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PRESS STATEMENT GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

AN URGENT CALL TO RESCUE GHANA'S COCOA SECTOR

The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference expresses grave concern over the deepening crisis in Ghana's cocoa sector and its devastating impact on farmers and rural communities.

For months, many farmers have endured delays in payment for cocoa already delivered, resulting in unpaid labour, disrupted schooling, mounting debt, and growing vulnerability to illegal mining. The recent reduction in the producer price has further eroded confidence and intensified hardship.

We note that while international market conditions fluctuate, farmers must not bear the full burden of systemic and historical failures. At the very least, existing producer prices should be sustained where increases are not feasible. During years of windfall gains, producer prices were not raised proportionately. Equity and justice therefore demand that accumulated surpluses be used to cushion farmers in difficult years. To penalise them for circumstances beyond their control would be insensitive and morally indefensible.

The Conference is also alarmed by Ghana's weakening position in the global cocoa economy. **Ecuador** is on course to overtake Ghana as the world's second-largest cocoa producer, while the combined output of **Nigeria** and **Cameroon** threatens to form a powerful third force. These shifts, alongside climate stress and land degradation from illegal mining, place Ghana at a strategic crossroads.

We therefore call for the immediate payment of all arrears, transparent financial restructuring of the **Ghana Cocoa Board**, sustained producer prices, intensified investment in productivity, and a depoliticised national dialogue centred on farmers' welfare. Youth participation, research, and local processing must be prioritised to secure the sector's future.

The Conference wishes to inform the public that a detailed pastoral letter on the cocoa crisis has been conveyed privately to His Excellency John Dramani Mahama and the Leadership of Parliament for their consideration and further action.

The rescue of Ghana's cocoa industry is not merely an economic task. It is a moral imperative. Justice for cocoa farmers is justice for Ghana.

MOST REV. MATTHEW KWASI GYAMFI
BISHOP OF SUNYANI AND PRESIDENT,
GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
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