

# DRAFT PROGRAM

# CHOCOA CONFERENCE 2026

THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> & FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

BEURS VAN BERLAGE, AMSTERDAM



**We're not just talking about sustainability  
We're leading the change**

# INTRODUCTION

CHOCOA CONFERENCE 2026

## Chocoa 2026: Chocoa Conference Program

**Dates:** February 19-20, 2026

### In transition towards resilience

The Chocoa Conference 2026 at Chocoa brings together global leaders of the cocoa and chocolate industry, authorities of main cocoa producing and chocolate consuming countries, representatives of cocoa farmers, NGOs, innovative service providers and the research community. As an independent platform we aim to bring latest evidence, nuance and inspiration to our professional audience, contributing to a resilient cocoa value chain.

The Conference will include several interactive panel discussions and break-out sessions, featuring expert speakers from different countries of origin, representing different stakeholders and bringing in fresh perspectives. The programme promises two full days with provocative discussions, innovations and a strong farmer voice. Visitors of the Conference can also benefit from sessions organised as part of the Chocolate Makers' Forum and have access to the Trade Fair on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

#### Day 1: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026

| Time          | Session                | Title                                |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Opening                | Welcome & Opening Day 1              |
| 10:30 – 12:00 | 1 – Panel              | We all want systemic change. Right?  |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch Break            |                                      |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | 2 – Panel              | Bottom-up perspectives on resilience |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | Cocoa and Coffee Break |                                      |
| 15:00 – 16:30 | 3 – Panel              | Forward Thinking Farming Models      |

#### Day 2: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026

| Time          | Session                | Title                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 09:00 – 10:15 | 4 – Breakout           | 4.1: Risk mitigation strategies, retainment and procurement<br>4.2: Potential (risks) of data-driven solution<br>4.3: Addressing labour challenges<br>Three breakout sessions, each 1 hour and 15min |
| 10:15 – 10:45 | Cocoa and Coffee Break |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 10:45 - 12:00 | 5 – Breakout           | 5.1: Living Income and Climate Change<br>5.2: Pathways for moving from pilots to scale<br>5.3: Gender, family well-being and resilience                                                              |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch Break            |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 13:00 – 14:15 | 6 – Panel              | Closing Panel - A pathway to transition: connecting the dots                                                                                                                                         |



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# DAY 1: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February

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## 09:00 Registration

## 10:00 Opening Session Day 1: Welcome to the Chocoa Conference

Welcome to the Chocoa Conference by the team of the company behind Chocoa (TCBC). The opening speeches will be delivered by a representative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and main sponsors.

## 10:30 Session 1: Panel – We all want systemic change. Right?

Global and regional trends in the cocoa sector make clear that fundamental changes are needed. Panellists will reflect on structural challenges that block transition, such as land tenure and documentation, restrictions on planting material, and access to services and finance. Is there a commitment of governments, industry, civil society and farmer representatives to do what it takes?

**Moderators:** Anna Laven, The Company Behind Chocoa  
Nicko Debenham, Sustainability Solutions

**Speakers:** Michiel Arrion, ICCO  
Carla Martin, Harvard University/The Institute for Cacao and Chocolate Research  
*Other speakers - To be announced*

## 12:00 Lunch break

## 13:00 Session 2: Panel – Bottom-up perspectives on resilience

Too many discussions about cocoa farming households take place over their heads, without really involving them. In this session, we give them a voice via farmer representatives and local organizations from various cocoa-producing countries. What are their perspectives? What would they consider to be a just transition towards resilience? What is needed to get there?

**Moderators:** Anna Laven, The Company Behind Chocoa  
Suzan Yemidi, The Voice Network, Ghana

**Speakers:** Bengaly Bourama, Coobadi, Côte d'Ivoire  
Ivonne Chávez, Wiñak Association, Ecuador (TBC)  
*Other speakers - To be announced*



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## DAY 1: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February

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**14:30 Cocoa and coffee break**

### **15:00 Session 3: Panel – Forward Thinking Farming Models**

What is evidence for new farming models that works at scale and addresses fundamental challenges, including climate change, land tenure issues, low farmer income, stable supply and poor labour conditions? This session will hear from pioneering companies and organizations about emerging models in a variety of origins, including larger scale agroforestry systems, high input farming with irrigation and cooperative farming models and mechanization. The panel discussion will include their perspective on their scaling journey - and debate their potential in terms of costs, sustainability, positive impact on farmers' livelihoods and supply security, as well as their limitations.

**Moderators:** Anna Laven, The Company Behind Chocoo  
Raphaël Felenbok, Senior industry advisor (independent)

**Speakers:** Xavier Sagnières, Andean Cacao  
Vitor Stella, Cocoa Action Brazil (TBC)

Other speakers - *To be announced*



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## DAY 2: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February

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### 09:00 Session 4: Breakout sessions – Round 1

During this session three breakout sessions (each 1h15min) will be organized simultaneously.

#### Session 4.1: Risk mitigation strategies, retainment and procurement

The cocoa production is a risky business. Cocoa farmers and their families may suffer from health issues, poor harvests, theft, for which they are not insured. Companies and NGOs that have invested in sustainability programs and cooperatives worry about farmers' high turn-over rates. In this break-out we will dive deeper into evidence that shows how financial mechanisms can reduce risks in the supply chain both for cocoa producers and for buyers.

**Moderators:** TBC

**Speakers:** Simon Schwall, Oko Finance  
Isaac Vifa, Asentenapa cooperative TBC  
Other speakers - *To be announced*

#### Session 4.2: Potential (risks) of data-driven solution

How does data and artificial intelligence transform the cocoa sector? This session discusses the potential of data-driven solutions for traceability, quality improvement, farm/farmer organization management and pest and disease control, as well as potential risks.

**Moderators:** TBC

**Speakers:** Maurits Appeldoorn, True Price  
Andrew Meter, Cacao of Excellence  
Sarah Biondich, Pula

#### Session 4.3: Addressing labour challenges

There are several labour challenges in cocoa, not only in terms of shortages and returns on investment but also in terms of labour conditions. In this session we will look deeper into new initiatives that aim to professionalize labour and reduce the labour burden in the household.

**Moderators:** TBC

**Speakers:** Speakers - *To be announced*



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## DAY 2: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February

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### 10:15 Cocoa and Coffee Break

### 10:45 Session 5: Breakout sessions – Round 2

During this session three breakout sessions (each 1h15min) will be organized simultaneously.

#### Session 5.1: Living Income and Climate Change – Powered by IDH

Will pre-competitive arrangements on cocoa trade and procurement lead to effective investments with long term outcomes on resilient farmer income and ensure sustainable yields? Would this impact a stable price development? What can cocoa learn from other sectors? This session will be co-organized and moderated by IDH.

**Moderators:** Renske Aarnoudse, IDH – Cocoa Program Director

**Speakers:** Other speakers - *To be announced*

#### Session 5.2: Gender, family well-being and resilience – Powered by Women in Cocoa and Chocolate (WINCC)

Gender equality and women empowerment are key in building resilient livelihoods. In this session, speakers will provide evidence and inspiration on how existing inequalities and disempowerment of women and girls can be effectively addressed at scale and show how this impacts on livelihoods of farmer families and communities.

**Moderators:** Beatrice Moulianitaki, WINCC Founder, Chairwoman of the Board.

**Speakers:** Other speakers - *To be announced*

#### Session 5.3: Pathways for moving from pilots to scale - powered by KIT Institute

Nice to see how a theory of change brings results on a small scale, often in an optimized setting. But does it work at larger scale? Will the impact scale up with the efforts? Speakers will bring in evidence on how sustainability initiatives and programs evolved from pilot scale to large-scale programs and what expected and unexpected barriers were found on the way.

**Moderator:** Oumou Diallo, KIT (TBC)

**Speakers:** BBF/ETG (TBC)

Vidhya Sriram, CARE (TBC)

Kumasi Drinks

*Other speakers - To be announced*



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## DAY 2: Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February

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### 12:00 Lunch Break

### 13:00 Session 10: A pathway to transition: connecting the dots

In the closing session, we will discuss key insights and takeaways of the break-out sessions and identify actions for the cocoa future. Panelists will reflect upon critical ingredients for systemic change and how to move forward together with a shared purpose: meaningful change in the cocoa sector.

**Moderators:** Anna Laven, The Company Behind Cocoa  
Michel Arrion, ICCO

**Speakers:** Other speakers - *To be announced*



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