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**For Immediate Release:**  
**Global Cocoa Project presents**  
**Explore The World of Chocolate**  
*Valentine's Day chocolate tasting*  
*to benefit cocoa farmers in West Africa*

February 1, 2011, New York, NY, San Francisco, CA – Chocolate fans will be delighted to know that they can indulge in their love of chocolate and at the same time make a significant contribution to the Global Cocoa Project's bi-coastal chocolate-tasting fundraiser just days before Valentine's Day.

**Explore the World of Chocolate** will take place in New York at Vintage Irving on February 12<sup>th</sup> from 1-4pm and at the HUB SOMA on February 10<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco from 7-10pm. The event promises to take party-goers around the globe on a discovery trip of the senses. The chocolate presented comes from cocoa beans sourced from cooperatives and estates worldwide. Cocoa beans are cultivated for export by over 55 countries found 20 degrees to the north and south of the equator, including the Dominican Republic, Belize, Ecuador, Venezuela, Côte d'Ivoire and Madagascar – the best of which will be represented at the event. **Explore the World of Chocolate** offers chocophiles and the just "plain-curious" alike an opportunity to taste the incredible range of flavors found in bars and bon bons created by premium makers and chocolatiers like Alter Eco Fair Trade, Amano, Bonnat, Cacao Prieto, El Ceibo, Equal Exchange, Green & Blacks, Kallari, Madécasse, MOHO, Pacari, Roni Sue, Sweet Earth Chocolates, Taza, Tcho, Valrhona and XOCO – all of whom cultivate working relationships with growers from whom they source their cocoa.

As a trusted third-party provider of Fair Trade certification for cocoa and more than 100 other product categories, Fair Trade USA is a lead partner for the event. "We applaud the leadership of the Global Cocoa Project to rally ethical businesses in an effort to educate consumers about the known injustices found in the cocoa industry and the solutions that are available. Through our partnership with the Global Cocoa Project, we hope to grow the demand for socially and environmentally sustainable cocoa, ultimately benefiting the lives of thousands of cocoa farmers and their families around the world," said Cate Baril, Director of Business Development, Fair Trade USA.

Chocoholics can be assured of the delicious selection of chocolates specially curated by Mark Christian, founder of C-spot.com, the freshly launched, comprehensive resource for all things premium chocolate. As if that were not enough, Clay Gordon, founder of the world-famous online chocophile community, *The Chocolate Life*, is one of the event's major supporters.

Partnering with socially conscious chocolatiers is no accident for the Global Cocoa Project. Its

very mission is to provide cocoa farmers around the world with tools necessary for the improvement of their cocoa quality and basic necessities, such as scales, for daily living. Scales are significant because they enable farmers to weigh the fruits of their labor and keep brokers and middlemen who buy their beans honest. Additionally, its goal is to educate Americans about the realities of the cocoa industry and leverage the power of knowledgeable, concerned consumers to help make cocoa growing a profitable and sustainable occupation for farmers.

The proceeds from the event will be donated to Project Hope & Fairness, a 501c3 organization that supports West African cocoa farmers who live below the poverty line, and work in dire conditions without basic needs that run from access to clean water and transportation to other infrastructure improvements.

Shana Dressler, the founder of the Global Cocoa Project, states, “When I found out from Tom Neuhaus (founder of Project Hope & Fairness) how poor cocoa farmers are I thought, ‘Cocoa is the raw material of my favorite food. This isn’t right. What can I do about this?’ This event is one of several ways to create awareness around the issues facing cocoa farmers around the world and especially in West Africa where the farmers are among the poorest. By buying chocolate from chocolate companies that have built their businesses using ethical principles and value chains that support farmers, a consumer actually contributes in the most profound way to the sustainability of not only a company worth supporting, but also the farmers. While many consumers are aware of fair trade coffee, tea and possibly sugar, many don’t realize that chocolate is also ethically sourced by a number of great chocolate companies. As far as poverty alleviation goes, there is definitely a place for philanthropy, but more and more I see the long term solutions being made through social enterprise.”

The Global Cocoa Project was launched at the Hudson Terrace chocolate-tasting event in 2010 where over 350 chocolate consumers came together to support the cause. In the last year the Global Cocoa Project has been working to create an international development project in Côte d’Ivoire which aims to help some of the industry’s poorest farmers in West Africa.

This year, the Global Cocoa Project invites all epicureans and caring consumers to discover distinctive regional cocoa bean flavors, while experiencing an equally important taste of how it feels to change the lives of those who grow them. Come join us in indulging at this delicious benefit at the appropriately international Vintage Irving near New York’s Union Square on Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 pm. Tickets can be purchased at [www.explorechocolate.eventbrite.com](http://www.explorechocolate.eventbrite.com).

## **PARTNERS & SPONSORS**

### **Event Partners**

Fair Trade USA, The HUB SoMa, Vintage Irving

### **Outreach and Media Partners:**

C-spot.com, TheChocolateLife.com, Cocktails for a Cause, Seedling Projects, Hoop

## **Food and Drink Sponsors**

Artesa Wines, Equal Exchange Coffee, FeelGood World, Hansen's, Numi Tea, Pairings, Radio Africa & Kitchen, Tieton Cider Works, Two Degrees

## **IMPORTANT LINKS & RESOURCES**

### **Purchase tickets for the event on 2/10 in San Francisco online:**

**at:** <http://explorechocolatesf.eventbrite.com/>

### **Purchase tickets for the event on 2/12 in New York online:**

**at:** <http://explorechocolate.eventbrite.com/>

### **Global Cocoa Project YouTube videos of past events and project impact:**

<http://www.globalcocoaproject.org/multimedia>

**Facebook Page:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Global-Cocoa-Project/101066316637958>

**Global Cocoa Project:** <http://www.globalcocoaproject.org>

**Project Hope and Fairness:** <http://www.projecthopeandfairness.org>

**Fair Trade USA:** <http://www.FairTradeUSA.org>

**The C-spot:** <http://www.c-spot.com/>

**The Chocolate Life:** <http://www.thechocolatelife.com/>

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## **GLOBAL COCOA PROJECT DESCRIPTION & MISSION**

The Global Cocoa Project (GCP) is a high-impact poverty alleviation project whose goals are to significantly improve the lives of cocoa farmers worldwide through the supply of equipment and basic needs. The secondary goal is to educate Americans about the realities of the cocoa industry and leverage the power of knowledgeable, concerned consumers to help make cocoa growing a profitable and sustainable occupation for farmers.

The proceeds from the event will be donated to Project Hope & Fairness, a 501c3 organization that supports West African cocoa farmers who live below the poverty level, working in dire conditions without basic needs such as scales, access to clean water and transportation.

For more information, please visit the organization's site: [www.globalcocoaproject.org](http://www.globalcocoaproject.org).