



*Ambassade de Côte d'Ivoire
2424 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008*

TEL.: 202-797-0300
FAX: 202-462-9444

*République de Côte d'Ivoire
Union - Discipline - Travail*

Washington, D.C, June 5, 2008

N° 0 SB/AMBCIW/MG/TN/08

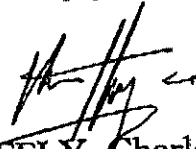
**Ms. Marcia Eugenio
U.S Department of Labor
IBLA, office of Child Labor, Forced and Human Trafficking
Bureau of International Labor Affairs
200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room S-5317
Washington, D.C. 20210**

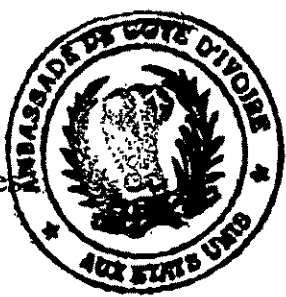
Dear Madam:

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 4, 2008 regarding the Public Hearing to Collect Information to Assist in the Development of the List of Goods from Countries Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor.

Attached, please find the answers to your questions.

Sincerely yours,


KOFFI Y. Charles
Ambassador



1. We note from your testimony that data collection and reporting for the nationwide survey on the cocoa harvest in 18 administrative regions will be completed at the end of May 2008.

. When will the report be available for the public?

Due to constraints experienced by experts, the report is not yet available. We completed the first draft which will be first reviewed, then approved during a workshop gathering all parties, and last published. We estimate a delay of two weeks, with the international workshop being held from June 10 to June 12, 2008, the report will be published around the third week of June, definitely before the end of June .

. Will the raw data analyzed for the report be available for the public?

The information is the property of sovereign States. The process includes a verification to be carried out independently then the basic documents are available and given to the field controllers currently in Cote d'Ivoire. Furthermore, basic information without analysis is meaningless. Let us trust the controllers and let them do their job. Let us not forget that US DOL, financed by Congress, put Tulane University in the field thus being able to collect its own data to check against the States'.

2. **Your testimony mentions a number of initiatives the Government of Cote d'Ivoire is undertaking in partnership with other organizations, such as GTZ (German Cooperation Agency), the ICI (International Cocoa Industry), and IFESH. How many children have been withdrawn or prevented from working through these projects?**

While Cote d'Ivoire above all aims at taking care of the children victims of the worst forms of forced labor, its action is not limited to these specific cases. The State considers the overall issue of rural development, tackles the elements which contribute to child labor, i.e. education, training, literacy classes for adults and children, fight against ignorance by awareness campaigns, and provides for the growers' and their children's basic needs (health, access to drinking water, product outlet). Cote d'Ivoire knows that fighting against the worst forms of child labor is the only way to provide farmers with a sustainable and tolerable economic environment.

Counting the withdrawn children is a good thing but preventing child labor is much better and it is precisely what our country struggles to achieve with its own resources and through projects like GTZ, ICI and IFESH among others.

In addition, any action which does not include the overall situation of countries trafficking children is doomed to failure. From 2006 to March 2008, about 284 children, eleven of them Ivorians, were intercepted by police and repatriated to their respective countries thanks to the support of GTZ, and 8 traffickers were jailed. These children were originally from Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali, Niger and Ghana. Such action was made possible through the awareness program sustained by ICI. As for IFESH, it specializes in literacy classes in rural areas jointly with the Government's education program.

.../...

3. Thank you for including in your testimony steps that the Ivorian Government is undertaking in support of the Harkin-Engel Protocol. Will you please elaborate for us how the certification process that is described will certify that cocoa, as a good, is child labor free?

The next step will be drawn up by the international workshop to be held from June 10 to June 12, 2008 and will sum up four years of work. The workshop will give the guidelines and the project will carry out the implementation.

The certification process does not specify that cocoa is child labor-free, but rather, it does indicate the following :

What is the work status of children in the field ?

The answer is given by the diagnosis survey.

We work in a transparent way, hence, we do publish the survey report.

We implement programs aimed at banning any factor conducive to child labor (remediation).

Should we discover any existing case, we take action by withdrawing the children followed by inserting them in schools or income earning activities.

Our proactive responses involve outreach programs and training.

Follow-up measures are taken to better explain the problem. Literacy programs, seminars and workshops are organized to uplift living standards of both children and farmers. This is tantamount to affording drinking water, opening up roads and building health centers.

By the end of the day, after all these endeavors, should children be still used in the labor force, this will simply mean that we did not make the right diagnoses.