



# STOP THE TRAFFIK

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



## STOP THE TRAFFIK COCOA INDUSTRY UPDATE

There is still a major problem with children being trafficked into forced labour on Ivory Coast cocoa plantations. There has been a slight increase in the amount of police activity with regard to human trafficking. For example, in September 2007, 18 Benin nationals were intercepted being trafficked into Ivory Coast, bound for cocoa plantations in Zuénoula and Bouaflé. During the same period, the special unit of police created to deal with child trafficking has successfully intercepted 32 children being trafficked to cocoa plantations and other possible destinations. This shows a greater police activity, but within a context of thousands of children being forced to work picking cocoa beans, clearly more needs to be done.

In October 2007, Tulane University completed its first survey of the progress of the Harkin Engel Protocol in addressing the problem of the worst forms of child labour in the cocoa industry in West Africa. It concluded that crucially, whilst in 2001 the Harkin Engel Protocol promised to “Develop and implement credible, mutually-acceptable, voluntary, industry-wide standards of public certification, consistent with applicable federal law, that cocoa beans and their derivative products have been grown and/or processed without any of the worst forms of child labour.” That has now changed to only promise a process that “reports on the incidence of the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour in a producing country’s cocoa sector and progress in reducing this incidence”. The report decides therefore that “The definition of certification offered by industry (2006) is a misnomer.”

The International Cocoa Initiative, which was set up to implement the Harkin/Engel protocol has conducted pilot projects and background surveys in Ivory Coast, particularly in the Oumé district. In 2007 the Child Labour in the Cocoa Sector Task Force was set up, headed by the prime minister. A report from the Task Force in 2007 “A National Plan of Action Against Slavery and Child Labour” acknowledges the exploitation of children.

Although Child Labour Monitoring Systems are crucial to the process, and one was piloted in the Oumé district, the Tulane report notes that “Industry contributed to the initial WACAP effort that included funding to develop the child labour monitoring system, but 2007, industry informed Tulane that it did not intend to continue to provide financial support for the system.”

According to latest reports, the ICI has reached 88 communities in Ivory Coast so far, since the problem of slavery in cocoa production was highlighted in 2001. Given that there are an estimated 600,000 cocoa farms in Ivory Coast, this seems like good work, on a small scale. The problem has been that industry has not backed the ICI enough for it to make significant progress.



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As Aidan McQuade, Director of Anti Slavery International recently said:  
"Now the industry needs to put its money where its mouth is, to get West African children off farms and back into school where they belong."

Crucially also, Industry has failed to deliver on the certification process, which was the centre-piece of the Harkin/Engel protocol, the agreement Industry signed up to in order to try to end the worst forms of child labour including human trafficking, in the cocoa supply chain.

As the Harkin Engel protocol struggles to make an impact, individual chocolate companies are starting to make other arrangements. The Cadbury Cocoa Partnership, was established in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), this program aims to help farmers in Ghana by increasing productivity on cocoa farms, helping farmers to grow other crops as well, and also invest in education. Although these aims are commendable, it seems likely that there is also another reason for the Cadbury initiative, namely to protect its supply chain as supply of cocoa struggles to meet demand. Secondly, while Cadbury buys most of its cocoa from Ghana, it also sources some cocoa products from Ivory Coast, which is still suffering from child trafficking in its cocoa plantations. Thirdly, this scheme does not address the central issue of cocoa certification – when will Cadbury be able to inform the consumer that the farms it buys from are certified as not using trafficked labour? A company like Cadbury has a real chance to move in this direction, and needs to lead the way and show an example to others. It has not, as yet, take such lead.

Another initiative which the food processing giant Cargill, along with Nestlé and Mars have signed up to, is a certification process being developed by UTZ, a Dutch certification organisation. UTZ has just launched its consultation on what will be in the code, so there is a long way to go, but it does seem like a step in the right direction in response to STOP THE TRAFFIK and many other campaigns.

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