



PRESS RELEASE

Naturland demands cocoa farmers be paid fair prices

4th World Cocoa Conference in Berlin – counter-demonstration announced

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Gräfelfing/Berlin – For over five million smallholders, most of them from West Africa, cocoa is the main source of income. It is their fate which will be talked about when some 1,500 players in the cocoa industry meet between 22nd and 25th April in Berlin for the 4th World Cocoa Conference. Naturland demands that the participants in the conference take their responsibilities seriously and pass concrete resolutions in favour of the cocoa smallholders.

“Anyone wanting to end hunger, poverty and abusive child labour in the cocoa sector needs to make sure the cocoa producers earn enough to secure their existence. This can only be achieved by paying fair minimum prices and guaranteeing planning security by concluding long-term supply contracts which protect the smallholders and their families from the extreme price fluctuations on the world cocoa market,” said Hubert Heigl, the president of Naturland, in the run-up to the conference.

Protest demonstration on 23rd April in Berlin

One of the official goals of the conference, which is jointly organised by the German Federal Ministry of Agriculture and the ICCO, the International Cocoa Organisation, is in actual fact to increase the proportion of sustainably grown cocoa, in order to improve the living conditions of the smallholders. But what is sustainable cocoa? Despite numerous schemes and initiatives, international cocoa business is as ruthless as ever. The cocoa farmers are prey to speculation on the world market and pricing pressure exercised by a handful of major corporations.

This is why the organisers of a **demonstration** on the fringe of the conference are also demanding effective measures be taken to combat poverty and child labour. The protest march, one of the sponsors of which is Forum Fairer Handel, a network of fair-trade organisations in Germany, starts at **11 a.m. on Monday, 23rd April**, at the Neue Nationalgalerie. It will end with a rally in front of the Maritim Hotel, the conference venue.

Combining organic with fair trade is the key to productive organic diversity and good prices

“Cocoa cultivation is only sustainable if the farming system is organic and the farmers are paid a fair price,” says Heigl, President of Naturland. Over 4,000 Naturland farmers throughout the world are growing organic cocoa in mixed cropping systems covering an area of over 12,000 hectares. Naturland places emphasis on diversified cocoa cultivation between a variety of shade-trees. This semi-natural cultivation system provides a habitat for many beneficial insects, thus contributing to pest control. At the same time, besides producing cocoa, mixed cropping systems supply citrus fruits, avocados, fuel and timber for the families’ own use or for sale on the local market, thus providing

additional income. Reliable long-term co-operation with fair trade partner organisations guarantees Naturland farmers planning security and fair prices for their cocoa.