

**TESTIMONY ON CHILD LABOR IN THE COCOA INDUSTRY IN  
GHANA BY AMBASSADOR KWAME BAWUAH EDUSEI,  
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Introduction:

The Government and people of Ghana are pleased about this public hearing on the worst form of child labor. We assure all and sundry, of our deep commitment to work closely with all stake holders to resolve completely this developmental challenge, even though the first major scientific study clearly indicates a small percentage. This is because a single child abused cannot be acceptable. They are our own children and our own future.

- Cocoa is the economic life blood of Ghana with over 600, 000 small cocoa farms averaging one to three acres affecting over 23 million Ghanaians.
  
- Ghana is conducting a multi-faceted national effort to combat child labor in the cocoa sector. This initiative is well grounded in several aspects of national law, national education policy, Ghana's ratification of ILO convention numbered 182, a strong partnership with International Labor Organization's International Program on Elimination of Child Labor ILO-IPEC, ongoing partnerships with industry and multilateral and bilateral agencies and an NGO program called the National Program for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector.
  
- The objective of the National Cocoa Sector Program is to eliminate the worst form of child labor in cocoa production by 2011, and to contribute the elimination of other worst forms of child labor by 2015. It is important to emphasize that this program is a partnership based effort, funded by the Government of Ghana as well as Cocoa Industry partners, multilateral, bilateral donors and NGOs. The program seeks to accomplish its objectives through the following strategies: Improving the knowledge base on child labor in the cocoa industry; Strengthening the legal framework; Focusing on enforcement of current laws; Mobilizing key stakeholders

in cocoa-growing areas to collaborate on awareness raising campaigns and other efforts to eliminate child labor; Developing and implementing interventions that will eliminate the worst forms of child labor in cocoa; Promoting universal basic education and the development of human capital in cocoa growing areas; Developing and implementing interventions that will reduce the need for child labor in cocoa production and Building capacity at the central, regional, district and community levels to effectively address child labor in Ghana, and the worst forms of child labor in cocoa, in particular.

- This is the first time Ghana has undertaken comprehensive scientific studies involving 60% of cocoa growing areas with multi-stakeholder participation and independent validation of the worst form of child labor. A major finding indicates 97% school enrollment rate and 90% school attendance rate. The certification report is in its final stages, results will be released next week, which June 6<sup>th</sup> 2008.
- A Draft Hazardous Activity Frame work (HAF) with clear definitions of activities deemed hazardous has been developed and is also in its final validation process. This would be released by June 5<sup>th</sup> 2008.
- The implementation phase has also been decentralized to the district level. This involves district action plans with close monitoring of activities, sponsored by Cocoa Marketing Board and other donor countries.
- Ghana has instituted district information service vans going round all districts to give information to the community about civil responsibilities and the rights of children (*including child labor issues*).
- We have instituted district and community child protection committees, to ensure child safety.

- Ghana has instituted a National Free and Compulsory Basic Education including Free Feeding for all Ghanaian children. Government is also providing free school logistics and supplies to all schools.
- We also provide Free Transportation for all school Children in areas with public transportation.

In summary, the Government of Ghana is working cooperatively with the global cocoa industry, key civil society organizations, and the multilateral and bilateral donor community on this important issue, while simultaneously creating a solid model of public-private partnerships that can be used in other sectors. Ghana is committed to working with all its partners to ensure that its children are protected and afforded every opportunity to receive a sound education and the opportunity for a better life.

The Ghana Government would want to make it abundantly clear that, we never sought special favors from the US Government or any other source in the evaluation of child labor.

We rather recognize this challenge as a developmental issue and we know we need more resources to build capacity in order to eliminate child labor. Let me emphasize here that Transparency and co-operation are key.

Thank you.