



Cabinet du Premier Ministre

*Système de suivi du travail des enfants
dans le cadre de La certification
du processus de production du cacao.*

Le Comité de Pilotage

For immediate release:

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Côte d'Ivoire issues Initial Pilot Survey Report on labor in the cocoa sector

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (30 November 2007): Since September 2001, Côte d'Ivoire, by signing the Harkin-Engel Protocol as a witness, has committed itself to improve the framework and living conditions of cocoa farmers and their children. The government has committed itself to the principle of transparency and is not reluctant to share the results of its actions. The publication of this press release, the pilot survey report and a summary of the report on the websites www.cacao.ci and www.cocoa.ci demonstrate this commitment.

Mme Acquah Assouan, Executive Secretary of the Certification Steering Committee for Côte d'Ivoire stated, "Côte d'Ivoire is a developing country with a bright future. We recognize that our children represent that future and we remain firmly committed to their well being and development. To that end we will continue to address critical issues within the cocoa sector – the lifeblood of millions of small farming families."

THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Cocoa certification must be understood as being a cycle of continuous improvement of living conditions and labor practices in the cocoa sector. Its implementation helps evaluate and report efforts by the actors for a sustainable cocoa economy.

The cycle includes four steps:

1. Diagnostic survey (data collection)
2. Publication of survey results (public reporting)
3. Implementation of actions for social protection (remediation)
4. Independent verification (verification)

The survey report is a critical step in the process. A survey report provides information on:

1. Living conditions of farmers and their children on cocoa farms
2. Characteristics of labor practices in the cocoa sector
3. Actions for social protection to remedy any inappropriate labor practices described in the report

PILOT SURVEY

From April to July, 2007, Côte d'Ivoire conducted a pilot labor survey in 6 villages within the districts of Agnibilekrou (East), Tiassalé (South), and Soubré (South-West). These districts were chosen randomly on the basis of a categorization of cocoa production areas.

Key objectives of the pilot survey were to test the tools of work (questionnaires, methodology, techniques and logistics), to improve future survey designs and to ultimately carry out a sector-wide survey.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE PILOT SURVEY:

1. The majority of children in the pilot villages (71%) live with one or both parents. 26% of children live within a familial relationship (including brother, sister, aunt, uncle or in-laws). Less than 3% reported living in a non-family situation.
2. 87% of the children interviewed reported performing hazardous work at least once in the preceding cocoa harvest. The hazardous work includes carrying heavy loads (84%), burning of brush (18%) and the application of fertilizer (14%) or pesticides (5%).
3. 54% of the children interviewed were attending school. 34% of the children had never attended school. Also of note, the survey revealed that 71% of the heads of household had never attended school.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS:

4. During the survey process, farmers expressed a strong desire to fight against the hazardous work performed by children.
5. The survey process revealed a lack of information among farmers regarding the issue of the worst forms of child labor.
6. Significant challenges within the rural education system (lack of schools, distance from existing schools and school fees) create obstacles to higher rates of school attendance for children living on cocoa farms.

COMMITMENT BY GOVERNMENT:

In 2006, Côte d'Ivoire established an Investment Trust Fund (now valued at more than US \$50 million) for development of the cocoa producing area. On the basis of pilot survey results, the Trust Fund will target various projects, including the rehabilitation of roads, construction of schools, health centers, and water facilities.

In addition, the government of Côte d'Ivoire has recently adopted *The National Action Plan on Child Labor and Trafficking*. This plan addresses the worst forms of child labor in all sectors of the Ivorian economy. The plan, to be implemented by the Ministry of Labor and budgeted at more than US \$6.5 million, seeks to significantly reduce the worst forms of child labor and trafficking by 2011.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its strong commitment to the certification process, and will continue to work with focus and dedication to provide cocoa producers and their families the means to improve their living conditions and opportunities for social development.

NEXT STEPS:

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire will:

1. Set up a framework of dialogue with relevant national and international stakeholders to implement actions for social protection.
2. Carry out an expanded survey covering an area that produces at least 50% of the country's cocoa, will publicly report those results, develop and implement appropriate remediation activities and support the process of independent verification.

“To be clear, Côte d'Ivoire is taking these actions so that the July 2008 milestone will be met. The country is confident and respects the commitments it has made to address the worst forms of child labor and to the children of Côte d'Ivoire,” stated Mme Acquah Assouan.