

Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa Taskforce
A special taskforce dedicated to the cocoa certification of Côte d'Ivoire

Press Release

Abidjan June 17, 2005. July 1st 2005 is the deadline imposed by the Harkin-Engel Protocol in which the chocolate industry was committed in September 2001 to design and implement a credible, transparent and mutually acceptable system to certify that the production of cocoa does not use worst forms of child labour.

The Ivorian government would like to pay a tribute to the fathers of this Protocol which has helped our country to have an eye on the importance of the child labour issue but also to address the issue through appropriate actions in favour of credible and sustainable solutions.

As far as the child labour issue is concerned and given the current stage of its evolvement, all key parties involved in this Protocol acknowledged the need for direct and further discussions. Therefore, Côte d'Ivoire has decided to send a delegation of experts in the U.S. to share information on efforts undertaken on the grounds, and discuss furthermore on strategic issues.

Concerning government's efforts along with the support of partners such as WCF, WACAP, ILO, GTZ and several NGO's, several significant actions have been undertaken, among them:

1. Signing of ILO Conventions 182 and 138
2. Organization of an international seminar on cocoa certification
3. Implementation of child labour monitoring system pilot project in Oumé entirely funded by Côte d'Ivoire
4. WACAP implementation program in 6 districts
5. Various meetings with WCF, GIG, ICI, the verification working group
6. Workshop with cocoa farmers
7. Production of a mid-term CLMS report

In fact, despite the militaro-political crisis experienced by the country, Côte d'Ivoire has pointed out as a priority the combat against child labour. Therefore, beyond the current pilot experiences that are taking place, Côte d'Ivoire is totally engaged in designing a scalable program to combat child labour in all the cocoa production areas in the country.