Media release

Regulations in the cocoa sector: opportunity or risk?

Bern, 4 July 2024

The members of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa discussed the opportunities and risks of regulations in sustainability at their annual meeting today. They also approved the Annual Report 2023, which summarises the Platform's milestones over the past year.

- At the annual meeting of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, the discussion centred on the opportunities and risks of regulations in sustainability.

- The Platform has already achieved its goal of importing 80% sustainable cocoa into Switzerland by 2025 in 2023. Instruments for this are certifications such as Fairtrade Max Havelaar, Rainforest Alliance or company programmes that are independently verified.

- However, the discussion about regulation in the cocoa sector shows that further efforts are needed to tackle the challenges in the cocoa-producing countries effectively.

In 2023, 82% of the cocoa imported into Switzerland came from sustainable production. This result corresponds to an increase of 7% compared to the previous year 2022. According to the [Annual Report 2023](#) published today, 82% of cocoa imports into Switzerland are now either certified according to an internationally recognised sustainability standard or produced according to a company programme verified by independent third parties. The Platform's goal of importing 80% sustainable cocoa into Switzerland by 2025 was therefore already achieved in 2023. This trend is expected to continue. Filippo Veglio, President of the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, says: "It should, however, be emphasised that certification schemes and verification programs of companies are an important step, but the social and environmental challenges in cocoa-producing countries require more comprehensive, joint efforts on the part of all actors in the cocoa sector."

The discussion on European and Swiss regulations in the cocoa sector showed that it is important for companies in the sector to have a level playing field. It was recognised that the opportunity of regulation is that sustainable business methods could become the new norm. At the same time, some voices addressed the risks. Although the concerns of consumers are being addressed, too little attention is being paid to the consequences for cocoa farmers. When regulations are drawn up and implemented, their possible side effects must be considered: Additional workload for all players in the value chain, unclear benefits and the risk that companies could source their cocoa from less fragile regions.

With this in mind, State Secretary Helene Budliger Artieda from SECO pleaded in the panel discussion at the annual meeting: "We need a "smart mix" consisting of regulations and market instruments. The latter can be voluntary approaches that promote sustainable production while also considering the needs of the weakest players in the value chain."

To do justice to the dynamically changing realities and necessities in the cocoa sector, the Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa will review its target framework next year and revise it if necessary. Participation and the involvement of all stakeholders in the sector remain central here.

Contact for media

Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa
Joël Frei, Communication Officer
031 311 65 11, joel.frei@kakaoplattform.ch

The [Swiss Platform for Sustainable Cocoa](#)

We are a multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together organisations based in Switzerland that are relevant to the cocoa value chain, including chocolate manufacturers, cocoa traders and importers, food retailers, the public sector, non-governmental organisations and research institutes. 95% of all cocoa products imported into Switzerland are covered by our members.

Our 96 members pool their knowledge and efforts to promote greater sustainability in the cocoa value chain. They want to improve the living conditions of cocoa farmers and their families, protect natural resources and create a viable and resilient cocoa value chain for current and future generations.