



Combating Child Labour: A Holistic, Development Oriented Approach

For nearly a decade now, the global chocolate and cocoa industry has made extensive efforts to tackle the occurrence of child labour in the cocoa supply-chain. Efforts have been developed in collaboration with the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana through the development of their National Action Plans, non-governmental organisations and a host of other international organisations including the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), the World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Collectively the Global Chocolate and Cocoa industry are currently supporting some 40 social and economic programs in West Africa that improve the lives of cocoa farming families and communities. By the end of this year more than three million direct and indirect beneficiaries will have been impacted by the industry's programs, including hundreds of thousands of cocoa farming families and more than one million children. A public Certification process is underway across the cocoa-farming sector in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, reporting on the incidence of the worst forms of child labour and on progress in reducing incidence. Changing traditional farming methods and bringing about real and lasting change to cocoa farming communities takes time, not just resources.

CAOBISCO and ECA welcome the opportunity to take part in the debate launched by the Commission through the Staff Working Paper on Combating Child Labour. We would like to highlight and further encourage the following aspects of the staff working paper

Multi-stakeholder approach, development cooperation and information gathering

As rightly outlined in the EU Commission staff working document child labour is a complex phenomenon that finds its root causes in poverty and limited access to education. The European Union's contribution towards the elimination of child labour requires a holistic approach, which brings together, policy dialogue, notably with third countries, combined with development cooperation and trade incentives. The paper stresses the need for multi-stakeholder involvement as an effective means of combating the worst forms of child labour and its root causes. If this is carried out, in cooperation with international organisations and third countries through the platform model that has worked well in other areas for the commission coupled with the multi-stakeholder conference proposed by the Council of Ministers in June 2010, an open and wide debate on this issue would be realised at EU level on the issue of child labour. This would in turn help to channel information to the relevant international arenas. Closer cooperation among international organisations and governments would allow progress to flourish without the hindrance of conflicting, over-prescriptive measures from a myriad of sources.

Better coordination of efforts on the ground and close collaboration with third country governments

The cocoa and chocolate industry efforts have been developed in collaboration with the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana through the development of their National Action Plans. National Action plans have shown to be very successful in focusing countries on what are the key issues and necessary capacity building to work towards eliminating child labour i.e. Judicial framework, effective policing, sensitisation of local communities. Child labour monitoring is an active process, carried out by a CCLMS committee comprised of community members and coordinated by district and national government officials. The community based child labour monitoring system enables cocoa farming communities to keep track of its population, to identify vulnerable children, to assist in the design of tailored remediation responses and to measure the effectiveness of such remediation activities. Communities take ownership of the issue and work together to find effective solutions. It also guides local efforts in identifying gaps in social and infrastructural challenges i.e. Education, health in particular that for the child.

It is essential from the earliest stages that these countries have a share of the voice in debates such as the one that is presently underway.

Focus on trade incentives rather than trade restrictive measures

Restrictive trade measures intended to eliminate or reduce producer incentives to use certain forms of child labour have been subject to much debate in many countries. As pointed out in the Commission Working Paper and reiterated in debates in the European Parliament and Council of Ministers, there is limited experience globally with such measures as a successful way to address child labour. It is clear that trade restrictions would not have a direct impact on the main contributing factor of poverty, which causes children to work in the first place. The recent ILO Global Report states such measures often run the risk of weakening the cooperative dialogue that has been harboured since the introduction of ILO Convention no. 182 and the key shift from denial of the existence of child labour to acceptance and action. The European chocolate and cocoa industry has responded to the Commission's public consultation on the GSP review. In this respect, it believes that positive trade incentives and the ability to check compliance can be useful instruments to drive progress.

The cocoa and chocolate industry experience has consistently shown that a constructive dialogue must remain open to really tackle the root causes of child labour and change the lives of millions of cocoa growing families for the better.

Socially Responsible Procurement

Responsible companies monitor their supply chains by initiating supplier codes of conduct. They also engage in a host of collective and individual programmes that address responsible and sustainable cocoa growing notably product certification schemes developed by UTZ, Rain Forest Alliance, Fair Trade among others.

But to be clear, there are limitations. The industry is aware of a number of public references around guarantees for products and appreciates the desire for certainty. However, the industry does not know of any system that currently, or in the near term, can guarantee the absence of the worst forms of child

labour, including trafficked labour, in the production of cocoa in West Africa. In a recently distributed white paper of the Fairtrade Labeling Organization states: “Child Labour is a very complex and intractable issue and while Fairtrade adopts a zero tolerance approach through its standards and compliance criteria, this principle is the starting point for a series of interventions through our own resources or in collaboration with others to help tackle the problem. No person or organization can simply guarantee that child labour does not occur in the supply chain, but Fairtrade can provide assurance that its standards, certification, and producer support services all contribute to a solution.”

The “Cocoa Protocol” is a “process certification” (i.e. evaluation, report, and remediation on sector-wide labour practices and conditions in cocoa producing countries), while product certification identifies specialty cocoa and cocoa products produced in accordance with economic, social and environmental criteria that are developed by a private certification organisation, audited against and which offer the consumer a level of assurance on particular product attributes. The various certification models are built on a matrix of variable priorities and should be merited on these, even if the core principles underpinning them are fairly consistent.

The certification studies carried out in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana have been ground-breaking in scope as they represent the first effort that we are aware of, to address the issue of child labour across an entire small, family farm based agricultural sector in a developing country context. The efforts in the cocoa sector can serve as a baseline to realistically assess what can be achieved, and what is most effective in driving change.

For further background:

<http://www.cocoafarming.org.uk/>

CAOBISCO and ECA response to the European Commission Staff Working Paper on Combating Child Labour document [direct link to doc](#)

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Through its 2000+ companies, **CAOBISCO**, the Association of the Chocolate, Biscuits and Confectionery Industries of Europe, represents more than 245,000 direct employees and generates more than 51 billion Euros annual turnover. CAOBISCO industries show a production of 10,4 million tons of products; 4,4 billion Euros of exports, i.e. 10% of the total value of food exports from the European Union; and an import value of € 1,2 billion. In terms of raw materials usage we represent over 50% of world cocoa consumption, 30% of EU sugar consumption and are the major users of dairy and cereals.

The **European Cocoa Association** (ECA) is a trade association that groups the major companies involved in the cocoa bean trade and processing, in warehousing and related logistical activities in Europe. Together, ECA Members represent two-thirds of Europe’s cocoa beans grinding, half of Europe’s industrial chocolate production and 40 % of the world production of cocoa liquor, butter and powder.

On behalf of its members, ECA monitors and reports on developments impacting the cocoa sector, both at regulatory and scientific levels. In addition, ECA is actively engaged in European and International fora related to the industry’s contribution to a sustainable cocoa economy.