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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **International Cocoa Verification Board Issues RFP for Verification of Certification Activities in West African Cocoa Farming**

The International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB) announces the official publication of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for Verification of Certification Activities in West Africa. The RFP is being distributed among industry, government, and civil society representatives active in the fields of cocoa and child rights for the recruitment of verifier(s) to develop an independent, third party verification process.

This verification process is an essential step in fulfilling the framework laid out by the 2001 Harkin-Engel Protocol, in which multiple stakeholders, including Members of Congress, the cocoa industry, affected African governments, non-governmental organizations, consumer groups, U.S. government agencies, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), negotiated an all-inclusive, six-point problem-solving protocol aimed at addressing abusive child labor practices in cocoa growing. By the July 1, 2005 deadline, the first five steps of the protocol had been completed and the sixth point, related to the certification process, was still in a pilot phase. On July 1, 2005, an extension of the Protocol was agreed to and a joint statement released by Senator Harkin, Representative Engel, and the cocoa industry, committed to expanding the pilot certification system to cover 50 percent of the cocoa growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana by July 1, 2008.

The International Cocoa Verification Board is a multi-stakeholder group in charge of overseeing the verification of the certification effort that is already in its pilot phase. The ICVB seeks to establish a quality, evidence-based verification process of the highest ethical standards in the field of social research. The findings from the verification process will be used to strengthen certification efforts and, in the future, will be used to strengthen remediation activities. The ICVB expects the verification activity will be guided by a rights-based approach that is also timely, transparent and sustainable.

The RFP and Proposal Budget Template, as well as reports of the surveys conducted by the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana will be available at [www.cocoaverification.net](http://www.cocoaverification.net). These documents and all other information can also be requested by email at [mawaffer@verite.org](mailto:mawaffer@verite.org). The deadline for applications is March 17, 2008, 11:59 Eastern Standard Time, USA.

#### **About the ICVB**

The International Cocoa Verification Board was convened by Verité in December, 2007. This multi-stakeholder body includes nine representatives from NGOs, academia, trade unions and industry. The nine Board members are: Anthony Fofie, Ghana Cocoa Board; Amouan Assouan Acquah, Special Counselor to the Prime Minister (Côte d'Ivoire); Stephen Ayidiya, University of Ghana-Legon; Andrews Addoquaye Tagoe, General Agricultural Workers Union (Ghana); Alice Koiho Kipre, Afrique Secours et Assistance (Côte d'Ivoire); Diane Mull, International Initiative on Exploitive Child Labor (USA); John Trew, CARE International (USA); Jeff Morgan, Mars, Inc. (USA); and Isabelle Adam, European Cocoa Association (Belgium). [www.cocoaverification.net](http://www.cocoaverification.net)

#### **About ICVB Secretariat Verité**

The Secretariat of the International Cocoa Verification Board, Verité is an international not-for-profit social auditing, training, consulting and research organization. Verité mission is to ensure that people worldwide work under safe, fair and legal conditions. Verité is recognized as a leader in the field of corporate social responsibility for its innovative approaches to solutions-driven auditing, remediation, training, and capability building. [www.verite.org](http://www.verite.org)