

## **International Labor Rights Forum**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Global Exchange**

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### **ILRF AND GLOBAL EXCHANGE CONGRATULATE CARGILL ON NEW COCOA CERTIFICATION COMMITMENTS Over 40 organizations and fair trade companies release new statement on ethical cocoa sourcing**

The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) and Global Exchange congratulated Cargill today on their new agreement to certify its cocoa beans to the farm level in West Africa. This week, Cargill, Heinz Benelux, Ahold, UTZ Certified, Solidaridad and Oxfam Novib announced a new certification program to ensure to the farm level that cocoa is grown in a sustainable manner in Ivory Coast. As a major buyer and processor of cocoa beans from Ivory Coast for the world market, Cargill's commitment and its desire to seek "cooperation with other interested companies in the cocoa chain" signals an important step forward in promoting labor and environmental improvements in the cocoa industry.

US consumers eat 2.8 billion pounds of chocolate annually, representing nearly half the world's supply. In 2006, US imports of cocoa beans from Cote d'Ivoire were valued at almost \$385 million. ILRF and Global Exchange have been working since 2001 to address the problem of forced and trafficked child labor in the cocoa industry in West Africa. For the past six years, chocolate companies have insisted that certification to the farm-level would be impossible, but as many organizations and companies in the fair trade movement have consistently argued, such a system could be put in place if chocolate companies were committed to the process.

The announcement comes as 47 organizations and fair trade companies around the world released a statement titled "Commitment to Ethical Cocoa Sourcing: Abolishing Unfair Labor Practices and Addressing Their Root Causes" [ATTACHED BELOW]. The statement outlines key elements of an ethical cocoa sourcing policy addressing, among other aspects, the following areas:

- 1) Transparency in the cocoa supply chain to the farm level;
- 2) Sourcing from cooperatives which respect core ILO labor standards;
- 3) Paying farmers a fair and adequate price for cocoa;
- 4) Financing the rehabilitation of child laborers.

**ILRF Executive Director Bama Athreya** said, "Cargill's announcement confirms what the ILRF and other advocacy organizations have been saying for years: that certification to the farm-level is indeed possible. We look forward to learning the details of this new certification program and hope that it will address all of the key aspects outlined in the ethical cocoa sourcing statement. We look forward to the day when other major cocoa exporters, particularly Nestle and Archer Daniels Midland, will also commit to farm-level certification."

**Global Exchange Executive Director Kirsten Moller** said, “As consumer demand for socially responsible goods rises, it is time social and environmental sustainability become part of the price of doing business for the chocolate industry. Any credible certification system must ensure an end to child labor, and a fair price to cocoa farmers for their products. We hope that other chocolate companies will also commit to ensuring transparency in their supply chains as well as independent certification to the farm-level.”

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## **Commitment to Ethical Cocoa Sourcing**

### **Abolishing Unfair Labor Practices and Addressing Their Root Causes**

We, the undersigned, represent chocolate companies, social justice organizations, faith-based groups, labor unions, citizens, consumers, investors and retailers. Together we wish to bring attention to the profound social and economic problems that persist in the global cocoa and chocolate industries.

We recognize that in the global supply chain, workers on cocoa farms are sometimes subject to unacceptable forms of exploitation, including debt bondage, trafficking and the worst forms of child labor, and that the standard models for trade and cocoa pricing have left cocoa farmers impoverished and economically vulnerable year after year.

We acknowledge that all of us within the nations who import and consume nearly all of the world's cocoa production have a particular responsibility to use our economic, social and moral power to address these problems. Further, we commit ourselves to doing what we can in our respective roles to quickly reform this important industry that shapes the lives of millions of small farmers, farm workers, and thousands of rural communities around the world.

Specifically, for those of us who are direct commercial participants in the cocoa supply chain – from the level of the farm to the consumer—we commit ourselves to abide by the steps articulated below or to work with other commercial signatories who do so.

Other signatories, such as interested non-profit or faith-based organizations, pledge our support of these measures and will work to increase their adoption within the cocoa and chocolate industry.

- 1) *Provide transparency in the cocoa supply chain to farm level.* We will provide our customers with detailed information about the origins of our cocoa beans and will support the establishment of systems that can map in any given growing season all the farms, production sites and cooperatives from which we may have sourced cocoa beans.

Additionally, we will publish and make publicly available full information on any payments made to government entities in cocoa-producing countries.

- 2) Commit to sourcing exclusively from farms and cooperatives which respect the core ILO labor standards, and pay a price adequate for those producers to meet these standards. We will have our products certified by a third party auditor which is independent from our companies to ensure that core labor standards are upheld by our producers and within our supply chains.
- 3) Pay farmers a fair and adequate price for the cocoa we purchase. “Fair and adequate” is defined as a price that exceeds the costs of production and that allows farmers to meet the basic human needs of their families and workers, including adequate nutrition, shelter, medical care, and primary education.
- 4) Implement – or maintain – as the case may be, the following structural practices so as to ensure farmers a consistently better price: simplifying our supply chain, working with cooperatives, encouraging cooperatization, providing more market information to farmers and committing to long-term trade relationships with cocoa producers.
- 5) Support the drafting and enforcement of national and international laws that prohibit human trafficking, debt bondage and the other worst forms of child labor (in accordance with ILO Convention 182).
- 6) Commit to 100% Fair Trade Certified sourcing of cocoa or to financing the rehabilitation, reintegration and education of children who have been exploited by the worst forms of child labor (in accordance with ILO Convention 182) on cocoa farms, both in the growing countries and labor exporting countries, through direct support to local and international development organizations with an expertise in child rights.

#### Endorsers

African Immigrant & Refugee Foundation

Americans for Informed Democracy

Amherst Fair Trade Partnership

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars

Bay Area Fair Trade Coalition

Casa Maria Catholic Worker

Choco-Revo

Cool Hemp Company, Inc.

Co-op America  
Daily Acts  
Druide  
Earth Rights Institute  
Equal Exchange  
Équiterre  
Ethical Bean Coffee  
Ethix Ventures Inc.  
Fair Trade LA  
Fair Trade Manitoba  
Fair Trade Resource Network  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives – Rural Training and Research Center  
Food & Water Watch  
Foreign Policy in Focus  
Global Exchange  
Global Witness  
Human Rights Action Service  
International Labor Rights Forum  
Ithaca Fine Chocolates  
Jeannette Rankin Peace Center  
Just Us! Coffee Roasters  
La Siembra Cooperative  
Latin Organics Inc.  
The Marquis Project  
Organic Consumers Association  
Oxfam-Québec Fair Trade  
Providence Coffee  
RESULTS Canada  
Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights  
Riptides  
Stop the Traffik  
Sweet Earth Organic Chocolates  
Ten Thousand Villages/Dix Mille Villages, Pointe Claire  
Ten Thousand Villages, Vancouver East and West End  
TransFair Canada  
United Students for Fair Trade  
Washington DC Fair Trade Coalition  
World Neighbors