



PRESS RELEASE For media interviews, contact: Silvia Araujo de Lima, Cocoa of Excellence Programme: s.delima@cgiar.org

The 2019 International Cocoa Award winners!

Celebrating and Rewarding Excellence in Producing High-quality Cocoa Origins

SALON DU CHOCOLAT, PARIS, FRANCE (30 October 2019) – Following a selection and evaluation process of 223 cocoa samples submitted from 55 countries, 50 entrants shortlisted for the 2019 Edition of the International Cocoa Awards waited with anticipation to hear the results. Read on to find out who the 20 winners are and why these awards matter for the future of our chocolate supply.

On 30 October during an exclusive evening ceremony attended by over 500 cocoa and chocolate professionals, the 20 International Cocoa Award winners were celebrated at the Salon du Chocolat, Paris, shining the international spotlight on the work of cocoa farmers, and the diversity of cocoa around the world. Every two years, the [Cocoa of Excellence](#) (CoEx) Programme spearheaded by Bioversity International (now the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT) and Salon du Chocolat recognizes quality, flavour and diversity of cocoas according to their origin. Cocoa diversity is vital for production, as it provides the different flavours, resistance to pests and diseases, and resilience in climate changes. Providing incentives for safeguarding cocoa diversity to farmers and national organizations ensures a portfolio of options remain available for the future.

“The most remarkable evolution of the Cocoa of Excellence Programme is the enthusiasm of the cocoa producing countries to participate in greater numbers every edition. We started this great adventure in 2009 with 20 countries and today we have 55 countries and hope that at the next Edition in 2021 we will reach 70. We are entering a new era for cacao that makes us discover all the potential and the pleasures that its genetic diversity, its environment, its culture, and the know-how of all these women and men that grow cocoa and upon which their prosperity depends. Brigitte Laliberté, Cocoa of Excellence Programme Coordinator, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT.

The Cocoa of Excellence Programme is the entry point for cocoa producing countries to participate in the International Cocoa Awards. This year we celebrate its 10th Anniversary. Over this past decade, it continues to increase awareness and promote education along the cocoa supply chain about the opportunity to produce high quality cocoa and the need to preserve flavours resulting from genetic diversity, the terroir and the know-how of the farmers who prepare cocoa. This unique international programme celebrates and values cocoa beans and the work of the cocoa farmers. They are the ones recognized on the international stage.

For the 2019 Edition, the Cocoa of Excellence Programme received 223 samples of cocoa beans, originating from 55 countries. After a detailed physical quality evaluation, the beans were carefully processed into liquor for blind sensory evaluation by the Cocoa of Excellence Programme Technical Committee, a panel of international cocoa and chocolate experts. Following this evaluation and a robust data analysis, the best 50 samples were selected and processed into chocolate (following the same recipe of 66% cocoa) for sensory evaluation. This evaluation included 35 experts from a broad

range of professions from chocolatiers to chocolate sensory evaluation experts to bean sources from 12 countries including Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. Jury members have expressed in a recent opinion survey if that the main reason to take part in this blind evaluation is the simple curiosity to explore the diversity and unique flavours of these cocoas without pre-conceived ideas as countries and regions are not revealed. Many mentioned believing strongly in the vision and objectives of the CoEx Programme and are proud to be part of this prestigious international competition solely dedicated to cacao. Most attended the ICA Ceremony and are visiting our stand at the Salon du Chocolat.

“The 2019 Edition of Cocoa of Excellence submissions were of exceptional quality collected from diverse regions of the world, making it challenging for the Technical Committee to select the best samples. The general public may view the percentage label of cocoa on a chocolate bar as a representation of its quality, however we understand the hard work and attention given by the farmers in growing quality beans. The perfect expression of aromas and tastes flows out of the cocoa samples, and it’s been a true honour to experience and evaluate the artistry and diversity of these beans.” Ed Seguire, Cacao Cocoa and Chocolate Advisors/Guittard Chocolate, Chair of the Technical Committee, and co-founder of the Cocoa of Excellence Programme.

The participation in each producing country is coordinated by a national committee well connected to producers. Such focal points are key to a well-functioning Programme since they are responsible to invite producers, selecting the best cocoa beans and sending them Bioversity International. The coordination at national level also means an engagement and commitment to improving the process Edition after Edition.

A lot of improvements were made between 2009 and 2013 in the case of Brazil and today we have a well-coordinated national selection with clear rules and good feedback from the producers that come from all the different cocoa producing regions of Brazil and an increasing interest in participating. It awakens and motivates producers to do something different and discover the real value of cocoa. When we were told that 2 samples were part of the best 50 for the 2019 Edition, we were really proud as these cocoa beans come from 2 very different regions: The State of Pará with proximity to the Amazon forest, and Bahia by the Mata Atlantica. We are happy and cheering for the Brazilian cocoa sample to win, showing the world the terroir, excellence, flavours and aromas of our cocoa”. Neyde Alice Bello, Comissão Executiva do Plano da Lavoura Cacaueira - CEPLAC, National Coordination Committee of the CoEx Programme in Brazil.

The CoEx Programme stimulates the sector in up and coming origins through the organisation of national cocoa competitions. More and more countries celebrate quality and excellence at the national level which is the best impact we can wish for, a greater participation and connections between producers, buyers and manufacturers at national level to bring more of the value added at origin. The producers in the best 50 and those winning an International Cocoa Award can play a strong role of quality champion in their cocoa communities. This is the case in the Philippines of Mr Jose Saguban who received a lot of support since he was informed that he was part of the best 50 samples in the world for this 2019 Edition and received support to travel to Paris to attend the celebrations at the Salon du Chocolat.

Mr Jose Saguban has become a real inspiration for many of our small cocoa farmers in the Philippines. The local people in our area including the media and the government offices are very proud of Mr. Jose Saguban for he is now the inspiration of our small farmers. His face is everywhere in the newspapers not only in the local but also in the national paper. With his achievement, government offices offered assistance in the form of a loan to improve his farm and the farms nearby. Indeed, a celebration for small and

diversified farming. All small cacao farmers in our country were elated to learn of this good news. We organized a delegation of more than 20 individuals to participate in the Salon du Chocolat and witness the celebration of Philippine cacao as one of the 50 best in the world. We will celebrate not only Mr. Saguban but the whole cacao industry in the Philippines. We thank the Cocoa of Excellence Programme for giving us this opportunity to produce the best cacao beans in the same time conserving our environment. Philippines will push for a biodiverse cacao farming system. Valente Turtur, Chairperson of the Philippine Cacao Industry Council and President of the Cacao Industry Development Association of Mindanao

For many participating cocoa producers, the International Cocoa Awards are the “Cocoa Olympics” said Chris Jahnke from Australian Chocolate Pty Ltd. N’Koh Ambroise of Côte d’Ivoire said: *“I participate because with my passion and knowhow, I am one of the best cocoa farmers in the world and I have to go through this “royal” way to be known from all those participating in the cocoa value chain”*. For Shadel Nyack Compton, Belmont Estate, Grenada, *“we participated in the CoEx Programme to give further recognition and validation to the high-quality cocoa that we produce here on the island of Grenada and also to encourage our young people to become cocoa farmers and cocoa entrepreneurs. We are indeed thrilled by the news of being selected among the best 50. Thank you so much for the opportunity. It means a lot for us, for Grenada and of course for our farmers and community. We are excited and looking forward to the ICA awards in October.”*

The families of these proud cocoa producers share the excitement. The aunt of Gustavo Díaz Cruz from Puerto Rico, in the best 50 shared with us: *We have received with great pleasure the news that our nephew, Gustavo Díaz, was selected among one of the best 50 cocoa samples! This is such an important recognition for our family, since he is a young cocoa producer in Puerto Rico that was not intimidated by the vast devastation that Hurricane María caused in Puerto Rico and in particular in his small farm. As soon as the strong hurricane winds subsided, he and his family struggled to get the cocoa trees up, so that they could recuperate. Therefore, for our family, this recognition is extremely important, for it is also a recognition of his resilience and courage. Thanks in advance, the proud aunt, Cruz María.*

Casey Keiderling of Emmoní in Bolivia said she was very grateful and proud of being part of the best 50 and thanks Bioversity and the NGOs in Bolivia that fight to promote cacao of excellence and the opportunity to show their work. Almost 100 people from the local communities Baures and Huacaraje participated in collecting this wild cacao; they are part of this success and are all very proud.

From these best 50 entrants, 20 International Cocoa Awards were selected and celebrated during the Ceremony held today at the Salon du Chocolat in Paris, France. Cocoa producing countries travelled to Paris in delegations to attend the Ceremony. They visited the Cocoa of Excellence stand and met with the coordination team, Organisers and Partners. They could taste chocolate from all the best 50 cocoa beans samples including theirs. For many of them it was the first time that they tasted chocolate made from their own beans and meet with buyers and chocolate makers.

“This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Salon du Chocolat and we are delighted to have worked with Bioversity International over the past ten years in gathering the world’s top chocolate makers, producers and international experts who can critically evaluate the qualitative aspects of cocoa. Thank you to all those who have participated, and a special congratulations to the winners.” François Jeantet, Creator of the Salon du Chocolat and co-organiser of the Cocoa of Excellence Programme.

The 20 International Cocoa Awards for the 2019 Edition, in alphabetical order, are:

Africa & the Indian Ocean

- **Côte d'Ivoire** - N'Koh Ambroise - Azaguié, Abé begnini, Lagunes
- **Ghana** - Samuel Tetteh - Nobi, Korboe Nkwanta, Nobi, Abuakwa North
- **Madagascar** - Lalatiana Andrianarison - Mangabe, Antranokarany, Ambanja
- **Madagascar** - MAVA SA, ferme d'Ambohimena Sud - Ambohimena Sud, Ambohimena, Ambanja
- **Tanzania** - Mababu Cooperative - PO Box 72, Mbeya, Kyela

Asia, Pacific & Australia

- **Fiji** - Manoa Raika Cocoa Farm - Naweni, Naweni, Cakaudrove
- **Hawaii** - Likao Kula Farm, Kokoleka Lani Farm and Pa'ani Farm - 75-1038 Kamalani St, 78-6749 Mamalahoa Hwy and 83-5599 E Middle Keel Rd, Holualoa and Captain Cook, North and South Kona
- **Malaysia** - Cocoa Research and Development Center (CRDC) Bagan Datuk - MCB, CRDC Bagan Datuk, Peti Surat 30 Jln Sungai Dulang, 36307 Sungai Sumun
- **Philippines** - Jose Saguban - Kialaw, Malabog, Paquibato District
- **Taiwan** - Joy Cacao Coffee Plantations - No 30-1, Guangfu Rd, Gaoshu Township, Pingtung County
- **Vietnam** - Hồ Văn Lâu - Số 67, Ấp Bình, Dưỡng Điền, Châu Thành

Central America & Caribbean

- **Belize** - Maya Mountain Cacao Ltd - San Jose Village, Zone 2, Toledo
- **Dominican Republic** - Jose Antonio Martinez Rojas - Seccion El Rejon, El Mamey, Los Hidalgos, Puerto Plata
- **St Vincent and the Grenadines** - Paula Pompey and St Vincent Cocoa Company Limited - Lowmans Windward, Georgetown, Charlotte
- **Trinidad and Tobago** - Leroy Peters - 37 ¾ Mile Mark Paria Main Road, Sangre Grande, Grande Riviere
- **Trinidad and Tobago** - Martin Matthew and Jacqueline Matthew - Whisky Trace, Four Roads, Sangre Grande, Tamana

South America

- **Bolivia** - Emmoní de los municipios de Baures y Huacaraje - Estancia El Pilar, Carretera Baures, Municipio de Huacaraje, Provincia Iténez
- **Colombia** - Federación Nacional de Cacaoteros - Granja Villa Mónica, San Vicente de Chucurí, Santander
- **Ecuador** - Costa Esmeraldas Cacao Company - Km 17 vía Tonchigue, Muisne, sector 7 de Agosto, Tonchigue, Atacames
- **Venezuela** - Jose Wilmer Kattah Reyes - Consejo Comunal Vuelta Redonda, Sector Caño Gaitan, Municipio Páez, Parroquia Urdaneta

For the full summary information on each of the best 50 samples and their flavour profile visit:

<http://www.cocoaofexcellence.org/the-best-50-samples-2019-edition>

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KEY FIGURES

- **55 producing countries** participated.
- **223 samples of cocoa beans** received.
- **50 high quality cocoa samples selected** and processed into tempered chocolate and moulded (66% cacao). Information available on the samples (producer, genetic origin, chocolate flavour profile and contact details).
- **35 chocolatiers and sensory evaluation experts and 7 Technical Committee member experts** blindly evaluated the 50 chocolate samples.
- **20 samples received an *International Cocoa Award*.**

About the Cocoa of Excellence Programme

The Cocoa of Excellence Programme is the entry point for cocoa-producers to participate in the International Cocoa Awards (ICA), a global competition celebrating the diversity of cocoa flavours and recognizing the skills and know-how of the men and women who produce it. The Cocoa of Excellence Programme is coordinated by Bioversity International and jointly organized with Salon du Chocolat in partnership with: Guittard Chocolate, Seguinte Cacao, Cocoa and Chocolate, Barry Callebaut, Puratos, the Cocoa Research Centre of the University of the West Indies (CRC/UWI), Valrhona, with contribution of CocoaTown. The Cocoa of Excellence Programme was founded in 2008 by Bioversity International, Salon du Chocolat and CIRAD with support from the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), ICCO, Guittard Chocolate, the Cocoa Research Centre of the University of the West Indies, Mars, Barry Callebaut, and Puratos. If you are interested in becoming a partner or sponsor of the Cocoa of Excellence Programme, please contact the Programme Coordination. www.cocoaofexcellence.org

About the Alliance Bioversity International - CIAT

The Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) delivers research-based solutions that harness agricultural biodiversity and sustainably transform food systems to improve people's lives. Alliance solutions address the global challenges of poverty, malnutrition, climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss. The Alliance works with local, national and multinational partners from low- to high-income countries across Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa, and with the public and private sectors. With partners, the Alliance generates evidence and mainstreams innovations in large-scale programmes to create food systems and landscapes that sustain the planet, drive prosperity and nourish people. The Alliance is part of CGIAR, the world's largest agricultural research and innovation partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to reducing poverty, enhancing food and nutrition security, and improving natural resources. www.bioversityinternational.org / www.ciat.cgiar.org / www.cgiar.org

About Salon du Chocolat

Salon du Chocolat, created by Sylvie Douce and Francois Jeantet, is organized and publicised - in France and abroad - by the global communication agency Event International.

In 25 years, Salon du Chocolat has become the largest BtoC and BtoB event dedicated to chocolate and cocoa.

Ranked among the 14 reasons to go to Paris by Condé Nast Traveler and the 10 best gourmet events in the world by World Guide, Salon du Chocolat is : 10.8 million visitors, 237 editions worldwide, 15 editions per year on average, a worldwide network of professionals and media located in 34 cities and 17 countries. www.salon-du-chocolat.com