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New Report Offers Evidence that Cocoa Industry Not Addressing Child, Trafficked Labor

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Source: ILRF, Global Exchange, Green America and Oasis USA

New Tulane University Report Indicates That Egregious Labor Rights Violations Persist In the Cocoa Sector; In Response, Groups Call On Hershey To Adopt Fair Trade Certification for Its Chocolate.

Highlights from the Tulane University report have been compiled by ILRF online here [1]*.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – September 30, 2010 – The Payson Center for International Development at Tulane University released its fourth annual report on Oversight of Public and Private Initiatives to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. The report underscores the lack of progress that is being made by voluntary programs adopted by the cocoa industry to address the problems of child and forced labor in West Africa. In response, national nonprofits Global Exchange, Green America, International Labor Rights Forum, and Oasis USA called on Hershey, the largest US chocolate company, to take action to end child and forced labor in its supply chain and to adopt Fair Trade Certified cocoa.

The report identifies the ongoing exploitation of labor rights in the cocoa sector including the worst forms of child labor, forced labor and trafficking. New research related to the trafficking of young workers from Burkina Faso and Mali found that:

- Cote d'Ivoire is the predominant destination for trafficked and migrant cocoa workers;
- The overwhelming majority of respondents moved to cocoa farms without their natural parents or guardians;
- Virtually all respondents experienced the worst forms of child labor including: verbal, physical and sexual harassment and restrictions of their freedom of movement;
- Virtually all respondents performed hazardous work including land clearing and burning, carrying heavy loads, spraying pesticides, and using machetes, among other dangerous activities.

In response to the Tulane Report, Global Exchange, Green America, International Labor Rights Forum, and Oasis USA stated: "It is clear from this report that the cocoa industry is not doing enough to address these problems. The world's largest chocolate manufacturers must do more to monitor their supply chains to combat child labor, forced labor and human trafficking. The Payson Center's report recommends that companies institute traceability systems for their cocoa supply chains starting at or near the farm level and work with product certification schemes, which no longer represent a niche market. All of the certification programs operating in the West African cocoa sector should be reviewed to ensure that they appropriately identify and address child labor issues. The report identifies major industry actors that have made commitments in this area, including Mars, Kraft, Nestlé and Cargill.

"Hershey stands out as the only major chocolate company missing from the list. The recent report "Time to

Raise the Bar: the Real CSR Report for the Hershey Company" [2] (issued by Global Exchange, Green America, International Labor Rights Forum, and Oasis USA) found that the Hershey corporation was the laggard in the cocoa industry regarding monitoring its supply chain. The report also found that Hershey lacked transparency and traceability when it came to its cocoa sourcing, as well as meaningful programs to address labor violations in the cocoa-growing communities of West Africa, from where it sources. As the dominant chocolate company in the US, the report calls on Hershey to "Raise the Bar" and adopt Fair Trade Certification for its best selling bar by 2012, and all of its top selling chocolate products by 2022."

The Payson Center's Report can be downloaded here:
http://childlabor-payson.org [3]

Highlights from the report have been compiled by ILRF online here. [1]

"Time to Raise the Bar: The Real CSR Report for the Hershey Company" is available at the following websites:
Global Exchange: http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/raisethebarhersh... [4]

Green America: http://www.greenamerica.org/pdf/HersheyReport.pdf [5]

International Labor Rights Forum: http://laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cocoa-campaign/resources/... [6]

Oasis USA: http://www.oasisusa.org/index.php/projects/the_chocolate_campaign/ [7]

ABOUT THE GROUPS

GLOBAL EXCHANGE is a membership-based international human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world.
www.GlobalExchange.org [8]

GREEN AMERICA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to harness economic power—the strength of consumers, investors, businesses, and the marketplace—to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society.
www.GreenAmericaToday.org [9]

THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide.
www.LaborRights.org [10]

OASIS USA is a non-profit organization committed to developing communities where everyone is included, making a contribution, and reaching their God-given potential.
www.OasisUSA.org [11]

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Source URL: http://laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cocoa-campaign/news/12408

Links:
[1] http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cocoa-campaign/resources/12407
[2] http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cocoa-campaign/resources/12395
[3] http://childlabor-payson.org
[4] http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/raisethebarhershey.htm
[5] http://www.greenamerica.org/pdf/HersheyReport.pdf
[6] http://laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/cocoa-campaign/resources/12395
[7] http://www.oasisusa.org/index.php/projects/the_chocolate_campaign/
[8] http://www.GlobalExchange.org
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[10] http://www.LaborRights.org
[11] http://www.OasisUSA.org