



14 March 2012

Industry welcomes European Parliament call to all stakeholders for action against child labour in cocoa production

The cocoa and chocolate industry welcomes the European Parliament's consent to the International Cocoa Agreement, which will reinforce cooperation between the private and public sectors.

The industry applauds the European Parliament Resolution on the complex issue of child labour in cocoa growing.

The Resolution recognizes the challenge of finding sustainable solutions to address child labour in the context of smallholder farming. As for other cash crops in the Sub-Saharan region, smallholder farming is the prevalent model for cocoa production.

Cocoa stakeholders are working hard to improve traceability in the cocoa supply-chain.

In addition to a host of company-led and collective programmes that aim to address inefficiencies in the supply-chain¹, the industry is working with CEN² to develop a Standard for Traceable and Sustainable Cocoa. This standard will serve as a strong framework to promote production practices which recognise the continually evolving needs of both producers and consumers and will play an important role in our collective efforts to protect children from the dangers of child labour.

We appreciate the European Parliament's call for action to the partners of the International Cocoa Agreement to support supply-chain improvements and better farmer organisation. The cocoa industry welcomes the Parliament's recognition of efforts undertaken so far. We agree that in order to effect the fundamental and sustainable change that is necessary within the cocoa supply chain, a holistic and coordinated framework supported by governments, industry, traders, producers and civil society is vital to address the root causes of child labour.

While the industry will continue to step-up its work to improve the cocoa supply-chain we believe that this serious concern should also be addressed from a multi-sectoral and regional perspective.

Taking into account the unique features of the supply chains of the various raw materials, we welcome the Parliament's invitation to exchange best practices between different economic sectors and would gladly take part in an European-led initiative to discuss best practices and approaches to tackling this complex issue.

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¹ Please see background information provided hereafter.

² CEN - European Committee for Standardisation - Project Committee, CEN/TC 415 "Project Committee – Traceable and Sustainable Cocoa"

Background Information

Over two thirds of the world's cocoa production is cultivated in West Africa with 1.5 to 2 million family-run farms involved (average farm size of 2 to 5 ha). Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are the world's top 2 producers.

Cocoa is a traditional, labour-intensive crop and it is not uncommon for youths and children to help out on the farm.

However, together with the ILO, **the industry believes that any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, defined as worst forms of child labour by the ILO, should be banned.** The global cocoa and chocolate industry believes no child should ever be harmed in the growing and harvesting of cocoa.

Cocoa and chocolate companies do not have direct access to farms – cocoa beans are collected and dispatched by a series of local intermediaries.

That is why the industry works closely with partners, from producer country governments, to NGOs and a host of international organisations, including ILO-IPEC³, and the OECD's Sahel and West Africa Club⁴, in order to find impactful, sustainable solutions.

Industry programmes have already made a difference to over a million vulnerable children in West Africa. Programmes focus on increasing access to education (building schools, training teachers), educating cocoa farmers on unacceptable labour practices⁵, but also improving agricultural practices to ensure better yields and therefore better income for farmers⁶.

For more than a decade now, the European and international chocolate and cocoa industry have made extensive efforts, along with the Governments of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana through the development of their National Action Plans, non-governmental organisations and other international organisations including the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), to bring about positive and sustainable change to the way cocoa is grown and harvested in West Africa.

The cocoa and chocolate industry is taking part in a host of company-led and collective programmes that aim to address inefficiencies in the supply-chain:

- On 13th September 2010, the European industry joined a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labour and Governments of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana and signed the Declaration of Action and Framework of Action to support the Implementation of the lessons learnt over the past decade and accelerate efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labour.
- The Framework of Action represents a new partnership with a common purpose and clear goal of bringing about an aggregate 70 percent reduction in the worst forms of child labour in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana by 2020. To this end the Framework of Action aims to support new or expanded initiatives. The first Annual Report on progress that has been made over the past year towards achieving the goals of the Declaration on Joint Action and its accompanying Framework of Action was issued on 23.01.2012.
- In addition, chocolate and cocoa industries have also committed to a Public – Private Partnership with ILO-IPEC (International Labour Organisations' International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour) focused on community based Child Labour Monitoring Systems (CLMS) and capacity building of governments, social partners and cocoa farmers in combating child labour.
- Individual companies also have multiple and extensive programs designed to create a sustainable cocoa supply chain.

³ http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/news/WCMS_162692/lang--en/index.htm

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/49/49069653.pdf>

⁵ International Cocoa Initiative – www.cocoainitiative.org

⁶ World Cocoa Foundation – www.worldcocoa.org