



Social Justice Board
Uniting Church
in Western Australia



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Media release

4 October 2012

Hershey comes through on ending child labour

Uniting Church bodies have welcomed the announcement by The Hershey Company that by 2020 all of its cocoa will be certified with standards prohibiting the use of forced and child labour.

This comes a week after the Uniting Church released a scorecard showing The Hershey Company was doing the least amongst major chocolate companies to address the problems.

“The Hershey announcement is fantastic news for the children and farmers in West Africa, provided it is backed up by efforts to address the poverty on cocoa farms in that region,” said Dr Mark Zirnsak, social justice spokesperson for the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

“The announcement is a testament to the efforts by US campaigners over a number of years, including the International Labor Rights Forum, Green America and the United Methodist Women. Australian campaigners also recently supported putting pressure on The Hershey Company by taking action through a postcard campaign to the CEO.”

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 US 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.

“The Hershey company needs to provide clear milestones on how it will meet its 2020 commitment, so consumers can be clear there is a consistent effort to get to this goal,” said Rosemary Hudson Miller, Associate General Secretary of the Uniting Church in WA.

“Kraft, and its subsidiary Cadbury, are now the company that needs to reveal what its plans are to make sure all their cocoa is sourced under a standard that excludes forced and child labour. It is now the major chocolate company that is least transparent in its efforts.”

Media contacts, Mark Zirnsak, 0409 166 915, Rosemary Hudson Miller, 0419 945 341