



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **GLOBAL CHOCOLATE, COCOA INDUSTRY AND STAKEHOLDERS ESTABLISH FOUNDATION, "INTERNATIONAL COCOA INITIATIVE" - WORKING TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE LABOUR STANDARDS FOR COCOA GROWING**

### **Catalyst for Progress in Addressing Abusive Labour Practices**

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND (July 1, 2002) -- The global chocolate and cocoa industry, in partnership with organized labour unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has established the **International Cocoa Initiative – Working Towards Responsible Standards for**

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<sup>1</sup> Caobisco is the Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of the EU

**Cocoa Growing**, to eliminate abusive child labour practices in cocoa cultivation and processing.

"The International Cocoa Initiative solidifies the partnership between our industry and stakeholders, and creates a catalyst for change and progress," said David Zimmer, Secretary General of CAOBISCO. "Together, we have created a mechanism that will focus the best research, expertise and ideas on this critical issue."

The International Cocoa Initiative will:

- Support field projects and act as a clearinghouse for best practices that help eliminate abusive child and force labour in the growing of cocoa
- Develop a joint action program of research, information exchange and action against abusive child and forced labour practices through the enforcement of internationally recognized standards in the growing of cocoa
- Help determine the most appropriate, practical and independent means of monitoring and public reporting in compliance with these labour standards

Last year, the industry endorsed an International Protocol and signed a Joint Statement laying out a date-specific timetable to ensure that cocoa is grown without abusive child or forced labour practices. The Protocol followed industry efforts already underway to gain a better understanding of the issue and develop solutions.

The announcement of the International Cocoa Initiative marks the completion of an important Protocol milestone – which calls for the establishment of a Joint Foundation by 1 July 2002.

"Being responsible means taking action: this joint foundation is the vehicle that will get the job done on the ground," said Kevin Bales, Director, Free the Slaves. "Through the Protocol process, Free the Slaves and others have asked the global chocolate/cocoa industry to work with us to fight slavery and child labour. We've also asked them to back their commitment with financial support and resources, and to share equally the decision making power during the entire process. A year ago, the industry committed to do just that, and the establishment of this joint foundation signifies they have kept their word."

The International Labour Organization (ILO) will serve as an advisor to the International Cocoa Initiative's Board of Directors. The Director of the ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour, Frans Roselaers, commended the chocolate and cocoa industries for setting up the Foundation. "This is a farsighted initiative, and the program they have outlined is both thoughtful and action-oriented," he said. "We will encourage continued cooperation among all concerned parties and are ready to advise and assist."

Co-presidents, one from industry and one from outside of the industry will head the International Cocoa Initiative. The International Cocoa Initiative's Board of Directors will be composed equally of industry and non-industry representatives.

The International Cocoa Initiative will be based in Geneva, Switzerland.

The stakeholders who participated in the establishment of the International Cocoa Initiative include:

**Cocoa and Chocolate Industry:**

- Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of the EU (CAOBISCO)
- Chocolate Manufacturers Association of the USA (CMA) and the National Confectioners Association
- Confectionery Manufacturers Association of Canada (CMAC)
- International Confectionery Association (ICA)
- Cocoa Merchants Association of America (CMAA)
- The Federation of Cocoa Commerce, Ltd. (FCC)
- European Cocoa Association (ECA)
- World Cocoa Foundation (WCF)

**Organizations:**

- Child Labor Coalition
- Free the Slaves
- Global March Against Child Labor
- International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF)
- National Consumers League

**Advisors:**

- International Labour Organization (ILO)