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Deciphering The Genome Structure Of Theobroma cacao

Xavier Argout¹ , Jerome Salse² , Jean-Marc Aury^{3,4,5} , Mark Guiltinan⁶ , Gaetan Droc¹ , Jerome Gouzy⁷ , Mathilde Allegre¹ , Cristian Chaparro⁸ , Thierry Legavre¹ , Siela Maximova⁶ , Michael Abrouk² , Florent Murat² , Olivier Fouet¹ , Julie Poulain^{3,4,5} , Manuel Ruiz¹ , Yolande Roguet¹ , Maguy Rodier-Goud¹ , Jose F. Barbosa-Neto⁸ , Francois Sabot⁸ , Dave Kudrna⁹ , Jetty Ammiraju⁹ , Stephan Schuster¹⁰ , John Carlson^{11,12} , Erika Sallet⁷ , Thomas Schiex¹³ , Anne Dievart¹ , Melissa Kramer¹⁴ , Laura Gelley¹⁴ , Zi Shi¹⁵ , Aurelie Berard¹⁶ , Christopher Viot¹ , Michel Boccara¹ , Ange-Marie Risterucci¹ , Valentin Guignon¹ , Xavier Sabau¹ , Michael Axtell¹⁷ , Zhaorong Ma¹⁷ , Yufan Zhang¹⁴ , Spencer Brown¹⁸ , Mickael Bourge¹⁸ , Wolfgang Golser⁹ , Xiang Song⁹ , Didier Clement¹ , Ronan Rivallan¹ , Mathias Tahiri¹⁹ , Joseph Moroh Akaza¹⁹ , Bertrand Pittolat¹ , Karina Gramacho²⁰ , Angelique D'Hont¹ , Dominique Brunel¹⁶ , Diogenes Infante²¹ , Ismael Kebe¹⁸ , Pierre Costet²² , Rod Wing⁹ , William McCombie¹⁴ , Emmanuel Guiderdoni¹ , Francis Quetier²³ , Olivier Panaud⁸ , Patrick Wincker^{3,4,5} , Stephanie Bocs¹ , Claire Lanaud¹

¹ CIRAD - Biological Systems Department – UMR DAP TA A 96/03- 34398, Montpellier, cedex 5- France

² Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique UMR 1095, 63100 Clermont-Ferrand, France

³ CEA, IG, Genoscope, 2 rue Gaston Crémieux CP5702, F-91057 Evry, France

⁴ CNRS, UMR 8030, 2 rue Gaston Crémieux, CP5706, F-91057 Evry, France

⁵ Université d'Evry, F-91057 Evry, France

⁶ Penn State University, Department of Horticulture and the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, University Park, PA

16802, USA

7 INRA-CNRS LIPM Laboratoire des Interactions Plantes Micro-organismes, BP 52627, 31326 Castanet Tolosan Cedex, France

8 UMR 5096 CNRS-IRD-UPVD, Laboratoire Génome et Développement des Plantes, Université de Perpignan, 52 Avenue Paul Alduy, 66860 Perpignan Cedex, France

9 Arizona Genomics Institute and School of Plant Sciences, University of Arizona, Tucson AZ 85721, USA

10 Penn State University, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, University Park, PA 16802, USA

11 Penn State University, The School of Forest Resources and the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, University Park, PA 16802, USA

12 The Department of Bioenergy Science and Technology (WCU), Chonnam National University, 333 Yongbongro, Buk-Gu, Gwangju, 500-757, Korea

13 Unité de Biométrie et d'Intelligence Artificielle (UBIA), UR875 INRA, F-31320 Castanet Tolosan France

14 Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, NY 11723, USA

15 Penn State University, Plant Biology Graduate Program and the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences, University Park, PA 16802, USA

16 INRA, UR 1279 Etude du Polymorphisme des Génomes Végétaux, CEA Institut de Génomique, Centre National de Génotypage, 2, rue Gaston Crémieux, CP5724, 91057 Evry, France

17 Penn State University, Bioinformatics and Genomics Ph.D. Program & Department of Biology, University Park, PA 16802, USA

18 Institut des Sciences du Végétal, UPR 2355, CNRS, 91198 Gif-Sur-Ivette, France

19 Centre National de la Recherche Agronomique (CNRA), B.P. 808, Divo, Côte d'Ivoire

20 Comissão Executiva de Planejamento da Lavoura Cacaueira (CEPLAC), Km 22 Rod. Ilheus Itabuna, Cx. postal 07, Itabuna 45600-00, Bahia, Brazil

21 Centro Nacional de Biotecnología Agrícola, Instituto de Estudios Avanzados (IDEA), Caracas 1015-A, Venezuela

22 Chocolaterie VALRHONA, 8, quai du général de Gaulle, 26600 Tain l'Hermitage, France

23 Département de Biologie, Université d'Evry Val d'Essonne, 25 boulevard François Mitterrand, 91025 Evry, France

Theobroma cacao L., is a diploid tree fruit species, originated from the South American rainforests, and constitutes an important source of incomes for farmers of tropical countries. We produced a high quality draft genome sequence corresponding to a 16,7X genome coverage of a criollo genotype. The assembly corresponds to 76% of the estimated genome size of the *T. cacao* genotype B97-61/B2 (430 Mbp). This assembly appears to cover a very large proportion of the euchromatin of the *T. cacao* genome, allowing to recover 97.8% of the unigene resource (38,737 unigenes assembled from 715,457 EST sequences) in the genome assembly. Annotations revealed 28,798 protein-coding genes among which 82% could be anchored in a high density genetic map. Only 20% of the genome consisted in transposable elements, a significantly lower percentage compared to other genome of similar size.

This first cocoa genome sequence was the support for several genome analyses revealing specific extension of some gene families. The comparative mapping of genes involved in disease resistance and quality traits, localised in the genome sequence, and QTLs related to these traits highlighted several co-localisations between them and candidate genes potentially involved in useful cocoa trait variations.

This genome sequence will facilitate a better understanding of trait elaboration and will accelerate *T. cacao* breeding through efficient marker assisted selection and exploitation of genetic resources.

A genome browser allows to access freely to the cocoa sequence data at the following website : <http://cocoagendb.cirad.fr>.