Kraft/Cadbury Takeover: Does National Ownership Matter?

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Three years after the controversial take-over of British chocolate giant, Cadbury, Sir Dominic Cadbury, Chancellor of the University of Birmingham, will reflect on the impact of Kraft's acquisition.

The former Cadbury chairman and chief executive will outline a number of reasons why company ownership is in the national interest, at an event at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, tomorrow evening.

"Strategic decisions are influenced by the interests of the country of ownership," Sir Dominic says. "Takeovers frequently result in pressure for short-term financial returns; long-term investment in corporal social responsibility is more difficult for subsidiary companies of foreign national corporations to justify, and finally, there will always be a change in corporate culture, which may not necessarily be negative but will certainly be different."

Sir Dominic will be among a panel of distinguished guests at the event, which is part of the Great Read at Birmingham initiative. Other panelists include Jerry Blackett, Chief Executive of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Dr Ian Clark, reader in Human Resources Management and Dr Pamela Robinson, lecturer in Employment Relations at Birmingham Business School.

Chairman of the panel, Professor Simon Collinson, Dean of the Business School, said: "The Kraft take-over of Cadbury in 2010 met with huge public unrest. Yet another of the UK's best known brands and most successful large multi-national companies had been bought up. For many it hit home that the UK could become a nation of SMEs with no large multi-nationals to its name. But does this matter? Aside from a dent to national pride, what are the negative consequences of increased foreign ownership? And do these outweigh the arguments for foreign direct investment, competition and a free market?"

Guests will revisit the Kraft take-over of Cadbury to ask what this has meant for the company, and examine the wider questions of national ownership in the UK in terms of employment, wealth creation and the effect on government tax generation.

Ends

For more information please contact Deborah Walker, press office, University of Birmingham, 0121 414 9041 or mobile 07776 465138 or email d.s.walker.1@bham.ac.uk

Notes to Editors

- The event is at 5.30pm on Thursday 31st January 2013 at Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham.
- For more information about the event please email a.t.miles@bham.ac.uk
- The event is part of GRAB – the Great Read at Birmingham initiative - which this year centres around Deborah Cadbury's book Chocolate Wars, charting the history of Cadbury and its competitors from the 19th Century through to the Kraft take-over of Cadbury in 2010.

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