PRESS RELEASE

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SEND GHANA COMMENDS THE GHANA COCOA BOARD FOR IMPLEMENTING DIGITIZED WEIGHING SCALES

SEND GHANA applauds the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) for taking proactive steps to implement digitized weighing scales for dried cocoa beans at the point of sale starting October 1, 2021. The move, which is ultimately meant to eradicate fraudulent practices perpetuated by purchasing clerks (PCs), popularly known as Kookoo Krakye at the point of sale, is seen as a significant step forward for Ghana’s cocoa sector, considering its potential positive impact on the incomes of cocoa farmers.

SEND GHANA has keenly followed the COCOBOD’s efforts to ensure cocoa farmers earn a decent income, including the introduction and passage of the use of non-adjustable weighing scales to aid farmers in realizing expected income from the sale of their cocoa beans. A study commissioned by SEND GHANA in 2019 called attention to the ongoing adjustment of manual weighing scales by PCs, which adversely impacts the income of cocoa farmers. According to the report, titled “Assessing farm gate pricing and income of cocoa farmers: A case study of cocoa farmers in the Agona East District,” up to 11 kilograms of dried cocoa beans were being ‘stolen’ from farmers during weighing. This fraudulent act was also identified in COCOBOD monitoring findings and a subsequent documentary by the Multimedia Group (the Joy News channel) on scale tampering within the cocoa sector. Together, these reports formed the basis for renewed calls and advocacy for the regulator (COCOBOD) to prioritize phasing out manual weighing scales and introducing electronic scales to check illegal adjustments.

The recent announcement of the arrival and distribution of 40,000 tamper-proof electronic sealable weighing scales to Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs) in fulfillment of the COCOBOD’s commitment to permanently resolve the long-
standing threat of fraudulent weighing scale adjustments came to SEND as good news.

While we commend the COCOBOD on this milestone, we wish to also highlight the need for consistent monitoring and follow-ups to ascertain the rate of usage for these new scales by LBCs and their PCs. Additionally, intensive awareness-raising must be done at the farmer level to ensure that all farmers are informed about the electronic scales and demand their usage at points of sale. To this end, we call on all actors engaging with cocoa farmers, including the Ghana Civil-Society Cocoa Platform and other civil society organizations (CSOs), to sensitize farmers on the digital scales and build their confidence to insist on their usage. Additionally, CSOs should consider undertaking monitoring on the usage of the new scales to complement the work of the COCOBOD.

The vigilance of all COCOBOD field staff and cocoa farmers themselves will play a crucial role in making sure that PCs comply with the new directive to use electronic weighing scales only, and punitive measures should be applied to LBCs who default in doing so. We believe this move will help eliminate cheating tendencies and ensure the payment of exact producer prices to our hardworking cocoa farmers. It will also help farmers fully realize and appreciate the Living Income Differential as they witness a substantial boom in their farm gate prices.

Signed

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(Deputy Country Director, SEND GHANA)

Vision: A Ghana where people’s rights and well being are guaranteed.
The Mission of SEND is to promote good governance and the equality of women and men in Ghana.