

Ms Cecilia MALMSTRÖM
cc. Ms Helena KÖNIG

EUROPEAN COMMISSION B-1049 BRUSSELS
Letter sent by e-mail

DEPARTMENT

CNV Internationaal

EXTENSION NO.

+31 30 751 1269

E-MAIL

m.kersten@cnv.nl/k.bouwsma@cnv.nl

CITY

Utrecht

DATE

12 June 2017

OUR REFERENCE

1473/MK

YOUR REFERENCE**CONCERNING**

Labour rights violations palm oil sector Indonesia

Dear Commissioner,

Today, the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) will be hosting its annual European Roundtable, with labour and human rights being one of its specific focus topics. In recent years, many companies that use palm oil in their products have joined the RSPO in an attempt to make their palm oil supply chains more sustainable. By procuring RSPO-certified palm oil, these companies want to ensure that the production of the palm oil they buy has, amongst other criteria, taken place free from labour rights violations and environmental degradation. The RSPO and two RSPO certified companies have been subject of a recent study "*Palming off responsibility. Labour rights violations in the Indonesian palm oil sector: case studies of Murini Sam Sam and Aneka Inti Persada*" conducted by SOMO and commissioned by CNV Internationaal.

CNV Internationaal is the international department of the Dutch CNV confederation, cooperating with trade unions worldwide to improve labour rights for workers. The results of the study will be used by both CNV Internationaal and our Indonesian partner organisations to engage in dialogue with the companies that have been investigated. However, we would like to address these results as well in light of the ongoing negotiations of the EU-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

The research demonstrates that workers are forced to work unpaid overtime in order to reach unrealistic production targets resulting in workers bringing their wives and children to work, giving rise to child labour. Other rights violations found in the field research included the disruption of unions, workers never receiving employment contracts, inadequate provision of protective equipment and inadequate medical services. When it comes to the palm oil sector, a lot of attention is – justly – paid to environmental degradation and deforestation, however, we should not forget the appalling circumstances that many workers on palm oil plantations are facing. The research found many workers' rights violations that breach either one or all of the following: the RSPO standard, international law and Indonesian law.

Ongoing violations of workers' rights by Indonesian companies demonstrate the lack of implementation and enforcement of f.i. the ILO core labour conventions by the Indonesian government. With the EC currently negotiating a free trade agreement with the Indonesian government, and with the research clearly demonstrating many abuses of internationally recognized human and labour rights, we call upon the Commission to place the responsibilities of governments and companies as recognized by the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights at the centre of the ongoing negotiations. A

DATE
12 June 2017
OUR REFERENCE
1473

PAGE
2/2

similar appeal is made by our partner organisation Konfederasi Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia (KSBSI) to mr. Enggartiasto Lukita and mr. Pak Iman Pambagyo.

We hope these issues can count on your support during the negotiations of the EU-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pieter de Vente', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pieter de Vente
President CNV Internationaal