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## **VERITÉ ANNOUNCES MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN IMPROVING LABOUR CONDITIONS IN THE COCOA SECTOR**

Amherst, MA – Verité, the US-based nonprofit that works to promote just and humane working conditions worldwide, announced today an important milestone in the creation of an independent, transparent and credible process to build public confidence that labor conditions in cocoa production meet international standards. Verité announced the five specialists who have been named to serve as non-governmental (NGO) representatives on the Cocoa Verification Board. The Verification Board is an independent body which is mandated to create and implement the process by which government surveys of labor in cocoa production are validated. The Board will select, train and hire individual, independent verifiers who will analyze critique and report on the robustness of the national surveys undertaken by the governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. This ground-breaking effort to identify and remediate the worst forms of child labor and forced adult labor in the cocoa sector is without parallel in agriculture.

“We believe that broad consultation and openness are the best way to ensure public confidence that labor conditions in cocoa production are being monitored and remediated effectively,” said Dan Viederman, Executive Director of Verité. “We feel fortunate to have been able to bring together a diverse, multi-stakeholder body that endorsed an open and collaborative process,” Viederman continued.

In recruiting members for the Verification Board Verité consulted with over 250 people in 17 countries from NGOs, trade unions, universities and the United Nations. The multi-stakeholder board structure outlined by Verité is central to ensuring that a wide array of viewpoints is heard. Members of the Verification Board are from government, academia, industry and civil society, whose collective expertise covers social science and statistical research, child-centered research methodologies, labor rights, trafficking, agriculture (with particular focus on cocoa farming), gender studies, collective bargaining and development economics.

Verité recognizes the importance of transparency to all stakeholders, including consumers. All materials relating to Verité's work and that of the Verification Board will

be readily available to all interested parties and a website will be created to ensure that information is easily accessible and widely available.

NGO representatives of the Verification Board, announced today, are:

Dr. Stephen Ayidiya, University of Ghana, Legon  
Alice Koiho Kipre, *Afrique Secours et Assistance*, Cote d'Ivoire  
Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe, General Agricultural Workers' Union  
Diane Mull, International Initiative on Exploitive Child Labor  
John Trew, CARE International

Government and industry representatives on the nine-member Verification Board have already been announced.

Government members are:

Tony Fofie, Ghana Cocoa Board  
Amouan Assouan Acquah, Special Counselor to the Prime Minister, Côte d'Ivoire

Industry members are:

Jeff Morgan, Mars, Inc.  
Isabelle Adam, European Cocoa Association

Biographies for all nine members of the Verification Board are attached.

### **About Verité**

*Verité is a US-based nonprofit and award-winning pioneer in the social auditing, training, research and consulting field. The organization has over a decade of experience working with Fortune 500 corporations and their local suppliers through our global network of NGO partners. Verité works in over 60 countries to empower companies, factories, NGOs, governments, and workers to create sustainable workplace practices in the factories and communities where our consumer goods are made. Verité was named winner of the 2007 Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship. For more information on Verité please visit <http://www.verite.org>.*



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**Verité is a worldwide leader in advancing sustainable business practices that promote just and humane work.**

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