

**GLOBAL EXCHANGE | GREEN AMERICA |
INTERNATIONAL LABOR RIGHTS FORUM | OASIS USA**

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Organizations Question Nestlé's Commitment to Fair Trade Cocoa

Nestlé SA announced today that it would begin to source Fair Trade Certified cocoa for its Kit Kat bars in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Since stories about the use of child, forced and trafficked labor and the widespread poverty among farmers in West Africa's cocoa industry surfaced in 2001, organizations in the United States and around the world have been campaigning to convince major chocolate companies, especially Nestlé, to commit to sourcing Fair Trade Certified cocoa. A lawsuit filed in 2005 in US courts against Nestlé on behalf of Malian children who were trafficked to Cote d'Ivoire to harvest cocoa is still ongoing.

While Nestlé's announcement may be a very small step toward supporting a more sustainable and labor-friendly system of cocoa sourcing, the company's history and practices around the world raise questions about its commitment to Fair Trade. Additionally, Nestlé has not announced any plans to use Fair Trade Certified cocoa in its products in the United States.

Nestlé is one of the most boycotted companies in the world. Trade unions have criticized the company for a range of labor rights abuses including in Colombia, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Tunisia. Nestlé has also been a target of campaigners concerned about its impact on access to water and baby food marketing, among many other issues.

Nestlé's minimal investment in Fair Trade Certified coffee also provides reason to be skeptical about its commitment. Nestlé's Fair Trade line is only a marginal part of its coffee products and it has not increased its purchasing of Fair Trade coffee despite its promises to do so. In October 2009, Nestlé launched a new program related to their global cocoa sourcing called "The Cocoa Plan" which does not include investing in Fair Trade cocoa, suggesting that the company does not intend to shift toward more equitable trading relationships through the Fair Trade system and it is unclear if Nestlé plans to expand Fair Trade cocoa beyond the UK.

Bama Athreya, Executive Director of the International Labor Rights Forum, said, "Nestlé cannot claim to be sourcing responsible cocoa by using a small amount of Fair

Trade Certified cocoa when the majority of its cocoa could be produced by forced labor and child labor. As the largest food company in the world, Nestlé must make a stronger commitment to protecting worker rights in its cocoa supply chain as well as in its production facilities and in the sourcing of other agricultural products.”

Todd Larsen, Corporate Responsibility Programs Director at Green America, said, “We urge Nestlé to go beyond this token commitment to Fair Trade and to take steps to end all sourcing from child labor and pay a living wage to its workers worldwide. Consumers the world over are increasingly concerned that their chocolate purchases are supporting slavery and misery, and are increasingly purchasing Fair Trade chocolate as a result. They will be looking to Nestlé to do far more to support farmers worldwide.”

Adrienne Fitch-Frankel, Fair Trade Campaign Director at Global Exchange, said, “While we thank Nestlé on behalf of the thousands of cocoa farming families who will begin to thrive by receiving the Fair Trade price for their cocoa, we also ask, ‘How can Nestlé leave so many thousands of children languishing in child slavery and abusive labor conditions, and keep so many farming families mired in poverty while growing cocoa for the rest of Nestlé’s products?’ Nestlé’s profits depend on the hard work of cocoa farmers, and justice will only be done when those farmers can live in dignity.”

Paul Hong-Lange, Director of Oasis USA, said, “This step by Nestlé guarantees that no slave labor or exploitation will be used in the production of one line of chocolate in one region of the world. This is a good start but it still leaves the conscientious American wondering if Nestlé chocolate on the shelf in their grocery store is tainted with slave labor. We urge Nestlé to do better by more farmers and more consumers.”

Over 60 organizations and chocolate companies have endorsed a “Commitment to Ethical Cocoa Sourcing” that sets a higher standard for sustainable and responsible cocoa sourcing than Nestlé. The commitment can be found online:

<http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-labor/cocoa-campaign/resources/10656>.

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Global Exchange is a membership-based international human rights organization dedicated to promoting social, economic and environmental justice around the world.

www.GlobalExchange.org

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

The International Labor Rights Forum is an advocacy organization dedicated to achieving just and humane treatment for workers worldwide. www.LaborRights.org

Oasis USA is a non-profit organization committed to developing communities where everyone is included, making a contribution, and reaching their God-given potential. Oasis USA is the West Coast Office for Stop the Traffik Campaign in the USA.

www.OasisUSA.org.