



NEWS RELEASE

OLAM AND PARTNERS CONSEIL REGIONAL DE SAN PEDRO, BLOMMER CHOCOLATE AND COSTCO WHOLESALE IMPROVE RURAL LIVELIHOODS THROUGH SUSTAINABLE COCOA PROGRAMME

Inauguration of primary school, health clinic and cocoa warehouse valued over 54 million CFA (US\$114,000)

San Pedro, Côte d'Ivoire, April 16, 2014 – Olam International Limited, a leading agri-business operating across the supply chain in 65 countries, has together with partners Blommer Chocolate Company, Costco Wholesale and Conseil Régional de San Pedro, inaugurated a health centre, primary school and warehouse in San Pedro and Soubré. With a value of more than 54 million CFA (US\$114,000) these buildings were constructed in recognition of the strong performance of three cocoa co-operatives in the villages of Doba (nursery school); Dagadji (health centre) and Méagui (warehouse).

Launched in 2009, the *Sassandra Sustainability Programme* is part of the [GrowCocoa](#) partnership, a JV between Olam and Blommer, and supported by the international retailer Costco. It aims to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farming communities by addressing rural poverty. This includes increasing producers' agricultural knowledge, the provision of seedlings, strengthening co-operative managers' skills, plus ongoing practical training in labour and gender issues. Evaluation of the co-operatives helps to identify gaps for improvement and specific performance indicators are considered:

- Farmer comprehension and application of training;
- Quantity and quality of cocoa collected from farmer members, and
- Evaluation of the traceability system (including the cocoa growers' individual identification, the treatment of cocoa trees against disease, tracking of cocoa volumes delivered by the co-operatives, and transparency on premium usage).

Over the last five years this commitment has also included the construction of health and maternity centres, primary and nursery schools, water pumps and co-operative warehouses in cocoa producing communities.

Within this context Olam, Blommer and Costco, with the Conseil Régional de San Pedro, congratulated the three co-operatives by awarding over 54 million CFA (US \$114,000) for community infrastructure. The three co-operatives respectively selected:

- A rural health centre delivering malaria treatment, vaccinations, and short-term over-night medical care;
- A primary school which can cater up to 150 children with two school teachers appointed by the Ministry of Education
- And a large cocoa warehouse.

With all three buildings now fully functioning the inauguration ceremony took place on Saturday April 5 in the presence of Costco Executives Sheri Flies, Associate General Merchandise Manager, Global Sourcing and Leanne Miller, Buyer, Corporate Foods.

Commenting on the award allocation, Sheri Flies said: "I am really proud of this programme and what we are building. Social investment is crucial if communities are to thrive for the long-term. Women's needs and ensuring that they are given a seat at the table must remain at the forefront while good health and literacy are essential for helping both men and women become commercial farmers with the ability to give their families choices in life."

Kip Walk, Corporate Director of Sustainability, Blommer Chocolate Company said: "The *Sassandra Programme* demonstrates the impact made by having the right collaboration of partners working

towards a common goal. The programme's holistic approach of providing agricultural training and systems that strengthen the overall community is one that the partners believe will lead to a vibrant cocoa sector and the long-term success of the cocoa farming family."

Andrew Brooks, Cocoa Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Manager, Olam added: "There are two key points to ensure industry investment in communities has long term impact: that the communities themselves have a choice in what's needed and that plans are approved by the respective authorities as to how the building is run as well as how it is built. With children in the classroom, families receiving the necessary healthcare and cocoa in the warehouse, we are satisfied our collaboration is delivering against these two objectives."

The ceremony was attended by the main stakeholders of the cocoa sector:

- The First Lady, President of the National Oversight Committee for Actions against trafficking, exploitation and child labour, was represented by Mr Coulibaly Brahim, Communication Director for the Office of the First Lady;
- The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs was represented by Madame Tano and
- The 'Conseil de Café et Cacao' was represented by Madame Rosemarie Tano Sustainability representative.

The *Sassandra Programme* fulfills the eight principles of the [Olam Livelihood Charter](#) which seeks to address holistically the economic, social and environmental needs of farming communities in emerging markets.

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About Outspan Ivoire

Outspan Ivoire began operating in Côte d'Ivoire in 1998 as a registered cocoa and coffee exporter. Outspan Ivoire is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Olam International and has built up a strong presence in all the cocoa/coffee regions with regional offices in Abidjan, San Pedro, Daloa, Gagnoa, Soubré and Man.

About Olam International

Olam International is a leading agri-business operating across the value chain in 65 countries, supplying various products across 16 platforms to over 13,600 customers worldwide. From a direct presence with sourcing and processing in most major producing countries, Olam has built a global leadership position in many of its businesses. Headquartered in Singapore and listed on the SGX-ST on February 11, 2005, Olam is a component stock in the Straits Times Index (STI), MSCI Singapore Free, S&P Agribusiness Index and the DAX global Agribusiness Index. Olam is the only Singapore firm to be named in the 2009, 2010 and 2012 Forbes Asia Fabulous 50, an annual list of 50 big-cap and most profitable firms in the region. It is also the first and only Singapore company to be named in the 2009 lists for the Global Top Companies for Leaders and the Top Companies for Leaders in the Asia Pacific region by Hewitt Associates, the RBL Group and Fortune. More information on Olam can be found at www.olamonline.com

About Blommer Chocolate Company

Blommer Chocolate Company is the largest cocoa processor and ingredient chocolate supplier in North America. With over 650 employees and four strategically located manufacturing facilities in North America, the company provides comprehensive business solutions for domestic and international customers of all sizes in the confectionery, baking and dairy industries. Among Blommer's core competencies are cocoa bean processing, chocolate manufacturing, commodity risk management, and product and process R&D. The company is a leader in advancing sustainable cocoa farming, playing an active role in the World Cocoa Foundation and promoting sustainable farming practices through its privately managed programs in Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia and Ecuador. Founded in 1939, the family owned and operated company maintains an outstanding reputation for customer service and quality. For more information about Blommer Chocolate Company, please visit www.blommer.com

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