

Joint Statement from U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Representative Eliot Engel and the Chocolate/Cocoa Industry on Efforts to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cocoa Growing

Protocol Work Continues

WASHINGTON, DC, USA (July 1, 2005) - U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), U.S. Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY) and the global chocolate/cocoa industry today issued a joint statement on efforts to address the worst forms of child labor and forced labor in the West African cocoa sector.

Protocol Establishes Framework for Progress

In September 2001, chocolate and cocoa industry representatives signed an agreement, developed in partnership with Senator Harkin and Representative Engel, to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the growing of cocoa beans and their derivative products from West Africa.

The agreement, known as the "Harkin-Engel Protocol," laid out a series of date-specific actions, including the development of credible, mutually acceptable, voluntary, industry-wide standards of public certification by July 1, 2005 -- to give a public accounting of labor practices in cocoa farming.

The Harkin-Engel Protocol marked an important first - an entire industry, including companies from the United States, Europe and the United Kingdom, taking responsibility for addressing the worst forms of child labor and forced labor in its supply chain. Today, the Protocol stands as a framework for progress, bringing together industry, West African governments, organized labor, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmer groups and experts in a concerted effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and forced labor from the growing, processing and supply chain of cocoa in West Africa.

Since the Harkin-Engel Protocol was signed, some positive steps have been taken to address the worst forms of child labor in cocoa growing. These include the creation of the International Cocoa Initiative foundation, which is now beginning to form partnerships with NGOs to provide social protection programs in West Africa. Also, small pilot projects have been initiated, which will be assessed and used to develop a child labor monitoring system. While the July 1, 2005 deadline will not be fully met, industry has assured Sen. Harkin and Rep. Engel that it is fully committed to achieving a certification system, which can be expanded across the cocoa growing areas of West Africa and will cover 50% of the cocoa growing areas of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana within three years.

"The Harkin-Engel Protocol established a framework to improve the living and working conditions for families and children who are growing, harvesting, and exporting the cocoa we enjoy here in America," Sen. Harkin said. "I am disappointed that the July 1 deadline established in the Protocol was not fully met. But I am pleased that they have committed to redouble their efforts to create a certification system and

eliminate the worst forms of child labor and forced labor in the cocoa fields and throughout the supply chain. The farmers and children in the cocoa growing countries deserve no less.”

“After meeting with the cocoa industry, I am comfortable that the industry is committed to moving forward even though I am disappointed that the original deadline was not fully met,” Rep. Engel said. “I am committed to working with them, because only with the cooperation of the chocolate industry will we end the worst forms of child labor and forced labor in Ghana and the Cote D'Ivoire. I am assured that progress will be made and deadlines will be met.”

Commenting on efforts to date and the road ahead, Lynn Bragg, President, Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA), and David Zimmer, Secretary General of Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit & Confectionery Industries of the EU (CAOBISCO), jointly said

“The leadership of Senator Harkin and Representative Engel gave us an historic opportunity - when the Protocol was signed - to bring about meaningful, positive change. Today, we remain committed to the Protocol and to a supply chain free of the worst forms of child labor and forced labor.”

“While we would like to be further along than we are in this effort, the building blocks are in place today for the development of a certification system which can be expanded across the cocoa growing areas of West Africa, and for programs to improve the well-being of farm families. The Harkin-Engel Protocol will continue as the framework for these efforts to get the job done.”

Next Steps

Going forward, the chocolate and cocoa industry is dedicating more than \$5 million annually to support the full implementation of the certification system for cocoa farming labor practices, and for programs to improve the well-being of the more than 1.5 million farm families growing cocoa in West Africa, including efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and forced labor. Specifically, industry efforts include:

- Rollout of the certification system-- including monitoring, data analysis, reporting and activities to address the worst forms of child labor -- as aggressively as possible in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, with a goal of covering 50 percent of the two countries' cocoa-producing areas by July 2008. This is a milestone on the way towards the ultimate goal of 100 percent coverage in the two countries.
- Support for programs to improve conditions in West African cocoa farming communities, and to address the worst forms of child labor and forced labor at the community level, through the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) foundation, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the Initiative for African Cocoa Communities (IACC). These programs include, among others, recently announced support for expansion of Winrock International's education efforts in Cote d'Ivoire and for an International Foundation for Education & Self-Help (IFESH) teacher training program that will benefit approximately 40,000 children annually in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

“Four years ago, I embarked on this historic effort with Sen. Harkin and the world's cocoa industry to combat the worst forms of child labor in cocoa fields,” Rep. Engel said. “Some progress has been made,

but it is my fervent hope that in four more years Senator Harkin and I will be able to stand with the industry with pride as we see vastly improved conditions on cocoa farms in West Africa.”

“The industry-funded child labor oversight organization—the Cocoa Verification Working Group—recently published a discouraging report on the chocolate industry’s progress to eliminate the worst forms of child labor and forced labor from the cocoa fields. The report made several recommendations, and I hope that industry will take these recommendations seriously as we move forward in the Protocol process,” said Sen. Harkin. “To ensure accountability, positive momentum and transparency, we have agreed to establish an independent oversight entity to monitor the further implementation of the Harkin-Engel protocol.”

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