



STCP Newsletter

S U S T A I N A B L E T R E E C R O P S P R O G R A M

Issue No. 13

Published by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Dec. 2005 - Jan 2006

STCP Undertakes Scoping Visit to Sierra Leone

Before the war, Sierra Leone's cocoa production was on the rise - delivering satisfying income to the farmer, significant foreign exchange earnings for the government of Sierra Leone, and a quality product for the world market. From the early nineties until recently though, cocoa and other farming systems, as well as the supporting infrastructure, have been neglected.

At the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) and USAID Sierra Leone, the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) was approached to send a scoping team to identify a pathway to re-invigorate the cocoa sub-sector and the challenges that need to be addressed towards a more productive and remunerative supply chain. The team, composed of Stephan Weise (Program Manager STCP, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, IITA) and Peter van Grinsven (Cocoa Sustainability Specialist, Mars Incorporated), was on the ground between December 5 and 12, 2005.

Today, cocoa farms typically have old trees that are too tall, rife with pests and diseases and overgrown with weeds, with ensuing low production. There is no cocoa extension and research support. The trading system would benefit from greater transparency, while farmers need improved incentives for the production of good quality produce (Photo 1). Sierra Leonean cocoa is now traded at a US\$200/mt discount compared to cocoa from other West African Countries. Still, in spite of these problems, cocoa is Sierra Leone's prime export product, with a volume of approx. 8,000 t for the 2004/05 season.



Photo 1: Mr Ansumana Kamara, a cocoa buyer, in front of his store in Daru. Photo: S. Weise.

The scoping team assessed that the volume and quality could be improved significantly and rapidly by training and organizing farmers, partnering with the private sector, improving market efficiencies, and aligning policies. The Sierra Leonean cocoa sector would be able to benefit from the experiences of the STCP partnership in other parts of West Africa.

Reported by S. Weise (STCP/IITA) and Peter van Grinsven (Mars Incorporated)

Excerpt from Keynote Address by His Excellency the President Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah on the Re-Launching of the Eastern Agricultural Show and Trade Fair in Kenema, Sierra Leone, 16th December, 2005:

Just last week, Government hosted a team of experts from the international cocoa industry with headquarters in the Netherlands and from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture based in Nigeria who visited several places in the eastern province, and held discussions with stake-holders. From those consultations, we expect that the cocoa industry will be revitalized to reach its former glory days when it was the second largest export crop.... Today, our export of cocoa totals approximately 8,000 tonnes of which a high percentage is of low quality. In the past, Sierra Leone achieved a high price premium on its exports because the cocoa was of very high quality. Now we receive a discount - a price reduction - because of the low quality. I am well aware that farmers feel they receive low prices for their cocoa, and that they do not obtain any benefits for higher quality cocoa beans. This is an important issue, which the Ministry of Agriculture will soon address with the seriousness it deserves. It is my hope that the efforts being made to improve the quality of cocoa will be sustained and, hopefully, this will lead to a proportionate increase in its price overseas.

STCP Steering Committee and Alliance Partners Meet

New and existing partners in the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) Alliance met October 27th through 29th, 2005 in Accra, Ghana to review the results of its three-year pilot phase and the development of a Phase II of this public-private partnership. The meeting brought together over 50 representatives active in the cocoa sectors of Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea (cashew), Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, including the cocoa and chocolate industry and trade, development investors, national authorities and organizations, and international institutions.

The alliance of partners agreed that STCP's goals had been well addressed by the program's accomplishments in public-private partnership building, integrated crop and pest management, cocoa quality improvement, farmer organization skills and tools development, organized cocoa marketing, and social messaging to alleviate HIV/AIDS and child labour. The group determined that in Phase II, STCP will build on these efforts, as well as look into providing additional assistance to farmers and the cocoa sector in the areas of policy analysis and dialogue, access to credit and savings, crop diversification, and environmental services.

At the end of the meeting, a Consensus Statement was issued in which the alliance of partners agreed that a new STCP phase be pursued and there was commitment to the development of a five-year integrated program. After further consultations with a wide range of donors, governments and private sector partners, a series of country-specific plans within a regional program is to be finalized by March 2006 to:

- * Facilitate the scale-up of successful approaches and tools from the pilot phase through training and institutional capacity development;
- * Align STCP Phase II targets with national and regional development objectives and efforts;
- * Strengthen countries' individual capacities to work toward these targets;
- * Ensure that issues across the full supply chain are addressed;
- * Assess the role cocoa and other tree crops can play in contributing to achieving the 6% agricultural sector growth targeted by the African Union and its New Partnership for African Development.

Reported by S. Weise (STCP/IITA)

Timber Rights and Cocoa Agroforestry

In the densely populated Lékié division of the Center province of Cameroon, cocoa agroforests account for more area than do secondary forests and the high-value timber in these agroforests is actively managed. A recent inventory conducted by STCP estimated the average amount of exploitable high-value timber at 38 m³ per ha for a sample of 16 randomly chosen agroforests. For the typical cocoa farmer with two to four ha, the value of this timber is significant, but highly distorted by market imperfections. Because the farmer does not have the legal right to harvest and sell timber, it enters the parallel market and is sold at a fraction of its FOB value.

To illustrate the distortion, 13 m³ and 5 m³ per ha of Frake (*Terminalia superba*) and Ayous (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*) were inventoried on the 16 cocoa farms with an estimated FOB value of \$2,350 per ha, at current world prices, whereas the value of these timber stocks in the local illegal market is estimated at about \$115 per ha. With an estimated 35,000 ha of cocoa in the Lékié division, the paper loss to the local economy is calculated as approaching \$100 million.

Granting timber rights to the proprietors of cocoa farms would eliminate this illegal market.

Study conducted by Drs. M. Tchataat (IRAD, Cameroon), J.M. Betti (University of Dschang, Cameroon) and J. Gockowski (STCP/IITA).

21st National Farmers' Day Celebration across Ghana in December 2005

STCP received a Certificate of Merit from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, for its outstanding contribution towards the development of agriculture in Ghana.



Reported by F. Addo (STCP/IITA)

Start up of STCP Activities in Liberia

A visit to Liberia in August 2005 by Dr. Stephan Weise (STCP Program Manager) and Peter van Grinsven (Mars Incorporated), kicked off start-up activities for STCP-Liberia. In October, Mr. MacArthur Pay-Bayee was hired as Project Manager of STCP-Liberia. To guide programmatic development, STCP commissioned two rapid assessments on the tree crops sub-sector in Liberia - one on cocoa and coffee production situation and another on cocoa marketing.

In November, Dr. Sonii David, STCP Regional Technology/Knowledge Dissemination Specialist, visited Liberia to plan activities related to farmer training and extension. Dr. David and Mr. Pay-Bayee paid a courtesy call on the President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf on November 18 (Photo 2).



Photo 2: Dr. Sonii David (first from right) and Mr. MacArthur Pay-Bayee of STCP during a courtesy visit to the President of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, on November 18, 2005.

Mr. Pay-Bayee briefed Mrs. Sirleaf on STCP's proposed activities to reactivate the cocoa sector. The Liberia project, initiated in October 2005 with funding from USAID, will focus on farmer training on integrated crop and pest management using the farmer field school (FFS) approach, supporting entrepreneurial development by working with farmer organizations and the private sector, ensuring efficient marketing of quality cocoa, developing modalities for the delivery of new cocoa germplasm and catalyzing policy dialogue. Initially, project activities will focus on Nimba County, north-central Liberia. Although cocoa has been grown in Liberia since the early 1900s, production was low prior to the war and dropped further during the years of unrest. Presently, according to FAO statistics, cocoa is the next highest export revenue earner after rubber.

Mrs. Sirleaf commended IITA's involvement in Liberia's post-war reconstruction effort, noting that the STCP project would have a positive impact on the livelihoods of small-scale Liberian farmers. She expressed hope that the project would expand to other parts of the country.

In the meantime, STCP-Liberia has been able to bring on board a participatory extension specialist, Mr. Jonathan Boiboi. To bring him up to speed with the STCP experience on FFS, Mr. Boiboi attended a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) Workshop for FFS facilitators in December in Kumasi (Ghana), organized by STCP-Ghana. In January 2006, STCP-Liberia will conduct a three-week ToT in Sanniquellie (Nimba County) for 18 facilitators on cocoa integrated crop and pest management farmer field schools. Facilitators will include farmers and government extension agents. Dr. Innocent Okuku, participatory extension specialist of STCP-Nigeria, will be traveling to Liberia to co-facilitate the workshop.

STCP-Liberia is thus benefiting from the experience of other STCP country projects with FFS, demonstrating the synergies created by the regional Program.

Reported by S. David and McArthur Pay-Bayee (STCP/IITA)

Reception of Commodity Marks Start of "Food for Progress" 2005 Project in Cameroon

The Resident representative of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Cameroon, Mr. Aboubakar Yacoubou along side the Country Manager of the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) in Cameroon, Mr. Jonas Mva Mva, took part in the reception exercise of 11,000 tons of American rice, at the Douala seaport on 16 December 2005. This was in the presence of the American Ambassador to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, H.E. Niels Marquardt, the Minister of state, Minister for Planning, Programming and Regional Development, Mr. Augustin Frédéric Kodock, representatives of the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Trade and other government ministries involved in the project.

The rice donated by the United States Department of Agriculture to the government of Cameroon under the

"Food for Progress" 2005 (FFP 2005) project is destined to be sold on the local Cameroon market while proceeds generated from the sales will be used to finance rural development and research activities to alleviate poverty, promote agricultural development and create employment in the Center and South-West provinces of Cameroon, under the auspices of the STCP.

The FFP 2005 project will capitalize on the experience generated within the STCP over the past years and shall aim at increasing the competitiveness, income and well being of tree crop producers in these two provinces. The rice is already on sale in Cameroon while the project set aside for implementation in January 2006.

Reported by G. Ndimasa (IITA)

2005 FFS Graduation in Cameroon

The third series of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) graduations in the Centre and South provinces of Cameroon, marking the end of the Pilot phase of the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), took place from Tuesday 6 to Thursday 29, December 2005 (Photo 3).

In all, sixteen schools were opened by the project during this third year. The most interesting aspect over this last year has been the opening of "annex-schools" run by some of the farmers' organizations from March to November 2005. Participants ranged from 20 to 35 persons per school. The course module was re-enforced with the introduction of courses like: the profitability of FFS and the impact of FFS in addition to the usual Integrated Crop and Pest Management module consisting of different agricultural techniques (spraying, shade management, grafting, agro-ecosystem analysis and postharvest processing). Dr. Dieu-ne-dort Wandji and Mr. Simon Bassanaga, the project's master trainers, together with resource persons selected from the national agricultural research institute (IRAD) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER), trained the trainers who then went back to their different FFS as facilitators and helped in the training of the other farmers while the master trainers did the back stopping. With this last year of the pilot phase, the STCP project has trained farmer facilitators, extensionist facilitators and farmers.



Photo 3: Visiting Graduates of a farmer field school in Mbankomo, south Cameroon, show their certificates. (Photo: G. Ndimasa).

During the different graduation ceremonies characterized by an increase in the number of female participants (from 5 last year to 18 this year), the testimonies in all the schools were similar. The farmers in a question and answer series testified to an increase in their yield, estimated at about 30%, an improvement in the quality of their cocoa beans, and also a sharp reduction in pesticides use; all attributed to their participation in the FFS.

As of 2006, STCP envisages to expand with the creation of FFS in the South-West province of Cameroon, a region

that contributes to about 50% of the country's total cocoa production, following its designation in the execution of the "Food for Progress 2005" Project sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Reported by S. Bassanaga (STCP/IITA) and G. Ndimasa (IITA)

Communiqué of the Nigerian Network of STCP in Akure, 29 November 2005

On 29 November 2005, members of the Nigerian Network of STCP met at the Royal Birds Hotel, Akure to review the progress achieved through the three-year pilot phase and the STCP-Nigeria's contribution to the draft STCP Phase II Regional Program Document.

The Network members reviewed the various innovations undertaken in the pilot phase to improve the economic and social well-being of smallholder cocoa farmers and took into due consideration the conclusions of the External Review of the STCP pilot program. They also discussed the Phase II planning process, proposed program objectives, scope, strategy and governance structure.

Generally, the meeting express satisfaction at the accomplishments of the pilot phase while noting that the farmer field school approach to extension delivery has been very spectacular. Members welcome the efforts of the STCP-Nigeria to ensure a smooth and effective mainstreaming of the approach into the national extension delivery systems. They appreciate the co-operation and commitment of all partners. Members also underline the importance of consolidating the progress made in the pilot phase and reaffirm their commitment to supporting efforts to improve the lot of smallholders.

Aware of the difficult task of developing a farmer cooperative and the contribution a strong farmer group can make to economic and societal development, members strongly appeal to donor community to continue to support the development of the Tonikoko Farmers Cooperative Union as it gains vigour and pace.

Members welcome the desire of the STCP Donor Alliance to support the development of the STCP Phase II. They agree that the planning process in Nigeria was thorough and comprehensive and that the Phase II Program Document addresses the other key issues impeding progress in the cocoa economy. Members are pleased to note that other tree crops of national and regional importance are addressed in the Phase II proposal.

Members commend the STCP-Nigeria pilot project team and the regional management of STCP for a job well done.

Finally, Network members wish to express their appreciation to the Donor Alliance for its support and commitment to STCP-Nigeria.

Signed

Prof. Lawrence Opeke

On Behalf of the Nigerian Network of STCP

Fourteen States of Nigeria Pay a Familiarization Visit to a Farmer Field School

Following presentations by the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) to key stakeholders in the Nigeria cocoa sector on the activities and accomplishments of the pilot phase of the Program at different fora, a major stakeholder, the National Cocoa Development Committee (NCDC) has made a move towards adopting and implementing the STCP farmer field school (FFS) approach in collaboration with the 14 cocoa-producing states. NCDC is a broad-based national committee with membership from cocoa producing-states, federal agencies and private sector operators, including farmers.

Towards understanding the processes of the FFS approach and in preparation for its adoption and implementation by the cocoa-producing states, the Training, Sensitization and Implementation Support sub-committee of NCDC in collaboration with STCP-Nigeria has organized a one-day interactive forum for the desk officers in charge of cocoa in the 14 cocoa-producing states. The interactive session which was hosted by the Deputy Governor of Ondo State, Otumba Omolade Oluwateru, on Monday November 28, 2005 at the premises of the Ondo State Ministry of Agriculture in Akure, was attended by representatives of 11 of the 14 cocoa-producing states as well as NCDC's Secretary, Mrs. Kehinde Ajao and other officials of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. STCP was represented by its Program Manager, Dr. Stephan Weise, the STCP-Nigeria Country Manager, Dr. Chris Okafor and the STCP-Nigeria Participatory Extension Specialist, Dr. Innocent Okuku - all of whom made presentations on STCP's activities and accomplishments with emphasis on the FFS approach.

In his welcome address, the Ondo State Deputy Governor, represented by Deacon Ayo Ifayefunmi,



Photo 4: Farmers group photographed with the visitors (Ondo State, Nigeria).

extolled the accomplishments of STCP-Nigeria during its pilot phase and reiterated the State government's commitment to mainstreaming the approach into its extension services. He lauded NCDC's effort aimed at facilitating the scale-up of the FFS approach to all cocoa-producing states. In his own address, the Chairman of the NCDC's Training, Sensitization and Implementation Support sub-committee and the Edo State Deputy Governor, Chief M. Oghiadome, represented by his State's Director of Produce, informed the desk officers that his committee decided to adopt the FFS approach following a clear demonstration of its potential to improve the productivity and wellbeing of the cocoa farmers. The climax of the forum was a visit by the desk officers to a FFS session in Ipoba Balogun, Idanre LGA of Ondo State where they interacted with the FFS farmer-students and FFS facilitators (Photo 4). Commenting on the farmers' presentation of a significant difference between the yields from their usual practice plot and the FFS plot, the fascinated Secretary of NCDC, Mrs. Ajao, remarked "seeing is believing".

Reported by C. Okafor and I. Okuku (STCP/IITA)

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This is the quarterly Newsletter of the Sustainable Tree Crops Program for West and Central Africa, produced by the Regional Office in Yaounde, Cameroon. The STCP Management would welcome any contributions/suggestions.

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SUPPORT:

The core STCP Platform, which is managed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), is supported financially by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the global chocolate industry and trade associations represented by the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF), and Masterfoods. To get a full list of additional support provided by development investors and the private sector to specific STCP associated activities, please contact the STCP Regional Office through stcp-wca@cgiar.org.