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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## International Cocoa Verification Board Members Present on Constructive Corporate Engagement at Children's Rights International Conference

Cairns, Australia

The International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB) was recently featured at the International Conference on Child Labor and Child Exploitation as a model for Constructive Corporate Engagement addressing the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa sector. Government representatives, international experts, academia, and corporate representatives from around the world attended the conference focused on "exploring the challenges ahead in securing rights for children in the 21st century" hosted by Children's Rights International (CRI).

ICVB members Isabelle Adam (European Cocoa Association) and John Trew (Care USA) presented on a panel moderated by Trish Hyde of the Confectionery Manufacturers of Australia. The expert panel focused on industry efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in West African cocoa-growing regions and on the development of the certification and verification processes currently underway. Specifically, the panel highlighted "steps taken by some companies and organizations operating internationally to address the worst forms of exploitation in their labor obligations and their attempts to try to set higher standards." The panel addressed the importance of engaging the private sector in a constructive and deliberate manner; highlighting how the experiences in cocoa should serve as a springboard for examining the worst forms of child labor in other commodities, such as sugar and cotton. The impact of the cocoa sector approach crystallizes the importance of cross-sector cooperation in order to bring about positive and lasting change for cocoa farmers and their families. The ICVB is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization convened by the labor rights non-governmental organization, Verité, to ensure that certification efforts to evaluate the occurrence of child or forced adult labor in cocoa producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are independently verified. Verified data will ensure that efforts to improve conditions are more strategically focused on the areas and issues that are in greatest need of remediation.

### About the ICVB

The International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB) is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization that was convened by Verité in December, 2007, to ensure that certification efforts to evaluate the occurrence of child or forced adult labor in cocoa producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana are independently verified. Verifying the soundness of the data collection methodologies and the accuracy of survey findings helps to ensure that remediation efforts are more strategically focused on the areas and issues that are in greatest need of remediation. Reliable data informs meaningful, enduring change for cocoa producing communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. All stakeholders, from governments to civil

society actors, will be able to use the results of this verification effort to strengthen their work going forward.

#### ICVB Vision Statement

Verification is an essential step in assessing labor conditions in cocoa-growing communities in West Africa. The ICVB holds the strong conviction that accurate data will help guide strategic planning and programming to effectively address potential areas of concern, including child and forced adult labor. Properly verified data will ensure that future remediation activities are more strategic, cost-effective, targeted and synergistic. Our true stakeholders are the cocoa farmers and children and we measure our success or failure by how well their lives improve, in part, due to our work. Accurate data matters.

For More Information Contact:

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