



*Working towards responsible  
labour standards for  
cocoa growing*

*"Sharing Lessons Learned - Developing Ways Forward"  
London, 1-2 April 2008*

### ICI Conference Recommendations

#### **Introduction**

The International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) hosted child labour experts from across the globe at an event at the London School of Economics. The conference, "Sharing Lessons Learned - Developing Ways Forward", focused on efforts to eliminate child labour in agriculture with a particular reference to the cocoa sectors of Ghana and the Cote d'Ivoire. The participants included senior Government representatives of Ghana and the Cote d'Ivoire, the cocoa trade, the chocolate industry, members of international agencies, civil society from producer and consumer countries, as well as internationally acknowledged experts on child labour.

The first day of discussion focused on lessons learned from the programmes underway and the efforts in different commodity producing countries, while the second day challenged the conference participants to set the agenda for future direction. After two days of intense discussion a number of themes emerged which, while not necessarily reflecting a consensus of all present, were the product of thorough debate, strongly support and, most importantly, recognised as critical to future success. On the morning after the full conference deliberations, a working group of participants, representing governments, industry, local and international NGOs, reviewed the conference outputs. Drawing on these outputs, this group identified the need for a compelling vision, along with key themes and concrete recommendations, for consideration by all those with an interest in the elimination of child labour and the sustainable future of the cocoa supply chain within Ghana and the Cote d'Ivoire. Outlined below are the key findings.

#### **A Vision for cocoa**

The elimination of child labour and the future of sustainable cocoa growing in Ghana and the Cote d'Ivoire must be based on **thriving cocoa growing communities**. This challenges us to work towards conditions that will support healthy, appealing and economically viable communities where children are safe and in school. Promoting the profitability of cocoa farms, using improved tools and methods, is the best way to ensure a sustainable supply of quality cocoa while at the same time encouraging investment in the farm, the family, the community and the future of their children.

The conference participants recognise and agree these conditions are not widely met in the two countries at this time. To achieve this vision will require the leadership of these producer governments and effective collaboration with the cocoa industry, international agencies, civil society and other development partners over the long term to achieve this vision. The approach must ensure that children inform and influence their own future and that child labour is not displaced to other sectors.

## Themes for action

Bearing in mind the many experiences and lessons learned to date, this conference suggests that there are compelling reasons for all parties to commit to a vision of thriving cocoa communities. The conference deliberations produced the following key themes that should be given serious consideration for individual and/or collective action.

- The governments of cocoa producing countries are central to providing the **overall leadership and coordination of efforts for the development of cocoa regions**. This places upon them the responsibility for providing appropriate plans, mechanisms for engagement and cooperation, appropriate data collection and transparent reporting, while remaining open to effective collaboration with others.
- The cocoa industry including local buyers, transporters and processors, manufacturers of cocoa based products, with the related trade and retail sector, bear a key part of the shared responsibility for the future of the cocoa supply chain. The industry should **support the evolution of an efficient, transparent and sustainable cocoa supply chain** that significantly contributes to the needs for a decent living for farmers and their families and actively supports efforts towards the elimination of child and forced labour.
- Effective progress towards this vision can only be made by drawing on the **expertise of the international development agencies and the unique role of civil society**. In partnership with governments these organizations are vital to ensure that improvements in infrastructure and farm profitability are matched with social development. Civil society can ensure a real voice for farmers, communities and especially women and children in their own progress.
- Underlying all development efforts and in particular the efforts to eliminate child labour, must be substantial **investment in quality accessible education for all**. Recognising that many positive lessons have been learned, there are innovative and cost effective solutions that need to be extended in support of the formal education system, to reach those children who are out of school and illiterate adults. The vision of thriving cocoa communities requires immediate action to improve education in the producing areas.

## Concrete steps forward

To build on the energetic engagement at the conference and the themes recommended above, concrete action is needed. This conference did not aim to be prescriptive but encourages all, including those not represented, to consider these outputs, learn from the lessons shared and put into action those recommendations that fall within their field of responsibility and influence. The conference encouraged the proposal of actionable items which can stimulate both engagement and common commitment.

The actions below are in no way exhaustive but are drawn from those conference outputs where there was significant agreement and energy to move forward in the short to medium term. Those actions which are considered urgent are indicated.

### **Producer government leadership & coordination:**

- **Urgent:** Disseminate widely National Action Plans and ensure a regular national coordination mechanism that allows all partners to contribute to these plans, share information and build on lessons learned.
- **Urgent:** Engage fully with civil society as unique partners of government to support the national action plans especially at community level.
- **Urgent:** Extend the regular cocoa sector studies envisioned under the “child labour certification” system currently being implemented, to drive effective policy, remediation and corrective action.
- **Urgent:** Complete and disseminate the national lists of hazardous activities in compliance with ILO convention 182. Dissemination must be in forms that are easy to access by all.
- Integrate the broader development needs in the cocoa sector, including specifically those of children, into national development plans and secure relevant concrete support from international agencies and development partners.
- Establish a fully operating system of response and safe rehabilitation for identified cases of trafficking and exploitation.

### **Evolution of the supply chain:**

- **Urgent:** Undertake a comprehensive review of the current knowledge that can support the development of a sustainable cocoa sector and ensure that this is widely disseminated.
- **Urgent:** Increase the investment in relevant extension-services to ensure that smallholder cocoa farming is properly supported, including access to market information.
- **Urgent:** Promote the organisation of cocoa farmers for collective action to enable them to work together for their common self interest and ensure a fair price.
- Develop and apply improved technology, methods and tools to raise productivity, improve quality and create proven replicable models for the future of profitable cocoa farming.
- Improve the efficiency and transparency of the cocoa supply chain ensuring that the farmers are fully represented in such changes.

### **The role of international agencies and civil society:**

- **Urgent:** Local civil society shall ensure that they effectively coordinate with national governments in their efforts to reach out to communities, promote equitable development with an emphasis on women and children.
- **Urgent:** Actively incorporate key international agencies, including but not limited to ICCO, UNICEF, ILO, IOM, UNDP, World Bank into the national coordination structures. Their support of the efforts of Governments should be sought to promote broad development in the cocoa sector.
- **Urgent:** Improve the identification and safe rehabilitation of trafficked and exploited children, with international agencies and civil society playing an active role under the leadership of government.
- Increase significantly the outreach of programmes that foster and build-on the capacity of local civil society. These programmes must seek to create community level capacity to lead their own development and ensure that the child is at the centre of their development efforts.

- Incorporate lessons learned into existing programmes for effective action to create awareness of and combat child and forced labour. New programmes translate into concrete support of national action plans.

### **Investment in quality accessible education for all:**

- **Urgent:** Incorporate the lessons learned in the provision of accessible quality education for all into the national action plans for development efforts in the cocoa regions. Lessons learned must specifically include the efforts needed to ensure all girls attend school.
- **Urgent:** Develop appropriate education support programmes to ensure basic education can be provided in cocoa growing areas including those which are remote.
- Expand significantly programmes that can effectively reach children who have dropped out of school, who have never attended school or who would better benefit from “life skills” based education. All such programmes should as much as possible aim to reintegrate children into and support the formal education system.
- Launch innovative projects to provide appropriate and meaningful approaches to vocational education. Projects must aim to provide older children with real choices for a livelihood in their community or the means to eventually seek work beyond their community without making them vulnerable to exploitation.

*ICI will produce a full conference report which will contain specific recommendations in all these thematic areas and further add to the areas of action for consideration.*

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