondelez and Mars to improve the position of women farmers and workers in their supply chain.

In 2014 Mars and Mondelez have published third-party impact assessments which provides a better understanding about the opportunities and challenges women face in their cocoa supply chains. Nestle has also committed to publish an impact assessment. The three companies have committed to publish action plans related to gender. The assessments bring in very useful insights, tools and recommendations to improve the position of women cocoa farmers. I conclude this presentation with the following recommendations for cocoa companies:

- 1) Engage with all supply chain partners and other stakeholders (NGOs, certification bodies, women organizations) to address gender issues and to increase women's participation.
- 2) Track and monitor women cocoa workers and farmers to better understand and take action.
- 3) Provide women oriented trainings and enable women to participate.
- 4) Start gender sensitization within communities.
- 5) Increase in the involvement of women in farmer associations / cooperatives.
- 6) Improve access to input products and financial assets for women farmers.
- 7) Encourage specific women activities (like self help groups)
- 8) Invest in crop and income diversification activities for women

When gender issues are addressed, it can make the cocoa sector more attractive for the future generation of farmers. It is important to create equal opportunities for women and men in cocoa, but also in other crops and other types of income diversification. Furthermore, Research shows that if more income directly comes in the hands of women, this usually translates into improved nutrition and educational outcomes for the children and family.