

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT

International Cocoa Initiative



Period covered by the Communication on Engagement

From: 31 July 2019 to: 31 July 2021

I. Statement of Continued Support by the Executive Director

1 July 2021

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Nick Weatherill", is written over a horizontal line.

Nick Weatherill

ICI Executive Director

## II. Brief description about the International Cocoa Initiative and its role in the Cocoa sector

ICI is a Swiss-based, non-profit foundation that works to ensure a better future for children in cocoa-growing communities. It is a multi-stakeholder partnership advancing the elimination of child labour and forced labour, by uniting the forces of the cocoa and chocolate industry, civil society, farming communities, governments, international organizations and donors.

ICI has been working in cocoa-growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana for 15 years and within that time has helped advance quantified progress in the fight against child labour in cocoa.

### **Vision and Mission**

ICI's vision is of thriving cocoa-growing communities within a dignified, sustainable and responsibly managed cocoa supply chain, where child rights and human rights are protected and respected, and where child labour and forced labour have been eliminated.

ICI works together with its partners to improve the lives of children and adults at risk of child labour or forced labour in cocoa-growing communities. ICI innovates, catalyses and supports the development, implementation and scale-up of effective policies and practices that promote child rights and that prevent or remediate child labour and forced labour.

ICI is committed to working towards the advancement of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and especially supports the fulfilment of [SDG 8.7](#).

Our current list of members can be found here: <https://cocoainitiative.org/about-ici/our-partners/industry-members/>

### **Our 2021 – 2026 Strategy**

Our new 2021-2026 strategy lays out a vision to support cocoa communities to thrive through the advancement of children's and workers' rights. ICI's new approach aims to catalyse the scale-up of prevention and remediation systems to reach all children and adults at risk of child or forced labour. Our strategic objectives aim to contribute to the creation of three key pillars that are essential to achieving this goal:

- Responsible supply chains built on systems and services that responsibly and transparently prevent and remediate child labour and forced labour across the entire cocoa supply chain.
- A supportive enabling environment with local, national and international policies and laws, that inspire, motivate and obligate progress, from human rights due diligence legislation in cocoa-consuming countries, to policies that continue to advance access to quality education and social protection in cocoa-producing countries.
- Coordinated approaches to support collaboration, alignment and accountability across the cocoa and chocolate industry, civil society, governments, and donors to maximise their collective impact.

[Learn more about our 2021-2026 Strategy](#)

### III. Description of actions

#### Introduction

ICI works together with its members and partners to improve the lives of children and adults at risk of child labour or forced labour in cocoa-growing communities. ICI innovates, catalyses and supports the development, implementation and scale-up of effective policies and practices that promote child rights and that prevent and remediate child labour and forced labour.

#### Operational Support

Effective strategies exist to prevent and address child labour and forced labour. A core part of our work is supporting the cocoa sector to adopt and scale up effective practices that are proven to protect and promote the rights of children and adults. We directly implement programmes to tackle child labour and forced labour, together with our members and partners. We also support actors across the cocoa sector to put in place effective practices themselves, by providing advice, tools and training.

Two approaches that we have found to be successful, and which can be implemented separately or together, include a Child Centered Community Development approach, and the implementation of Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS).

- **Child Centered Community Development** is an approach that brings communities together and helps them to play an active role in implementing child-centred development. The needs and priorities of the community are discussed with community members, including farmers, their families, children, village leaders, and others. A Community Action Plan is then drawn up, that describes the activities that can help the community to reduce child labour. Depending on the community, the Action Plan may include activities such as building or improving schools, supporting women's empowerment, or helping farmers to find other income sources to supplement the income from cocoa production.
- **Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems** are systems that identify, address, and prevent, child labour. They are built around community facilitators (often farmers themselves) who are connected to cocoa-farming cooperatives. These facilitators visit households, raise awareness on the dangers of child labour, and identify children doing tasks that may be hazardous for them. If a child is found in child labour, they are recorded in the system and support is provided to the child, their family and community. This support may include things like improving access to quality education (through providing school books and uniforms, birth certificates that allow children to attend school, or improving school infrastructure), supporting cocoa farming families to supplement their income with alternative income generating activities or village savings and loans associations, and gender empowerment, all of which we know can help reduce child labour in cocoa-growing communities.

#### Innovation and Learning

Child labour and forced labour are complex issues. We know that to protect children and workers, these must first be understood, and solutions must be grounded in evidence, which is why Innovation and learning has been at the heart of our work for several years. We drive forward a learning agenda for the cocoa sector, assess existing solutions, test and develop new approaches, and share our knowledge with our key stakeholders. We have a number of innovation projects currently underway, where we explore things like the impact of cash transfers on child labour, various models to predict child labour risk, and a number of new tools to help tackle forced labour.

## **Technical Advocacy**

We also actively promote knowledge and learning, sharing what works so that all stakeholders understand root causes, effective approaches and the need for policies, standards and benchmarks to create an enabling environment. We engage as a technical expert in the development of such policies and standards, advising and advocating for effective, evidence-based measures. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, we work with our members and broader stakeholders to support coordination – aligning approaches and common success measures. In addition, we work to mobilise further support to scale up effective systems and bring new capacity and investment to tackling child labour and forced labour risks in cocoa.

## **Human Rights Due Diligence**

ICI supports the UN Global Compact's mission and works to help businesses to align their strategies and operations with the Global Compact's Principles, in addition to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) that require companies to conduct on-going human rights due diligence.

Our work and our tools are designed to support cocoa and chocolate companies' efforts in undertaking ongoing human rights due diligence, with a particular focus on child labour and forced labour risks in the cocoa sector. For example, our CLMRS follows an ongoing risk-based due diligence approach in line with the OECD guidance on responsible business conduct, which requires companies to identify and assess adverse impacts within their operations, prevent or mitigate them, track implementation and results, communicate transparently on how impacts are addressed and provide for remediation when appropriate. Our community development approach provides much needed support to cocoa-growing communities and is a complementary step to achieve responsible supply chains and communities.

## **IV. Measurement of outcomes**

### **Outcomes of ICI's 2015-2020 Strategy**

Last year saw the conclusion of our 2015–2020 strategy. During this period the cocoa sector has changed significantly. Sustainability programmes to support cocoa-growing families have expanded amidst greater expectations for responsible business conduct, for corporate human rights due diligence and for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. In part thanks to ICI's innovations, learning and influencing work, there has been growing stakeholder alignment on best practices to tackle child labour.

In tandem ICI's membership increased during the 2015–20 period to include 14 new members from the cocoa industry, civil society, farming cooperatives and international organizations. This has further enhanced ICI's role as a multi-stakeholder platform and a vibrant community of learning and practice.

Over this period ICI's direct work, with our members and partners, benefited 423,000 children by the end of 2020, surpassing our target of directly reaching and positively impacting the lives of 375,000 children by 2020. In addition, external evaluation of ICI's indirect influencing impact confirms ICI as "a key influence on aligning stakeholders towards a common approach to combatting child labour in cocoa and driving the adoption and scale-up of CLMRS" with at least 269,000 households (corresponding to around 726,000 children) additionally impacted (by end-2020) through ICI's influence on the action of others. This amounts to improved child protection for approximately 1.15 million children, exceeding the 2020 target of 1 million.

Our work on the ground has also provided key insight into what works to tackle child labour. Results from CLMRS show that they can reduce hazardous child labour by 50% amongst the child labourers they identify. Uptake from the sector means that these systems now cover an estimated 20% of the cocoa supply chain in West Africa. Meanwhile our three-year Community Development Programme resulted in reductions in child labour of around 20% in assisted communities.

Over the past five years, ICI's innovation and learning has also played a key role in advancing the sector's knowledge on issues such as child labour risk, the importance of quality education, and the role of income. Pilot projects have enabled critical issues, such as forced labour risks, to be better understood and new tools to be developed. This learning and innovation work will continue to be central as we advance the scale up of interventions, helping us to develop new tools and improve current systems, such as CLMRS. For instance, our research on child labour risk has resulted in a model to allow at-risk households to be identified more efficiently and prioritized for support.

For a more detailed look of ICI's results in relation to the UN Global Compact Principles, please take a look at our 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports.

- [2019 Annual Report](#)
- [2020 Annual Report](#)

### **International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour**

To mark the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, ICI and its members are pledging to scale up systems that prevent and address child labour, as part of corporate human rights due diligence efforts, to cover 540,000 cocoa-growing households in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana by the end of 2021. This represents approximately 30% of the cocoa supply chain in those countries. This ambitious pledge forms part of ICI's wider goal to help ensure that 100% of the cocoa supply chain is covered by such systems by 2025.