

PRESS STATEMENT – CHOCOLATE: THE BITTER TRUTH

25 March 2010



On Wednesday, 24th March, 2010, the BBC Panorama's report, Chocolate: The Bitter Truth, raised troubling questions about the international cocoa industry and highlighted the deep seated poverty that exists in countries like Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

In highlighting issues to do with child labour and trafficking Panorama clearly stated: *"Fairtrade can only take action because its farms are traceable and open to scrutiny. Most are not."*

This explicit validation of Fairtrade's audit systems should not detract from the central point of Panorama's findings: continued serious problem of child labour and child trafficking in West Africa's cocoa industry.

The cocoa market continues to work against the interests of growers in West Africa and other cocoa producing regions which provide the environment for child labour to flourish. Cocoa prices in real terms have slumped in the past 40 years from \$2.50 per lb in 1970 to less than \$0.80 per lb in 2008 according to The Food & Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations despite the recent speculative commodity price hike.

Peter Gaynor, Executive Director, Fairtrade Mark Ireland says: *"Fairtrade is a part of the solution. And we call on the chocolate industry to extend its involvement with Fairtrade - to pay a fair price to farmers and to work directly with them to tackle huge challenges farmers and their communities are struggling to overcome. We can't guarantee there won't be problems but we can guarantee a better deal for cocoa farmers and a system to tackle the problems where and when we find them."*

The BBC Panorama journalist concluded: *"I asked myself at the beginning of this journey: 'Do we pay a fair price for our chocolate?' ...Actually the answer lies here in the reality of the situation in West Africa and the cocoa farms here, and the grim reality of life where they don't have shoes to wear, they don't have electricity and running water. And all that begs another question – 'Are we in the west prepared to pay a little bit more for our chocolate so that they can enjoy a decent standard of living and more importantly so they don't have to use child labour?'"*

Thanks to access to the international Fairtrade market, over 50,000 poor farmers and workers in [Ghana](#) and [Côte d'Ivoire](#) (Ivory Coast) have been able to improve their lives with tangible economic and social benefits including education.

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