

For Immediate Release: June 16, 2008

Contact: Jennifer Mullin (Harkin): (202) 224-3254
Joseph O'Brien (Engel): (718) 796-9700
John Rowsome (CMAC): (416) 510-8034

Joint Statement from U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, Representative Eliot Engel and the Chocolate and Cocoa Industry on the Implementation of the Harkin- Engel Protocol

Protocol Drives Number of Achievements; Industry Outlines Next Steps

WASHINGTON, DC, USA (June 16, 2008) - In September 2001, industry representatives signed an agreement, today known as the "Harkin-Engel Protocol," developed in partnership with U.S. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and U.S. Representative Eliot Engel (D-NY). The agreement laid out a series of steps aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour from cocoa growing in West Africa. An unprecedented effort, the Protocol marked the first time that an entire industry stepped forward and worked with governments, civil society and other stakeholders to address the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour in its supply chain.

The development of a system of public certification is a key part of the Harkin-Engel Protocol. In an agreement made in 2005, the industry committed that by July 1, 2008, a public certification system would be in place that would cover 50% of the cocoa farming sector of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. In fact, the data collection element of the certification process covering an area that produces at least 50% of the cocoa farming output in each country has been completed, and reports detailing the preliminary results of these surveys by the respective governments are expected to be released by July 1. However, independent verification, which is critical to establishing the validity of the results of the government conducted surveys, partially funded by the industry, will not be fully completed until the end of the year. This robust verification process, which is underway, will improve data collection to ensure accurate reporting of the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour and strengthen remediation efforts.

This certification process has been developed as a cooperative effort between the North American and European chocolate and cocoa industry together with their international affiliates and the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. These surveys, as part of the certification process, will eventually be representative of the entire cocoa sector, reporting the incidence of child and adult labour practices that are unacceptable. This is not the same as product certification, whereby internationally recognized certifying organizations attest that particular products and their specific raw materials are produced according to labour practices that are confirmed by third party auditors.

The certification process being implemented will help governments, industry, and the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), to focus their efforts toward eliminating the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour in the cocoa supply chain. Ideally, over time, subsequent surveys will indicate an improvement in the status of child and adult labour practices.

Since its signing, the Protocol has been a positive and important catalyst for change, driving a number of important achievements.

Today, both the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are working toward implementing detailed national plans of action, focused on child labour issues across all sectors of their economies, with dedicated senior level officials assigned to lead these ongoing efforts. Both countries have invested in the implementation of certification, and will publicly post the results of their surveys. In addition, each country has committed resources to address issues that are identified through the data collection / reporting process. These efforts are to be acknowledged and applauded.

“I had a chance to see, first hand, the progress that is being made in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire during a trip in January,” **said Senator Tom Harkin**. “After that trip and meeting children who have already been affected by our work, I am more dedicated than ever to seeing through the commitments made by the industry and the national governments under the Protocol. I am hopeful that the industry will redouble its efforts to increase its contributions to the ICI to effectively deal with remediation needs.”

Representative Eliot Engel added, “Since 2001, I have been firmly committed to working with the cocoa industry and the governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire to do everything we can to work in partnership to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour. My trip to West Africa in January reaffirmed my commitment to this crucial process.”

“The certification process currently being undertaken is delivering an assessment of cocoa labour practices across ever-larger areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana,” **said Larry Graham, President of the National Confectioners Association (NCA)**. “Today, the ICI foundation is actively engaging communities to address labour issues and help children. And we have an ongoing, action-oriented partnership between industry, civil society and these governments, a partnership that will continue to drive change in the years ahead.”

The International Cocoa Initiative

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) was established in 2002, as called for under the Protocol. A partnership among NGOs, trade unions, cocoa processors and major chocolate brands, the ICI is a unique initiative that combats the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour in cocoa farming. To date, industry and individual companies have provided nearly \$10 million in financial support for the ICI and its programs since its formation and will continue to support the foundation in the future.

In 2008, the ICI is working in 104 communities in Côte d'Ivoire and 119 communities in Ghana. In 2006 – 2007 it organized 23 training sessions in Ghana and 17 in Côte d'Ivoire for government officials, local police, NGOs and media to sensitize participants with respect to child and adult labour practices.

“During my recent trip to Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, I was impressed by the work being done by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI). The ICI is not only sensitizing communities about the hazards of child and forced adult labour, but is also working to promote the important role of quality education in childhood development,” **said Representative Engel.**

“But if we are to make real progress in eliminating the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour in the cocoa industry, I believe that the ICI must now substantially scale up its efforts in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. I look forward to working with all of the stakeholders to ensure that ICI efforts are deepened over the next year.”

Future Commitment:

Going forward, the chocolate and cocoa industry will continue to support efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and forced adult labour on cocoa farms and to help cocoa farmers, their families and communities by continuing to work with the national governments to ensure that the certification process, including remediation and verification are fully implemented.

“As an industry, we see this effort as a long-term commitment, one that reflects a shared responsibility for the cocoa farmers and their families at the start of our supply chain,” **said John Rowsome, President of the Confectionery Manufacturers Association of Canada (CMAC).** “It is not a commitment that expires with any one date but rather is an essential, ongoing part of how we conduct business. While we focus on near-term milestones, they are in fact part of a longer, sustained effort that reflects our corporate citizenship in this and other areas.”

In the next 2-3 years, this long-term commitment will include the following:

- Industry will work with the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to have a sector-wide independently verified certification process fully in place across each country's cocoa-growing sector by the end of 2010.
- Industry will work closely with and assist the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana as they target and coordinate remediation efforts, based on the results from the certification data reports.

- Companies will deepen their support for the ICI as the foundation expands to additional communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana; further strengthens government capacity at the national level, and educates key stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain on safe, responsible labour practices.

“Looking ahead, there is still much work to do and our commitment will remain firm,” **remarked Bill Guyton, president of the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)**, an industry-supported organization that plays a leadership role in improving economic and social conditions for cocoa farming families. “We will build upon the achievements within the Protocol framework, as well as upon our ongoing support for the economic and social development of cocoa farming communities, to make a better life for children and adults on cocoa farms.”

###