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Press release

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### **Côte d'Ivoire cocoa transparency move welcome**

The publication of financial data on the cocoa sector by the Ivorian government is a welcome development, but it needs to take place regularly, Global Witness said today.

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's biggest producer of cocoa for the global chocolate industry. Revenues from cocoa have played a key role in fuelling the country's conflict since 2002.

Last week, the Ivorian government published, for the first time, figures on the revenues generated by levies on the cocoa sector and what they were spent on. The information was for 2006-2008 and was released as a communication to the Council of Ministers. The government also released data on the energy sector.

"This is a welcome, if overdue, major step towards transparency and accountability in the Ivorian cocoa sector. But to be effective it should not be a one-off. Regular publication of such data is needed," said Patrick Alley, director at Global Witness.

In 2007, Global Witness released a report, *Hot Chocolate: how cocoa fuelled the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire*, which showed how more than US\$118 million from the cocoa trade had funded both sides of the recent armed conflict in the country. *Hot Chocolate* also documented patterns of mismanagement of revenues, opacity of accounts, corruption and political favoritism in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire.

For the past year, Global Witness has called for increasing transparency and accountability in the cocoa industry by the government and cocoa institutions, as well as by the chocolate industry.

In the light of the government's latest move, Global Witness calls on companies buying cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire not to delay further and publish what they pay to the cocoa institutions and the government. "Increasing transparency within the government and national cocoa institutions is just the first step. Companies have now to do the same for the Ivorian people to get the full picture and be able to match payments and receipts to check money isn't going missing," said Alley.

The full report, *Hot Chocolate: how cocoa fuelled the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire*, is available at [www.globalwitness.org](http://www.globalwitness.org)

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Note to editors

*Global Witness is an independent non-governmental organisation which investigates and campaigns on the links between natural resource exploitation, conflict and corruption.*

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