



**HELP THE NGO COMMITTEE TO STOP
TRAFFICKING THIS HALLOWEEN!
SAY “BOO” TO CHOCOLATE COMPANIES
THAT ARE TURNING A BLIND EYE TO
CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING IN
COCOA PRODUCTION IN WEST AFRICA!**

Halloween is a favorite day for American children. What child doesn't love dressing up and pretending to be Super Woman or Darth Vader and scaring the neighbors into giving them treats?

Americans last year spent \$7.4 billion on Halloween festivities, \$2 billion of which was spent on chocolate candy.

Chocolate might seem less desirable if consumers knew that more than 50 percent of the world's chocolate is made from cocoa beans harvested in Cote D'Ivoire by thousands of children, who are bought, stolen or trafficked from neighboring countries. These children, as young as 10, work 80-100 hours per week in dangerous conditions without pay. They are often abused.

The deadline for the Harkin-Engel Protocol, an industry-wide agreement written in 2001 to put an end to child labor in chocolate by 2005, has been extended several times and has only resulted in minor improvements in conditions, despite the fact that most major chocolate producers have signed the protocol.

Consumer buying power is a vital tool for sending a message to chocolate producers that we have a choice in our candy purchases and will not pad their pockets at the expense of abusive child labor and the trafficking of children. We can make big corporations listen up if we eat into their profits!

Look for Fair Trade chocolate produced by companies which are certified to comply with international and domestic labor laws, including the prohibition of child and forced labor; cocoa prices that are adequate to enable farmers to escape poverty; and the promotion of environmental sustainability. See Global Exchange (www.globalexchange.org) and the Child Labor Coalition (www.stopchildlabor.org).

Individual consumer responsibility is critical to turning chocolate production from a trick to a treat this Halloween. While it is easier and cheaper to pick up those big bags of mini-chocolate bars than to find Fair Trade chocolate sources, each of us has a responsibility to make the effort to stop the exploitation of children in cocoa harvesting in West Africa. Seek out Fair Trade-certified chocolate or consider giving out delicious non-chocolate treats this Halloween.