

## Russia, Africa And The Cocoa Products



By Kester Kenn Klomegah

**MOSCOW, March 10, 2016 (Business Africa)** -- The V Salon du Chocolat, an international exhibition focusing exclusively on the cocoa industry and that has attracted more than 30 foreign countries (among them were Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana), ended successfully with a serious call on cocoa producing countries to increase export of cocoa and processed cocoa products to meet the growing demand in Russia.

Russia is and remains one of the most promising markets for chocolate worldwide. It is also the largest European market, while at the same time, its chocolate sector has been considered as booming especially with the emergence of new generation of Russian chocolatiers.

The organizers said that the exhibition was to offer all chocolatiers and professionals interested in the cocoa and chocolate industry, to provide a unique platform to communicate and establish informal commercial relations, to exchange know-how and interact with consumers. As such, the key goal is generally to support and contribute to the development of the Russian chocolate industry.

Claire Coutin, Director of the V Salon du Chocolat in Moscow said in an exclusive interview with me that the key results and final assessment of the exhibition that “first of all, key result is the number of companies that contacted me, that want absolutely to participate in Salon du Chocolat in Moscow. They have included in their plan for the future as a number-one exhibition in Moscow, they want to take part in.”

She added: “Secondly, 90% of current exhibitors are satisfied with sales and are looking forward to the next Salon. And finally, we have reached our goal in making visitors happy and giving the pleasure of enjoying Salon du Chocolat.”

According to the director, she would encourage Ghana, Cameroon and Cote d’Ivoire, and other producing countries to supply cocoa to the Russian market, noting that cocoa from these African countries is highly demanded for its classic quality.

Salon du Chocolat, which continues gathering cocoa-producers, chocolate makers and consumers under one roof, hopes to grow and become more significant in Russia, both in size and from an economic point of view and consequently help smoothen trade difficulties and barriers for exporting countries.

Discussing further about how many, approximately, people visited the exhibition, Director Coutin explained that since the exhibition was exactly twice the size of the previous Salon and obviously it was full, streaming with visitors, it showed that there were twice as many visitors this year. So the estimation, the V Salon du Chocolat was visited by more 30,000 people.

At the exhibition, one leading Russian super-premium chocolate manufacturer presented its unique chocolate processors and many other related equipment. The Russian industrial company has acquired vast experience and technical know-how during the 20 years for developing and operating factories, modifying and improving the equipment for manufacturing of chocolates.

According to the information made available by the company's directorate, the factory size includes small scale to large scale production processes from raw beans through mixing of necessary ingredients to well-packed chocolate bars ready for delivery.

For Lyubov Demidova, Deputy Chairperson of the Regional Council for the Development of Relations with African Countries, "business leaders in African countries can also make some efforts to establish large-scale, long-term and mutually beneficial cooperation with Russian partners. In some areas, we will be able to cooperate fast enough and some other areas will require years of hard work to get effective and positive results."

Demodova, however, acknowledged in her interview remarks that the key obstacle has been insufficient knowledge of the economic potential, on the part of Russian entrepreneurs, the needs and business opportunities of the African region, and thus exhibitions and trade fairs serve as good mechanism for the development of fruitful cooperation.

She further said that the three African countries (Cameroon, Cote d'Voire and Ghana) have taken the right step to come to the cocoa exhibition and that Russia together with these countries could do more about cocoa products which are needed by Russian industries.

The Republic of Ghana was represented by the York Trade Corporation, a Canadian registered and certified trading company, and the Ghana Cocoa Board's nine-member delegation headed by the Chief Executive Dr. Stephen Kwabena Opuni. The Ghana Cocoa Board was supported by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Ghana to the Russian Federation, H.E. (Dr.) Kodzo Kpoku Alabo and his staff members at the exhibition.

By participating in the trade event and in future ones, it will significantly help to develop and establish business relations, find and collaborate with new partners for the cocoa industry of the Republic of Ghana.

The Ghana Cocoa Board was established with a mission to encourage and facilitate the production, processing and marketing of premium quality cocoa, coffee and shea nut in all forms in the most efficient and cost effective manner and to promote cocoa products both in

local and international markets. (END)