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## **Ghana Cocoa Certification Report to Guide Efforts to Help Children on Cocoa Farms**

### **Findings Support Programs Underway to Improve Labour Practices, Working Conditions, Access to Education**

**ACCRA, GHANA (April 20, 2007)** – The release of the first cocoa farming “Certification” report by the Republic of Ghana highlights important issues in that country’s cocoa sector, and will help improve the lives of children on cocoa farms.

“Ghana has taken a major step forward in its commitment to eliminate child labour,” said Bill Guyton, President of the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF). “This report highlights important issues, and confirms the direction we are taking to help children, families and communities in the West African cocoa sector.”

The certification process was established as part of the “Protocol” agreement and with the leadership of U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY). It is a transparent and credible process that reports on the incidence of the worst forms of child labour and forced labour in a country’s cocoa sector, and on progress in reducing their incidence.

In addition to advancing the country’s commitment to the certification process, the Ghana cocoa farming report is part of the Ghana National Cocoa Child Labour Elimination Programme. Launched in 2006, the national effort represents a major commitment on the part of the Ghanaian Government to improve the lives of children and eliminate the worst forms of child labour on cocoa farms.

“The Ghana report shows that children are working on family farms, and most live with their parents or a close relative,” said Lynn Bragg, President, Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA). “Yet the survey also shows that too many children are involved in hazardous tasks, beyond what is appropriate for helping out on the family farm.”

To improve labour practices on cocoa farms, the Government of Ghana, the chocolate/cocoa industry and other stakeholders are undertaking a number of programs.

Industry efforts focus on four key areas:

- Ensuring that cocoa is grown responsibly, and that children are not harmed in the process of helping out on the family farm;
- Improving the economic return from cocoa for smallholder farmers growing this important crop;
- Strengthening farming communities by addressing such needs as access to quality education;
- Supporting efforts to protect and enhance the environment in which cocoa farmers grow their crops.

Established in 2000, the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) plays a leading role in strengthening the partnership between industry and cocoa farmers. The WCF-led “Healthy Communities” initiative, for example, will work with 150,000 West African farmers to educate them on responsible, safe labour practices, while at the same time helping farm families earn more for their cocoa crop.

Similar programs have proven effective in helping reduce children’s exposure to hazardous work and raising farm family incomes.

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) is a critical component of industry efforts to help children on cocoa farms. Established in 2002, The ICI is the leading vehicle to promote responsible labour practices on cocoa farms, and is supported by individual chocolate and cocoa industry members. ICI efforts are led by a board composed equally of industry and civil society representatives.

The ICI is working at the farm village level in Ghana and the Ivory Coast, employing a community-empowering approach that engages local leaders in the development and implementation of action plans to address the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour. The approach drives change in labour practices, improves educational opportunities for children, and creates a more actively engaged community.

“While there is much work to be done, we are making progress, and focused on the right issues,” remarked David Zimmer, Secretary General of the Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit & Confectionery Industries of the EU (CAOBISCO). “In partnership with others, we must now build upon these successful programs to help children, families and cocoa farming communities.”

The Ghana report was released by the Government of Ghana’s Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment. The research was conducted by University of Ghana, and is based on late 2006 visits to farms representing more than 10 percent of the country’s cocoa output. The regions surveyed by the University of Ghana were areas where industry-supported and government programs are not active – to provide a clear assessment of the situation.

To access the full Ghana report, visit the Ghana Cocoa Board Web site, [www.cocobod.gh](http://www.cocobod.gh).

Additional information on industry-supported efforts to support the social and economic development of cocoa farming communities can be found at the World Cocoa Foundation Web site, [www.worldcocoa.org](http://www.worldcocoa.org).

Information on the activities of the International Cocoa Initiative can be found at [www.cocoainitiative.org](http://www.cocoainitiative.org)