



PRESS RELEASE

Chiquita partners with German retailer REWE for development of bio-diversity conservation project in RAMSAR wetlands in Panama

Antwerp, 2 February 2009 – **The 2nd of February is World Wetlands Day**, marking the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in 1971 dedicated to the protection and conservation of this unique and fragile environment. Chiquita and REWE are committed to the protection of this important natural habitat and have formalized a partnership to initiate a **bio-diversity conservation programme** in the **San San Pond Sak protected area** (a UNESCO Biosphere of special environmental importance) and surrounding districts, close to Chiquita's banana farms in the Bocas Del Toro province of Panama.

As a first step, the partners will purchase and **donate 120 hectares of pasture land located in the protected area**, for the purpose of restoration of the natural habitat. Another objective is the protection of **endangered manatees and sea turtles**, in cooperation with local and international NGOs.

The San San project will be **conducted in cooperation with the Panamanian authorities and civil society organizations** such as AAMVECONA, the local residents association, and the Panamanian environmental authority ANAM. This collaborative approach is crucial in helping the project achieve its aims - to deliver significant benefits, both for the community and the environment, in a place where abundant bio-diversity is threatened and human activity can either conserve or devastate the fragile tropical environment. The community initiatives that the partnership will focus on include developing environmental education programmes and creating additional income opportunities for the local community.

During the official announcement of the agreement between the two companies, in the presence of several thousands of REWE's employees, the CEO, Alain Caparros, expressed his satisfaction at having forged a new commitment to sustainability within the company: *"I am delighted that we are announcing this innovative project when we are also launching REWE's company-wide commitment to sustainability."*

This initiative **follows on the footsteps of a pilot-project initiated in 2004 in Costa Rica - the Notal Nature & Community Project**, a public-private partnership, between Chiquita, the Swiss retailer Migros and GTZ which aims to protect bio-diversity with community involvement. The Notal project was established in 2003, and in 2006 the Costa Rican government passed a decree making it an official wildlife refuge.

“In this new initiative we can apply the lessons learned during our years of working with the Rainforest Alliance certification programme, as well as valuable experience gained from the Notal Nature & Community Project. Of particular relevance is the understanding that long term conservation of endangered species and ecosystems is not possible without the support and participation of the local community”, stated George Jaksch, Senior Director Corporate Responsibility and Public Affairs at Chiquita. *“We are privileged to be a partner in this new endeavour and will make every effort to ensure we meet the objectives we have established.”*

The partnership between REWE and Chiquita foresees an initial commitment of three years, during which several initiatives will be developed. Already designed is an environmental education programme which is to be coordinated with the Panamanian ministry of education, and will extend to more than 20 primary and secondary schools in the region, as well as to local communities and Chiquita employees. Local community leaders are also currently involved in the design of a programme to create and support small businesses. Some of the identified opportunities include handicraft based on local customs and traditions or support activities to eco-tourism.

This agreement demonstrates both companies’ commitment to sustainability, whilst marking an important milestone and a shift from a more traditional customer-supplier relationship to a more ambitious partnership. Both companies look forward to the continued interest from academia, NGOs and other stakeholders and welcome the announcement by GTZ (German Development Agency) of its intention to participate and follow the project closely.

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ABOUT CHIQUITA BRANDS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

With annual revenues of approximately \$4 billion from continuing operations, Chiquita Brands International, Inc. is a leading international marketer and distributor of high-quality fresh and value-added food products – from energy-rich bananas and other fruits to nutritious blends of convenient green salads. The company's products and services are designed to win the hearts and smiles of the world's consumers by helping them enjoy healthy fresh foods. The company markets its products under the Chiquita[®] and Fresh Express[®] premium brands and other related trademarks. Chiquita employs approximately 23,000 people operating in more than 70 countries worldwide. For more information, please visit our web site at www.chiquita.com.

ABOUT WORLD WETLANDS DAY

2 February each year is World Wetlands Day. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Each year since 1997, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular.



