22 Aug 2013

**The Palm Oil Industry and Human Rights**

**Case studies from Central Kalimantan**

***Proposed side event to the 2013 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, presented by the Institute for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (an Indonesian NGO) and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo.***

**Theme**: The side event will present research on how the oil palm industry affects human rights – positively or negatively - in a number of selected communities in the Indonesian province of Central Kalimantan. Using the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights as a frame of reference, the project canvassed a wide range of rights with most emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights. The research is based on extensive interviews with affected communities, plantation workers, companies and representatives from relevant government institutions; as well as reviews of existing regulations at national and local level and codes of conduct adopted by involved companies. The data collection was undertaken by three Indonesian NGOs over a six month period between April and September 2013. A report on the project is due to be completed by early November 2013, copies of which will be made available at the Forum and online.

The choices of research locations are based on the following criteria:

* How long there have been oil palm plantations established in the area (we have included areas where oil palm plantations have already been established for a considerable time, areas that only recently have been affected by oil palm plantations, as well as areas where until now there is no palm oil plantations established.)
* Number of land conflicts (we have included districts with a reported high level of land conflicts, as well as districts with a relatively low level of land conflicts)
* Whether the operating oil palm companies are members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) or not (we have included districts where the operating companies are RSPO members, and districts where the operating companies are not RSPO members)
* Whether the affected communities are mainly consisting of indigenous Dayaks or consisting of so-called trans-migrants originating from Java or Sumatera. (Both will be represented)

**Objective:** The objective of the side-event is to provide data and facilitate discussion related to 1) human rights challenges faced in the oil palm sector 2) the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles in the oil palm sector and 3) the effectiveness of relevant industry initiatives in the oil palm sector; in particular the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

**Relevance to the Forum’s mandate**: The above-mentioned objective is highly relevant to the Forum’s mandate, which according to the UN Human Rights Council Resolution 17/4, is to “discuss trends and challenges in the implementation of the Guiding Principles and promote dialogue and cooperation on issues linked to business and human rights, including challenges faced in particular sectors, operational environments or in relation to specific rights or groups, as well as identifying good practices.”

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