



## **COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE 2025 CRIN IN-HOUSE RESEARCH REVIEW**

### **Preamble:**

The Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) hosted its 2025 In-House Research Review with the theme: **“Advances in Varietal Development of Cocoa, Kola, Cashew, Coffee and Tea for Sustainable Economic Growth.”** The three-day event, held at the Institute’s Headquarters in Idi-Ayunre, Ibadan, provided a platform for evaluating ongoing research efforts, identifying emerging challenges, and exploring opportunities across CRIN’s mandate crops. It brought together Researchers, Policymakers, Stakeholders, and Farmers involved in our mandate crops and programmes; Cocoa, Cashew, Coffee, Kola, Tea, Extension, Farming Systems Research, and Value Addition Research. A total number of over 220 participants attended the event.

In his opening remarks, CRIN’s Executive Director, Dr. Patrick Adebola, commended participants for their swift response to the invitation and used the occasion to speak out against Western initiatives towards promoting synthetic chocolate. He maintained that synthetic alternatives could never match the quality of organically grown cocoa and described the effort as “dead on arrival.” Also, Dr. Adebola expressed concern over the shift in focus of cocoa production from Africa to Latin America and the Caribbean, attributing the development to multinational companies’ attempts to bypass African suppliers. He further noted CRIN’s commitment to supporting farmers, but acknowledged the Institute’s limited capacity to meet the increasing demand for seedlings’ production due to infrastructure deficit as a result of poor funding.

The keynote addresses focused on critical themes such as the impact of climate change on cocoa production, the need for improved traceability, and the application of technology in agricultural research. Comrade Adeola Adegoke, the President, Cocoa Farmers Association of Nigeria (CFAN) advocated for integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and innovative tools to address evolving challenges faced by farmers. Mrs. Blessing Nanman, Visionary Leader/Chairperson of Lingzhi Global Nigeria, emphasized the role of creativity, innovation, and value addition in Nigeria’s agricultural transformation, an agenda CRIN actively supports. Mr. Daniel Gemana, Managing Director of Vertex Agro Limited, called for a robust policy framework to address processing challenges in the cashew sector. Overall, the review reaffirmed the importance of collaborative research, strategic investment, and stakeholder synergy in driving sustainable growth across Nigeria’s tree crop value chains.

Goodwill messages from notable guests further underscored the value of CRIN's work. Prof. Lateef Sanni, Executive Director of the Nigerian Stored Products Research Institute (NSPRI) and Chairman of Committee of Directors of Research Institutes (CODRI), praised Dr. Adebola's leadership and emphasized that Research Institutes remain best positioned to conduct applied agricultural research. Professor Sunday Bako, Vice-Chancellor of Taraba State University, Jalingo expressed optimism about ongoing government policies and their potential to positively impact the agricultural sector. Similarly, the Zonal Director of NTA Ibadan, Mr. Waheed Popoola, commended CRIN's resilience in defending Nigeria's organic cocoa sector and assured participants of national media coverage to amplify the Institute's efforts and outcomes.

### **Key Observations**

- CRIN mandate crops grown sustainably do not only enhance rural livelihoods and contribute significantly to Nigeria's GDP and foreign exchange, but also improve biodiversity and build climate resilience.
- The perennial crops when integrated into agroforestry systems, improve soil structure, increase organic matter and offer long-term carbon sequestration potential.
- The National Cocoa Management Board, approved by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, has the potential to upscale cocoa production from the present 300,000 metric tonnes to 500,000 metric tonnes in the next two years.
- The European Union Deforestation Regulations (EUDR) have placed enormous pressure on cocoa sector and other supply chains.
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a viable substitute to synthetic chemical usage.
- Innovative solutions have been adopted in pest-resistant hybrid development, bio-fertilizer formulation, and micro-propagation techniques.

### **Key Resolutions**

- CRIN will scale up the availability of improved planting materials to meet the needs of farmers nationwide.
- The Institute shall intensify efforts in cascading CRIN-developed technologies and innovations to grassroots farming communities through extension systems and demonstration plots.
- Subsequent In-House Research Reviews will include broader participation of farmer groups for improved inclusivity and feedback.
- Sensitize cocoa farmers on the equitable utilization of revenue generated during cocoa boom seasons.
- Encourage community leaders and public office holders to fund farmer training programs.
- CRIN reaffirms its commitment to climate-smart research and will promote climate-resilient, energy-efficient practices among stakeholders.

- Researchers must present physical evidence of project outputs at future reviews to ensure accountability and transparency.
- The Institute supports the full integration of traceability systems, blockchain technology, and digital tools to eliminate middlemen, reduce post-harvest losses, ensure fair pricing, improve transparency, and data management across agricultural value chains.
- Prioritize local processing to improve shelf life, diversify product offerings, and promote inclusive value addition.
- Promote farmer-participatory composting models for sustainable soil fertility management.
- Funds should be allocated towards varietal release process and the development of supporting infrastructure.
- CRIN shall support and advocate for local cocoa processing initiatives that promote small-scale enterprise development, particularly among youth and women.

## **Conclusion**

The 2025 CRIN In-House Research Review reaffirmed the Institute's strategic role in supporting agricultural innovation, climate resilience, and farmers' empowerment. Stakeholders expressed confidence in CRIN's continued leadership in the sustainable development of the Institute's mandate crops. The Institute commits to translating research into action for enhanced productivity, improved livelihoods, and a more sustainable agricultural future.

Submitted by:

**CRIN Communiqué Drafting Committee**