

U CACAO COOPERATIVE

→ Formal Notice

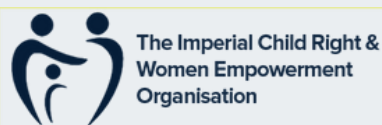
December 15, 2023

ISSUES

The associations International Rights Advocates, Imperial Child Rights and Women Empowerment and the organization ROSCIDET have served formal notice on the company “Coopérative U Enseigne” to respect its duty of vigilance. They are asking the French retail giant to take the necessary measures to exclude chocolate derived from deforestation and forced child labor from its global supply chain, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana [1].

ACTORS

The American NGO International Rights Advocates, the Ghanaian organization Imperial Child Rights and Women Empowerment (ICRAWE), the Ivory Coast organization ROSCIDET, and eight former child slaves who harvested cocoa in the Ivory Coast (Issouf Coubaly, Sidiki Bamba, Tenimba Djamoutene, Oudou Ouattara, Ousmane Ouattara, Issouf Bagayoko, Arouna Ballo, and Mohamed Traore), initiated the proceedings.



Terry Collingsworth, Executive Director,
International Rights Advocates
tc@iradvocates.org
1-202-255-2198

Etelle Higonnet, Executive Director, Coffee Watch
etelle.higonnet@gmail.com
1-202-848-7792

To go further



www.internationalrightsadvocates.org



CASE DESCRIPTION

According to the signatories of the formal notice, Coopérative U Enseigne markets products from Nestlé, Mars, Mondelez and other brands, while the latter continue to profit from child labor and deforestation in West Africa [2]. Their “cocoa suppliers, Cargill, Incorporated (“Cargill, Inc.”) and Cargill Cocoa (together ‘Cargill’); Barry Callebaut USA LLC (“Barry Callebaut”), and Olam Americas, Inc. (“Olam”) have been repeatedly listed as being particularly at risk of child trafficking and forced labor, as well as other human rights abuses and environmental crimes, such as illegal deforestation, in their cocoa supply chains [3]”.

An estimated 1.5 million children work in cocoa production and harvesting in the cocoa-growing areas of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Furthermore, over the last 60 years, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have lost around 94% and 80% of their forests respectively, and it is estimated that around a third of this forest loss is due to the encroachment of cocoa cultivation on forests [4].

According to the signatories of the formal notice, the company knew or should have known of the problem, taken it into account when drawing up its vigilance plan and implemented appropriate measures.

They argue that the plan does not comply with legal requirements: incorrect identification of risks, particularly in the case of child labor, assessment procedures and preventive and mitigating actions that are unsuitable and insufficient in relation to the stakes involved, warning mechanisms that are inaccessible to the populations concerned, lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of measures.

[1] <https://www.internationalrightsadvocates.org/cases/francehumanrights>

[2] Ibid.

[3] <https://thechocolatelifelife.com/content/files/2023/12/12.15.23-LOI--Coopere-rative-U.pdf>

[4] <https://www.internationalrightsadvocates.org/cases/francehumanrights>

