



INTERNATIONAL  
**C O C O A**  
INITIATIVE

*Working towards  
responsible labour standards  
for cocoa growing*

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CONSULTATIVE GROUP TO ELIMINATE THE USE OF CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED  
LABOUR IN IMPORTED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

REQUEST TO ATTEND AND MAKE AN ORAL STATEMENT

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The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) was created as a public private partnership with the express mandate to support the elimination of child labour and forced labour in the growing and processing of cocoa. Since 2004 ICI has implemented on the ground programmes in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, supported Governments development of plans of action, provided training and developed partnerships that have demonstrated impact on the prevalence of child labour in the cocoa sector. ICI's work has involved the development of relevant indicators and means of monitoring to support our own work and contribute to the availability of national and international data.

The mandate of this consultative group is a significant initiative and we believe that ICI is well placed to make relevant concrete contributions to the public meeting planned for the 29<sup>th</sup> of March.

We would therefore like to request to attend and to make an oral statement at this important meeting.

Key issues to be addressed:

- a) Examples of identification monitoring, verification and/or certification systems, or other models, that have been successful in reducing child labor and/or forced labor in the global supply chains within the agricultural sector or other industries.

ICI will describe how, in a supply chain like cocoa that largely depends on small holder family farm production, a best practice model must include meaningful dialogue with communities that contextualises the concepts and language around child labor and forced labor to the local environment. ICI will demonstrate that locally sustained change in child labour practices can be achieved through a process that catalyses a local debate, inspires community owned plans of action, promotes mobilisation of local resources and results in attitudinal change based on local debate rather than external compulsion.

ICI will demonstrate clear indicators of impact and will also show how informed communities are also well placed to monitor children in their local area and that they can identify suspected cases of forced labour.

- b) The roles and responsibilities that may be appropriate for the business sector and other stakeholders.

ICI will offer contribution based on over six years of active partnership working with governments, international agencies local civil society and industry on relevant and appropriate roles that can effectively combat child labour.

ICI will assert that States Parties are the sole signatories to international conventions and have both a sovereign right and duty to provide care for children in their jurisdiction. ICI will describe successful efforts in the cocoa sector by governments to establish action plans and provide coordination mechanisms.

ICI will draw from its own direct experience to argue that the business sector has two primary roles to play:

- a. Provide direct support to programmes that can address specific needs, help fill gaps in capacity, address urgent needs and stimulate innovation, but not seek to replace the mandate and ultimate role of the public sector agencies in social protection and broader development.
- b. Review and as necessary change business practices that permit child labour and/or forced labour as a necessary or permissible feature of the labour supply in the sector. This can be through direct investment in improved production for farmers and their families to increase incomes; through increasing transparency and traceability in the supply chain so that unacceptable practices are more easily identified, traced and

addressed; by ensuring that company procurement, commercial and product functions are brought into alignment so that efforts to eliminate child labour are reflected in business practices not just projects.

ICI will describe the value of multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together expertise from the industry about the supply-chain and commercial mechanisms with experts of human and labour rights. That creating a space for confidential dialogue can enable difficult and complex issues to be discussed and solutions developed that combine the capabilities of different parties.

- c) Other information that would be useful to the Consultative Group in meeting its mandate to develop recommendations relating to a standard set of practices for independent, third party monitoring and verification systems for the production, processing and distribution of agricultural products or commodities to reduce the likelihood that agricultural products or commodities imported into the United States are produced with the use forced labor or child labor.

ICI will offer the view based on experience and progress being made that monitoring and verification systems must be conceived within a framework of a holistic analysis of the underlying causes of child and forced labour in any given supply chain. ICI will demonstrate from some of the emerging best practice that unless there are integrated efforts to address policy issues, create national and local capacity for action, contextualise messages and tools, ensure relevant investment in key areas such as provision of education and training then monitoring and verification alone will not create progress. Development in agricultural production is a proven pro-poor sector and the opportunity to export to the United States offers immense opportunities that enable poor producers to climb out of poverty through their own efforts rather than as dependents on handouts. Mainstreaming efforts to tackle child labour into the national or regional development agenda is necessary to ensure imports to the United States are free of the use of child and forced labour while at the same time promoting the development that will ensure that this is sustainable.

Peter McAllister  
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