



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**World Coffee Alliance (WCA) announces confirmed speakers at WCA CROSS TALK SERIES 2021 Virtual Event - “Digitalising Access to Coffee Finance: Where is the Beef?”**

**KEYNOTE MASTERCARD** | **EPISODE SPONSOR GRAIN CHAIN**

**CROSS TALK SERIES**  
Every Opinion Matters™

**World Coffee Alliance**  
Make Sustainability Work™

**DIGITALISING ACCESS TO COFFEE FINANCE:**  
**Where is the beef?**

Wednesday 24th February 2021 3:00 pm GMT/10:00 am EST

zoom | LIVE | YouTube Live | World Coffee Alliance

**SUPPORTED BY:** WORLD BANK GROUP, INTERNATIONAL COFFEE ORGANIZATION, IFC, Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, CAFE de Colombia, root capital, THE BRITISH COFFEE ASSOCIATION, FAIRTRADE, LSE, THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, RAINFORREST ALLIANCE, IACO, BSCA, MERCON.

**MEDIA PARTNERS:** realwire, PERFECT DAILY GRIND

**Speakers:**  
 Dr Rocco Macchiavello (Associate Professor, LSE, MODERATOR)  
 Chris Brett (Lead Agribusiness Specialist, World Bank Group)  
 Gerardo Pataconi (Head of Operations, International Coffee Organization (ICO))  
 Juan Esteban Orduz (President, FEDECAFE North America)  
 Peter Onguka (Head of Lending, Africa, Root Capital)  
 Blanca Castro (Chapter Relations Manager, IWCA Global)  
 Laura Mackenzie (SVP Financial Inclusion, Mastercard (KEYNOTE))  
 Luis Macias (CEO and Founder, GrainChain (INSPIRATIONAL TALK))  
 Dr Panos Varangis (Principal Agriculture Finance Specialist, IFC)  
 Catalina Eikenberg (Head of Sustainable Business Unit, Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG))  
 Anthony Day (Blockchain Partner, IBM UK and Ireland)  
 Dr Frederick KAWUMA (Secretary General, IACO)

**LONDON, United Kingdom** - World Coffee Alliance (WCA), a network alliance of coffee industry professionals producing critical insights including market research, due diligence reports and technical advice in the global coffee value chain will hold a Zoom virtual event **WCA CROSS TALK SERIES - “Digitalising Access to Coffee Finance: Where is the Beef?”** on **Wednesday 24 February 2021, 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm GMT/10:00 am - 12:30 pm EST.**

**Joseph de Villiers, CEO and Founder, World Coffee Alliance (WCA)** said “The gathering of these global leaders in the coffee industry including **ICO, IACO, IWCA Global, FEDECAFE,** and trusted brands like **World Bank Group, IFC, Root Capital, IBM and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG),** is by no means an easy feat. Given the importance of finance to the smallholder coffee farmers, I just hope that this online conversation will turn into something more concrete that will pave the way for global partnerships and more urgent actions. I am delighted to welcome **Mastercard, GrainChain and Prof. Rocco Macchiavello (LSE)** to lead



this conversation which gives us the unique privilege in providing a neutral platform to talk about the interest of the smallholder farmer - who is at the heart of what we do as an alliance.”

**Mastercard** is a global technology leader in the payments industry. **Laura Mackenzie**, *SVP Financial Inclusion and Global Consumer Product*, will deliver the **Keynote**. *“At Mastercard, we’re focused on building a more inclusive and sustainable digital economy through innovation and trusted partnership. Last year, we expanded our worldwide financial inclusion commitment pledging to bring a total of 1 billion people, 50 million micro and small businesses and 25 million women owned or led businesses into the digital economy by 2025. I am looking forward to joining the event and discussing how our digital payments technology can empower the smallholder coffee farmer”, she said.*

**GrainChain**, a technology company that enables supply chain visibility, empowering suppliers and farmers while reducing risks to buyers, is the **Episode Sponsor** and will provide the **Inspirational Talk**. *“Our mission has always been to help support farmers around the world, providing them the technology and tools to escape a cycle of debt and provide an opportunity to expand their operations,” said Luis Macias, CEO and Founder, GrainChain. “Small coffee producers suffer from a lack of trust and transparency that our solution provides, allowing them to receive quicker payments from buyers and gain better access to liquidity. Building an ecosystem that provides a maximum social impact, inclusion and security in the digital economy is what our solution is designed to do. It is a great pleasure to follow the Mastercard Keynote with an Inspirational Talk at the **World Coffee Alliance (WCA)** virtual event– an opportunity for us to showcase what we are doing for the coffee farming community and the industry overall. Our partnership with Mastercard to enable improved visibility along the supply chain makes it even more meaningful to be participating with them at the **WCA CROSS TALK SERIES**”, he added.*

There will be two panels, both moderated by **Prof. Rocco Macchiavello** from **LSE**. His extensive expertise and vast experience will provide an interesting background to this debate. *“Events like **WCA CROSS TALK SERIES** can provide the needed dialogue to engender more collaborative effort in addressing some of the most important issues that the coffee industry now face”, he said.*

Panel One will discuss *“Designing eco-systems for the future of coffee finance”*. Confirmed speakers on Panel One include **Chris Brett**, *Lead Agribusiness Specialist, World Bank Group*, **Gerardo Pataconi**, *Head of Operations, International Coffee Organization (ICO)*, **Juan Esteban Orduz**, *President, Colombian Coffee Federations Inc (North America) FEDECAFE*, **Peter Onguka**, *Head of lending, Africa, Root Capital*, and **Blanca Maria Castro**, *Chapter Relations Manager, IWCA Global*. Panel Two will focus on *“Harnessing potential benefits of Digital Innovation”*. Confirmed speakers include **Dr Panos Varangis**, *Principle Agriculture Finance Specialist, IFC*, **Catalina Eikenberg**, *Head of Sustainable Business Unit, Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG)*, **Anthony Day**, *Blockchain Partner, Global Business Services, IBM UK*



and Ireland and **Dr Frederick KAWUMA**, *Secretary General*, **Inter-African Coffee Organisation (IACO)** and **Luis Macias**, *CEO and Founder*, **GrainChain**.



**World Coffee Alliance** is a network alliance of coffee industry professionals providing critical insights including market research, due diligence reports and technical advice in the global coffee value chain. Our mission is to help create a sustainable business environment, by working closely with the stakeholders in the coffee industry by advising them on how to adopt best practices, utilize cutting-edge technology and help build a community that can tackle climate change. [www.worldcoffealliance.com](http://www.worldcoffealliance.com)



**Mastercard** is a global technology leader in the payments industry. Our mission is to connect and power an inclusive, digital economy that benefits everyone, everywhere by making transactions safe, simple, smart and accessible. Using secure data and networks, partnerships and passion, our innovations and solutions help individuals, financial institutions, governments and businesses realize their greatest potential. Our decency quotient, or DQ, drives our culture and everything we do inside and outside of our company. With connections across more than 210 countries and territories, we are building a sustainable world that unlocks priceless possibilities for all. [www.mastercard.com](http://www.mastercard.com)



**GrainChain** was founded to solve the biggest problems facing global supply chains, such as the way commodities are verified and exchanged. Our innovative blockchain and IoT-based suite of products encompasses all participants along the supply chain and allows producers, buyers, storage operators, and lien holders to accurately, efficiently and reliably track commodities from field to market. GrainChain currently operates in the United States, Mexico and Honduras. [www.grainchain.io](http://www.grainchain.io)



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**Perfect Daily Grind** is the world's leading voice for coffee. The publication is a must-read resource for anyone with an interest in the broader coffee sector, publishing content on everything from brewing and roasting to production and coffee trade. It provides real-life editorial content driven by insight from those who have direct experience at every stage of the supply chain. [www.perfectdailygrind.com](http://www.perfectdailygrind.com)

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