

Statement from the Global Chocolate and Cocoa Industry

19 January 2010

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

Furthermore, it is our hope that anyone associated with Bastard TV Production, who may have witnessed such conduct took it upon themselves to immediately contact the proper authorities.

In West Africa, 90% of cocoa is grown on small family farms. In Cote d'Ivoire alone, over 600,000 families live in some of the most remote parts of the country and depend on cocoa for their livelihood. The vast majority of cocoa farms are not owned by the companies that make chocolate or supply cocoa and we therefore don't have direct control over cocoa farming and labour practices.

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.

Ending these practices begins with changing traditional farming methods – many of which have been conducted for more than 100 years. We collectively have spent more than \$75 million and support nearly 40 programmes throughout West Africa that provide cocoa farming families and their communities with the following:

Greater opportunities for economic development

- As a result, participating farmers are now earning 20% and in some cases 55% more in income.

Teaching farmers about acceptable labour practices

- The International Cocoa Initiative engages with farmers about the dangers cocoa farming children face. This dialogue is central to getting cocoa communities to commit to a lasting change through self-monitoring and community-led farmer outreach. In Campement in the Cote d'Ivoire for example; there has been a 20% fall in children using machetes, 35% fewer children are carrying heavy loads and 25% drop in children spraying pesticides.

Equal access to quality education

- We know that the more time children spend in school, the less time they have to work on the family farm. Therefore, we have programmes dedicated to improving access to traditional schools, improving the quality of education at those schools, and training more teachers to grow the number of schools.

Our belief is that no child should ever be harmed in the farming of cocoa. In addition to industry programmes, we remain committed to support government and our global partners in the pursuit of sustainable cocoa farming, helping farmers, families and children achieve a better life.

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