

Fort Portal, Western Uganda, 20-10-20

Rwenzori Sustainable Trade Centre Lives up to its Name: Recognised by UN as a Carbon Neutral Social Enterprise. RSTC is pioneering new levels of assurance on climate and conservation. RSTC is the only social enterprise in Uganda to have achieved both the Carbon Neutral International Standard and the UN Climate Neutral Now participation and was Carbon Neutral Certified.

The **Rwenzori Sustainable Trade Centre** is a Ugandan social enterprise helping 5,000 families in the Rwenzori region to earn more money and to lead more secure and healthier lives. The RSTC mission is to build sustainability. It's in the name. Sustainability for RSTC means a full focus the way the coffee, cocoa, cotton and crafts are produced and positive working relationships that are transparent, accountable and fair.

To become a signatory to the **United Nations Climate Neutral Now Initiative**, the RSTC has calculated and disclosed its own carbon footprint, including international air travel. The technical support of One Carbon World, has helped the RSTC to offset its current emissions and identify the areas it will to continue to measure, reduce and balance in future.

Andrew Bowen, Chief Executive Officer of One Carbon World said: *"We are thrilled to announce that Rwenzori Sustainable Trade Centre has achieved the Carbon Neutral International Standard, which clearly shows how strongly they are committed to sustainability. Every emission Rwenzori Sustainable Trade Centre has offset directly supports the UN and verified voluntary reforestation projects around the world."*

Pauline Tiffen, the RSTC Chairperson stated: *"We are so proud to be recognised as the first social enterprise in Uganda to achieve the Carbon Neutral International Standard. This achievement comes in a year when despite the fears and disruptions of COVID-19, we have made enormous progress in our work for social and environmental sustainability."*

After many years of hard work, in 2020 the RSTC helped cocoa and coffee co-operatives gain organic certification, launched a solar and eco-technology community business to reduce carbon and provide new jobs for young people and is launching a new Bird Friendly Certification initiative. Tiffen added: *"This year the RSTC is hosting the first ever East African Bird Friendly Coffee and Cocoa Forum to consider the best ecological production practices for the Rwenzoris with their rich and unique flora and fauna."*

Notes:

- The RSTC is a Ugandan social enterprise founded in 2012 to enable producer organisations to access local, regional and international markets for their products and do so in ways that are socially and environmentally responsible.
 - RSTC serves hard-to-reach communities in the Rwenzori Mountain region of Western Uganda, working in four districts.
 - With RSTC support, more than 5,000 smallholder farmers and 1,800 craftswomen make and ship their products. The RSTC is the largest exporter of hand-made crafts in Uganda.
 - **East African Bird Friendly Coffee and Cocoa Forum:** for info see www.rwenzorisustainable.org/bird-friendly-certification To register for the Forum contact s.ellie@rwenzorisustainable.org
- Eco-Technology Community Business:** distribution, installation and promotion by trained coop members and young people of solar products and cooking technologies which reduce reliance on wood and carbon emissions

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