

Global Chocolate and Cocoa Industry

Working towards the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in West African Cocoa Farming Communities

The Global chocolate and cocoa industry condemns the use of forced or indentured child labour in the cocoa supply chain.

Our belief is that no child should ever be harmed in the growing or harvesting of cocoa. In West Africa, 90% of cocoa is grown on small family farms. In Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana there are over 1.5 million cocoa farming families living in some of the most remote parts of these countries who depend on cocoa for their livelihood.

Unacceptable labour practices on cocoa farms are a recognised issue, with too many children participating in hazardous farming tasks or working at the expense of attending school. Child Labour is a complex phenomenon that finds its root causes in poverty and limited access to education. Ending the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) begins with changing traditional farming methods which have been practiced for more than a hundred years.

Before our work began nearly a decade ago, there was little understanding of the nature of working practices in Cote d'Ivoire, but a clear commitment by the industry that children should not be working on cocoa farms at the expense of their schooling or exposed to potentially hazardous farm tasks. After 7 years of field surveys in the Cote d'Ivoire, independent third party organisations have verified the data and concluded that the incidence of forced child labour is extremely small.

For nearly ten years now, the Government of Cote d'Ivoire, Industry, Non-governmental Organisations and a host of other international organisations including the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) and ILO, have committed vast resources in an unprecedented effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labour from the production of cocoa.

The chocolate and cocoa sector is committed to a programme of investment and improvement of social conditions in cocoa producing countries. Collectively, the global chocolate and cocoa industry has spent more than US\$75 million over the past decade.

We are currently supporting some 40 social and economic programmes in West Africa that improve the lives of cocoa farming families and communities. By the end of 2010, more than three million direct and indirect beneficiaries were impacted by the industry's programmes, including hundreds of thousands of cocoa farming families and more than one million children.

In September 2010 a new Framework of Action partnership agreement was created between the US Department of Labor, ILO and industry. The global chocolate and cocoa industry has made an immediate pledge to commit \$7 million to further the goals of the Harkin-Engel Protocol and the Framework of Action, of which \$2 million will support a new public private partnership led by the International Labour Organisation's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC). The Framework is focused on the continued reduction of the worst forms of child labour on West African cocoa farms – through education and training; help for vulnerable families; measures to address farm safety issues, and monitoring.

We remain committed to support governments and our global partners in the pursuit of sustainable cocoa farming, helping farmers, families and children achieve a better life.

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For more information about industry funded programmes which work towards the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, please visit: www.responsiblecocoa.com