



STOP THE TRAFFIK

PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD



WHERE DOES ALL OUR CHOCOLATE COME FROM?

COTE D'IVOIRE – THE CURRENT SITUATION ON CHOCOLATE, CHILD TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY

Cote d'Ivoire is a country in the west of Africa which produces more than 40% of the world's cocoa crop.

In 2001 reports confirmed widespread child labour on cocoa farms in Cote d'Ivoire and hundreds of children being trafficked from nearby Mali. The conditions these children were working in was characterised as dangerous and they were forced to work long hours.¹

In 2002 a study by the Sustainable Tree Crops Program of the Institute of Tropical Agriculture of Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria claimed that there were at least 284,000 children trapped in forced labour in the West African cocoa industry. The majority of these (200,000) were to be found in Cote d'Ivoire. Many of these child labourers were discovered to have been trafficked from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Togo. The ILO is in the process of commissioning new studies to verify this research. Despite this fact, the ILO does not dismiss the findings and considers them as a part of the evidence of widespread child trafficking to the cocoa industry. 153,000 children were found to be forced to apply pesticides without protective clothing, and 64% of the children on cocoa farms were under the age of 16. Forty percent of child labourers were girls.²

The 2000 US State Department Human Rights report said " It is estimated that some 15,000 Malian children work on Ivorian cocoa and coffee plantations. Many are under 12 years-of-age, sold into indentured servitude for \$140 (100,000 FCFA), and work 12-hour days for \$135 to \$189 (95,000 to 125,000 FCFA) per year." The vast majority of children will be working on cocoa plantations.

As a result of these accusations US Senator Tom Harkin and Representative Eliot Engel proposed a bill, which would require the chocolate industry to certify all their chocolate as "slave free." The Cocoa industry successfully lobbied against this on the premise that the supply chain for Cocoa is very complex with middlemen buying the beans and mixing them before selling them on to conglomerate buyers such as Nestle, ADM and Cargill. NGOs such as the International Labor Rights Fund argued that as these three controlled the market they could very well determine under what

¹ The most prominent of these was the BBC report "Mali's children in chocolate slavery"
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1272522.stm>

² Child Labour in the Cocoa sector of West Africa STCP 2002 and referenced in Combating child labour in cocoa growing, ILO 2005.



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conditions they bought the beans. An argument was made to say that many families employ their own children on farms so that they learn skills for the future. This is a good cultural argument³, but if it leads to children not receiving an education then it must be challenged and it of course does not apply to trafficked children.

In 2001 a compromise was reached dubbed the Harkin Engel Protocol.⁴

Under this agreement the Cocoa industry committed to introducing a certification program voluntarily which would cover all of West Africa by July 1st 2005. This has clearly not been achieved. There have been some pilot projects, some education co-operation, but now the industry has promised to cover only half of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana with a no child slavery certification by 2008⁵. Even this seems very uncertain, with a press release by Cadbury Schweppes claiming that it is impossible to monitor all farms or certify "every bean" due to the remote location of so many of the farms from which the beans come.⁶ Although Cote d'Ivoire is certainly a volatile country, it seems absurd to say that it is impossible to monitor the supply chain for human rights abuses because farms are geographically remote. This is at the same time as promising as part of the International Cocoa Institute that half of all farms in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana will be monitored by 2008.

In fact, what is being promised is that there will be monitoring at a national level of a selection of farms by 2008, and a number of projects underway to improve education and awareness on child labour. Although it is true that cocoa is produced in more than 1.5 million farms across West Africa, it is surely unacceptable to endorse a monitoring system, which will never visit the majority of the farms, which may employ child labour and trafficked children. Literature from the ILO stresses that a Child Labour Monitoring System not only monitors places of work but also checks that children are now in school and not in other exploitative situations. For example the ILO CLMS in place in Bangladesh includes "unannounced visits to factories by monitoring teams, with the frequency depending on their record of compliance."⁷

3 Tulane Report, p49: If a child is trafficked, the child's presence in a household may be explained by 'family ties' even if the child is not related.

4 Chocolate Manufacturers Association Protocol for the growing and processing of Cocoa Beans and their derivative products in a manner that complies with ILO convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. 2001

5 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. 2005

6 http://www.cadburyschweppes.com/EN/EnvironmentSociety/EthicalTrading/CocoaProcurement/responsible_cocoa_farming.htm, echoed by statements by the industry at

<http://www.international-confectionery.com/global/index.asp?id=15>

7 ILO/ IPEC Facts on Child Labour Monitoring 2003



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What progress has actually been made? The International Cocoa Initiative, a partnership of labour unions, NGOs, cocoa processors and the major chocolate brands, targeted 24 Ghanaian communities for its pilot phase. ICI's program is community driven, sensitizing cocoa farmers to abusive labour practices and identify how to ensure these practices are brought to an end. Some key results and achievements of the pilot phase which was completed early 2007:

- In 21 communities, children are no longer involved in spraying of cocoa;
- 19 communities have taken measures to reduce the load children carry;
- In all communities, parents and guardians have started providing protective clothing
- for children when they accompany them to the farms;
- 20 communities have taken measures against children breaking pods;
- In 21 communities, the Traditional Labour Cooperation has been revived, thereby
- allowing children to go to school;
- 21 communities officially requested teachers, 13 were granted;
- 13 communities had employed supporting teachers, paying them directly.⁸

In 2008 the ICI is scaling up, working with 154 communities in Ghana and 88 in Ivory Coast. With an estimated 12,000 cocoa producing communities in Ghana, and 18,000 in Ivory Coast, the ICI program seems like good work, on a small scale. Furthermore, Anti-Slavery International's director Aiden McQuade states: "While ICI, in parallel with its more general child labour focused approach, has undertaken positive initiatives with the police and others on trafficking, there is a high risk that without a more systematic approach to trafficking that this most serious of problems will be inadequately unaddressed". The scale of failure to come to grips with the problem becomes clear when the original commitment made under the Harkin-Engel Protocol is considered;

"By July 2005, the industry in partnership with other major stakeholders will 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."⁹

The industry has passed the deadline and has not come anywhere near meeting these standards.

⁸ Combating child labour in cocoa growing, ILO 2005.

⁹ Chocolate Manufacturers Association Protocol for the growing and processing of Cocoa Beans and their derivative products in a manner that complies with ILO convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. 2001



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Unless industry can guarantee that our chocolate is not made from beans picked by trafficked children, then no real progress has been made. This should be the standard by which they are judged. Industry must be able to tell people which farms beans are from and must guarantee no trafficked labour.