

ISCR 2017
ICCO ED INTRODUCTORY SPEECH
Lima, 13 November 2017

Your Excellency, Señor Ricardo V. Luna Mendoza, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Your Excellency, Señor Juan Manuel Hernandez Calderon, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation,

Ing. Jorge Amaya Castillo, Director General, Ministry of Agriculture, and Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee for the ISCR 2017,

Dr. Brigitte Laliberté, Chairperson of the ISCR 2017 Scientific Committee,

Distinguished representatives from the Government of Peru,

Distinguished Cocoa Scientists and Researchers,

Invited guests and representatives of cocoa public and private sector,

Honourable farmers, members of cooperative societies, cocoa traders, processors, chocolate manufacturers, civil society groups, policy makers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the International Cocoa Organization, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this first edition of the International Symposium on Cocoa Research (ISCR 2017). I would like to thank a group of institutions and people that have contributed to making this symposium come to fruition.

I would like to first and foremost thank the Government of Peru for hosting this Symposium and for the hospitality in welcoming participants from all corners of the world. I recognize that Lima is a long way from home for most participants, but I am sure you are

enjoying the excellent city of Lima and you will have fond memories of it when you return home.

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Agriculture of Peru, in particular to the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) under the leadership of Eng. Jorge Amaya Castillo, the new Director General of Agriculture, for the meticulous preparations in organizing this event. Thank you very much to you and to your team.

We are sincerely grateful to the members of the ISCR 2017 Scientific Committee for their dedication and contributions in assisting the ICCO Secretariat to prepare for the symposium. The Scientific Committee defined the theme for the symposium and developed the programme after screening abstracts submitted by scientists. The Scientific Committee was chaired by Dr. Brigitte Laliberté. I thank you and all the members of your committee for the excellent job you have done and will continue to do during and after the symposium.

This symposium would not have been possible without the generous financial contributions from Mars Chocolates UK and the Cocoa Research (UK) Ltd. We thank you very much for your support to make the symposium a success.

Ladies and gentlemen, the world cocoa economy is facing old and new challenges which require all stakeholders to work together in a collaborative approach to overcome them.

As with every commodity sector, research is the main driving force to bring accelerated development in the cocoa sector through innovative ideas and technologies. It is in recognition of this fact that one of the objectives of the International Cocoa Agreement, 2010 is to “encourage research and the implementation of its findings through the promotion of training and information programmes leading to the transfer of technologies suitable for cocoa”.

I am delighted today to be among the best cocoa minds from about 75 institutions in the world that carry out active research in cocoa. The journey to this day has been a very long one. It started with the recognition of the void created by the pause in the organization

of the International Cocoa Research Conference (ICRC) and the clamour from the cocoa research community to once again have a global platform where institutions and individuals that conduct research in all aspect of the cocoa sector can share their results among peer groups and agree on common protocols on further research works and implementation of research results.

In this respect the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO) has partnered with the Government of Peru to organize this First edition of the International Symposium on Cocoa Research (ISCR 2017). It was an easy decision for us to choose Peru to host the symposium among a number of competitors. With a rich history of fine and flavour cocoa, high diversity of cocoa germplasm, and an impressive growth rate in cocoa production, Peru stands out among cocoa producing countries.

The theme of this symposium is “Promoting Advances in Research to Enhance the Profitability of Cocoa farming”. The current decline in cocoa prices and low productivity of cocoa farms are endangering the profitability of cocoa farming which is competing for resources with other more profitable commodities. Another emerging threat to the profitability of cocoa farming is the effect of climate change on cocoa production. We would like this gathering of nearly 500 participants from not less than 40 countries to focus on ideas that will enhance the profitability of cocoa farming.

What are the expectations of the ICCO regarding the outcome of this symposium?

We would like the symposium to critically review the impact of climate change on cocoa production and recommend measures that can be put in place in the short, medium and long term to deal with these changes. We also believe that climate change brings opportunity to the cocoa sector in the form of carbon sequestration. The idea of carbon credit and how it can benefit cocoa farmers needs to be explored.

Low productivity on cocoa farms is still a major challenge. But we need to address this issue to focus on quality and intensification of resource use without leading to increased production with the consequent impact on cocoa prices.

Cocoa production needs to move from the current majority smallholder subsistence nature to a more large-scale business-like approach. The package of technologies and innovation to be able to do this successfully is very important and we would therefore like the symposium to propose ideas in this respect.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the importance of research to achieving a sustainable world cocoa economy and the need for a platform like this symposium to push the frontiers of cocoa research for greater development. In this respect, we need to particularly encourage young cocoa researchers in all fields of cocoa research.

I would like to wish you a fruitful deliberation and hope that after four days of presentations and discussions, we would be able to come up with recommendations that, if implemented, will further develop the cocoa sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to take this opportunity to inform you that the ICCO Secretariat will be organizing the Fourth World Cocoa Conference in Berlin, Germany in April 2018. It is our hope and wish to present the outcomes and recommendations of this symposium at the WCC4 for adoption and dissemination.

Thank you very much for your attention.