



Social Justice Board
Uniting Church
in Western Australia



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Media release

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Kids betrayed by a Hershey Kiss

A 'scorecard' detailing chocolate company's efforts to address child and forced labour in cocoa production has found The Hershey Company is doing the least to tackle the problem of all the major companies currently selling chocolate in Australia.

"From what companies have publicly disclosed, The Hershey Company is the chocolate company that appears to be putting in the least effort to ensure cocoa production in West Africa is free of forced and child labour", said Dr Mark Zirnsak, social justice spokesperson for the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

"They have not disclosed publicly how much cocoa they are buying that is subject to a certification standard banning forced and child labour, but it would appear to be less than one per cent of their total cocoa usage. Their funding of anti-poverty work in West Africa appears to be less than a fifth of what they pay their CEO each year."

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are two of the largest producers and exporters of cocoa in the world. It is estimated 70 per cent of the world's cocoa comes from West Africa. The most recent figures estimate that 1.8 million children in West Africa are involved in the industry.

A 2002 report by the U.S Department of State estimated there were 109,000 child labourers working on cocoa farms. Some of these children are being forced to work against their will, but the majority are children working on family farms. The work that is required of these children includes being exposed to dangerous pesticides and chemicals, using machetes, travelling great distances and working in the blistering heat for long hours for little or no pay. In most cases this work is considered to be some of the worst forms of child labour as it has the potential to be extremely harmful.

"Mars and Nestlé are to be commended for being the most transparent about their efforts to ensure there is no forced or child labour in the cocoa they are using", said Rosemary Hudson Miller, Associate General Secretary of the Uniting Church in WA. "It is in the chocolate industry's interests to ensure cocoa farmers are lifted out of poverty and do not resort to forced and child labour, if they are to have any hope of lifting cocoa production to meet projected demand."

"Kraft/ Cadbury started strongly in addressing these problems in 2009, but in the last two years have not offered the public a clear picture of what they are doing", said Dr Zirnsak. "The idea of a scorecard is to encourage the companies to be more transparent about the efforts they are making and informing the public of these efforts. Consumers should be able to know who is not pulling their weight in addressing these problems."

The scorecard can be downloaded from: <http://www.justact.org.au/chocolate-company-commitments/>

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