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Company announces new commitment to buying Rainforest Alliance certified cocoa after hearing from over 100,000 consumers; takes first step to addressing child labor

WASHINGTON, DC – The Hershey Company announced yesterday that it will make its first commitment to sourcing independently certified cocoa for its Bliss line by the end of 2012. The announcement was made days before International labor Right Forum was scheduled to run a Super Bowl ad highlighting Hershey's use of child labor and follows a multi-year campaign that generated over 100,000 letters to Hershey, including from 50,000 supporters on Change.org, asking Hershey to improve its cocoa sourcing practices.

The "[Raise the Bar, Hershey Coalition](#) [1]," a group of responsible cocoa advocates led by Global Exchange, Green America, and International Labor Rights Forum, started the campaign after identifying Hershey as behind its competitors on addressing child labor, forced labor, and other abuses in the cocoa industry.

"It's great to see Hershey's take this first step towards accountability in their supply chain. We will continue to push them to ensure a better price for cocoa farmers so they can stop depending on forced child labor," said Judy Gearhart, Executive Director of the International Labor Rights Forum. "The threat of a Super Bowl ad certainly increased the pressure, but Hershey's new agreement is really the result of thousands of consumers, students, church congregations and community groups writing to them over the past two years."

The Raise the Bar, Hershey Coalition has been increasing pressure on Hershey, including launching a petition on Change.org, creating "brand-jamming" photos and videos of Hershey products, blanketing the company's Facebook wall in messages, organizing rallies at Hershey's flagship stores, and delivering more than 100,000 letters from concerned consumers to Hershey's corporate headquarters on Halloween.

"The Raise the Bar, Hershey! Coalition is excited to see Hershey listening to consumer demand for ethically sourced cocoa," said Elizabeth O'Connell, fair trade campaigns director for Green America, "but we also recognize there is much more work to be done to fight child labor and other abuses in the cocoa industry, and we will continue to encourage Hershey to develop ethical sourcing practices."

"The growth and ultimate success of Raise the Bar, Hershey's petition on Change.org is incredible," said Change.org Director of Organizing Amanda Kloer. "Hershey responded to consumer pressure with a significant improvement in cocoa sourcing transparency. It's been empowering to watch this group of concerned organizations and individuals use Change.org's tools to fight for changes at the Hershey Company."

In response to Hershey's announcement, eighth grader Jasper Perry-Anderson has created a [follow-up campaign on Change.org](#) [2], asking the Hershey Trust to ensure the Hershey Company expands its commitment to certified cocoa to all its products in the future.

Live signature totals from Raise the Bar, Hershey's campaign:

<http://www.change.org/petitions/hershey-raise-the-bar> [3]

The Raise the Bar, Hershey! Coalition is led by the following organizations:

GREEN AMERICA is the nation's leading green economy organization. Founded in 1982, Green America (formerly Co-op America) provides the economic strategies, organizing power and practical tools for businesses and individuals to solve today's social and environmental problems. www.GreenAmerica.org [4]

GLOBAL EXCHANGE is a membership-based international human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world. www.GlobalExchange.org [5]

INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide. www.LaborRights.org [6]

For more information on Change.org, please visit:

<http://www.change.org/about> [7]

Change.org is the world's fastest-growing platform for social change — growing by more than 500,000 new members a month, and empowering millions of people to start, join, and win campaigns for social change in their community, city and country.

Source URL: <http://laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cocoa-campaign/news/response-to-hershey%E2%80%99s-rainforest-alliance-certified-blis>

Links:

[1] <http://www.raisethebarhershey.org/>

[2] <http://www.change.org/petitions/hersheys-trust-stop-exploiting-children-to-grow-cocoa-beans>

[3] <http://www.change.org/petitions/hershey-raise-the-bar>

[4] <http://www.GreenAmerica.org>

[5] <http://www.GlobalExchange.org>

[6] <http://www.LaborRights.org>

[7] <http://www.change.org/about>