

# FIRESIDE CHATS

DATE: **WEDNESDAY 26/05**THEME: **PARTNERSHIPS**

## FIRESIDE CHAT 1: REBUILDING BETTER

**EVENT  
SPONSORS:**

### SPEAKERS

- **Cathy Pieters**, Senior Director Sustainable Ingredients & Cocoa Life, Mondelez
- **Katharine Stewart**, Group Corporate Responsibility Director, Associated British Foods plc

- **Giles Bolton**, Responsible sourcing Director, Tesco<sup>1</sup>

**Host:** Yvette Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder, *Business Fights Poverty*

### WHAT DOES 'BUILD BACK BETTER' MEAN FOR SUPPLY CHAINS?

For Cathy Pieters, 'build back better' in supply chains means enhancing resilience. Resilient supply chains help people to thrive, respect human rights, and protect the environment. As an example, Cathy referred to Mondelez's Cocoa Life programme, which involves local communities and partnerships with host governments and NGOs with the aim of supporting the most vulnerable. Cocoa Life is partnering with the FCDO Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility (VSCF)<sup>2</sup> in Ghana to provide grant funding to farmer unions' climate smart farming adaptation plans. In addition, Katharine Stewart remarked that partnerships are an essential part of companies' response to the challenges that emerged with the pandemic, especially considering the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on women and ethnic minorities. For Katharine, partnerships are crucial to help us build back better as they can contribute to improving working conditions, rising transparency standards, and gathering more accurate information on workers' health.

### HOW CAN WE MAKE SUPPLY CHAINS MORE RESILIENT?

Giles Bolton stated that empowering women makes supply chains stronger, more efficient, and fairer. He also argued that, taking into account the lessons COVID-19

has taught us, it is critical that we make our global food system less damaging to the environment. Moreover, complying with living wages throughout supply chains and investing in long-term relationships with suppliers are important for resilience. Katherine added that companies must look at improving the capacity and capabilities of their partners. For instance, as she pointed out, offering training to female farmers in supply chains has positively affected not only her company's environmental impact but also the livelihoods of their partners. The VSCF partnerships in which Tesco and Primark are involved are building this longer-term understanding of actors throughout food and garment supply chains in East Africa and Bangladesh, as well as directly supporting female farm and factory workers to protect their livelihoods and reduce their susceptibility to potential abuse.

### WHAT ROLE CAN GOVERNMENTS PLAY TO FOSTER RESILIENCE?

According to Cathy, governments can construct and monitor regulatory frameworks that serve both producing and consuming countries. For her, adequate regulations enable governments and companies to collaborate around issues of sustainability, climate change, and fair trade. On the same note, Giles noted that regulations can level up the playing field when built carefully and in consideration

to all stakeholders. He explained that, via regulatory frameworks, governments are able to strengthen labour standards

and environmental protection, and there is space for companies to collaborate in the design of these policies.

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## **FIRESIDE CHAT 2: FIRESIDE CHAT ON THE POWER OF MULTI-PARTY PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

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### **SPEAKERS**

■ **Lydia Hopton**, Global Head of Ethical Trading, M&S

■ **Justin Dell**, Partnerships Manager, CARE International UK

■ **Jahirul Azad**, Head of Urban Health, CARE Bangladesh<sup>3</sup>

**Host:** Yvette Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder, *Business Fights Poverty*

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### **WHAT IS THE VULNERABLE SUPPLY CHAINS FACILITY (VSCF), AND WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR ITS SUCCESS?**

Lydia Hopton explained that the VSCF benefited from a collaborative initiative involving M&S, GSK, and CARE that had already been in place for some years in Bangladesh. When the pandemic struck, the partnership was rapidly repurposed and scaled up with the help of funding that was made available from the FCDO's Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility (VSCF)<sup>4</sup>. Lydia argued that the long-term success of partnerships depends on partners being rewarded for their efforts, members that are equally ambitious and committed, and the agility to adapt to challenging contexts.

### **WHAT HAS THE PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVED SO FAR?**

As Justin Dell described, the partnership reaches across 25 factories and 70,000 female workers in Bangladesh. It offers

support for issues of health care, gender-based violence, nutrition, and hygiene. In relation to COVID-19, the project works to raise awareness about prevention and to provide access to medical facilities and vaccination. Also, women workers supported by the partnership spread reliable information about health measures in their communities and set positive examples for friends and family.

### **HOW HAS THE PROJECT WORKED WITH LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES?**

According to Jahirul Azad, the project takes into consideration the situation of both the private and public health care systems. Building on existing partnerships with governments, at the height of the pandemic the project contributed to the provision of medical equipment, PPE, and hospital materials as well as the training of frontline healthcare workers. Moreover, partnerships have been used to build up local and national capacity in health systems through donations and expertise support in areas such as logistics and procurement.

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<sup>1</sup> Mondelez International, AB Foods, and Tesco are partners in the Business Partnerships for Global Goals programme funded by FCDO reaching 1 million vulnerable women and men in supply chains across Africa and Asia.

<sup>2</sup> The Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility (VSCF) is a rapid COVID-19 response facility set up by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and managed by Mott MacDonald Ltd. The Facility partners with 20 UK and international retailers and brands, and 9 not-for-profit organisations,

supporting over 130 suppliers across Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Myanmar, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. It is providing economic, social, and health benefits to around 1 million women and men directly and indirectly.

<sup>3</sup> M&S and CARE are partners in the Business Partnerships for Global Goals programme funded by FCDO reaching 1 million vulnerable women and men in supply chains across Africa and Asia.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote #2.