



### **The Toledo Cocoa Growers Association**

(Neil La Croix – Head of Supply Chain)

Green & Black's has been involved in Belize since 1991. When the founders of Green & Black's were in Belize on holiday and were put in contact with a group called the TCGA, which is the Toledo Cacao Growers Association. The TCGA had planted organic cacao trees at the request of another chocolate company which soon afterward left Belize, leaving the farmers with a very good crop but no where to sell it, and the founders were very impressed with the quality of the cocoa or the cacao as the Mayans call it, and decided that this would be ideal to source as our organic cacao in the future.

(Armando Choco – General Manager of TCGA)

Green & Black's have been purchasing cacao beans from the TCGA since 1993 and ever since they have maintained a constant relationship. Farmers are now able to venture into a business because they know that a stable price will be guaranteed in the future. We agreed a 5 year rolling contract with Green & Black's and this gives us significant time to be planning for the future. We agreed a 5 year rolling contract with Green & Black's and this gives us significant time to be planning for the future, for example they will send their children to school now as they know their crop is producing and they have a market, that's one way Green & Black's has definitely had an impact.

(Neil La Croix – Head of Supply Chain)

The relationship between the TCGA and Green & Black's is essentially a simple one, they grow the cocoa and we buy it. The key points are, one, there's a 5 year rolling contract, two, there's a minimum guaranteed price and three we pay the farmers directly when we receive the cocoa, if you're a farmer that's a lot of security.

(Justino Peck – Chairman of the TCGA)

We have established a business relationship with G&B's and it's been working very well and the impact that it has on the livelihood of the people that we represent is positive, the farmers are enjoying because it's the only source of export market the farmers have, especially in Southern Belize. The farmers themselves are expert but modern systems are being put in place to improve productivity.

(Neil La Croix – Head of Supply Chain)

We also have Extension Officers who are really key, they are essentially farm advisors, they link the farms and they are responsible for passing on training and key advice, it's a really key role.

(Eusebio Salam – farmer)

I'm very proud of the TCGA, they train all of the farmers how to prune, how to harvest and how to maintain their cacao fields. The TCGA plays a very important role. In 2001 we were struck by hurricane Iris and we suffered as all our shade trees were knocked down, but we managed to get back to where we are now because the TCGA supported the farmers with technical information and so now within 2 to 3 years we are back to normal.

Today we had one farmer register to become a member of the TCGA.

(Floriano Chun - farmer)

Their information was really inspiring so I was moved into the world of cacao. I wasted no time and I thought, let me revive my Dad's cacao farm so that's the reason I am here at the TCGA office, to complete my registration.

(Armando Choco – General Manager TCGA)

TCGA has accomplished a lot of things in the last 5 years. During the last 5 years we've increased our membership from 230 to 1088 farms. We've increased our acreage from 300 to 3000 and we've also increased production. In the near future we do not want to depend on external funding to do what we are doing but we want to be sustainably developed by administering our own affairs and I think we are getting there.

(Neil La Croix – Head of Supply Chain) The future strength of the TCGA depends upon them being viable and self funding and our goal is to help them achieve this.

(Armando Choco – General Manager TCGA)

With the continued working relationship with Green & Black's the future of the cacao farms in Belize is very positive.