

The Tripa Resolution at the RSPO General Assembly

The primary rainforests of Tripa, peat swamp forests of exceptional high conservation value, are presently being destroyed for palm oil plantations. The palm oil companies concerned, among them suppliers to RSPO-members, damage the reputation of the palm oil industry as a whole and query the efficiency of the RSPO.

Proponent:

PanEco Foundation, RSPO member since 2005.

Request:

Presentation at General Assembly 5, max. 10 minutes.

Summary of Proposal:

Several palm oil companies are logging primary rainforest and establishing palm oil plantations on peat in Tripa, Aceh Province, Indonesia. This contravenes many existing Indonesian policies and laws, and international conventions. Tripa is an area of exceptional high conservation value that provides important ecosystem services both for the region and worldwide. Palm oil plantations in Tripa increase disaster risk, contribute to climate change and are driving a unique Sumatran orangutan population to extinction. Stakeholders have engaged in a dialogue, but logging has to be stopped immediately to save Tripa for its social, environmental and economic values. Some of these palm-oil companies are suppliers to RSPO-members.

In cooperation with governments and NGOs PanEco Foundation has initiated the following actions to stop the destruction:

- In 2007, the head of the involved district requested the central government to review the legality of the concessions in Tripa. The activities these concessions contravene 15 policies & laws.

- A broad consensus to save Tripa has emerged: the authority for the management of the Leuser Ecosystem in Aceh (BPKEL), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNESCO, IUCN, Aceh's senators, the Governor of Aceh and the local District governments all provided support letters to restore and protect the coastal peat swamp forests of Aceh, including Tripa.

- A national media campaign was launched informing about the Tripa case and questioning the legal status of the plantations in Tripa.

- A broad coalition of national and international organisations against Tripa's destruction (Eye-on-Aceh, Fauna and Flora International, Greenpeace South-East Asia, Leuser International Foundation, Oxfam GB, PanEco, Sawit Watch, Wetlands International Indonesia Programme and YEL) has been established. The coalition has entered a dialogue with some of the stakeholders requesting clarification on their policy for the development of Tripa.

- The coalition urged the most significant of the palm-oil concessionaires in Tripa to review its corporate policy and to assume its corporate social and environmental responsibility, not only in Tripa, but in the broader context of their current plantation expansion in Indonesia. Possibilities are explored, to close Tripa concessions down and replace for others on fallow land with land development licences elsewhere.

Action on legal and political level:

PanEco engages actively with local governments' planning agencies to include certain criteria in land use planning policies and in the procedures for granting plantation concessions. Indonesia's governance regarding management of its natural resources is poor. Tripa is an example for multiple legal breaching. However, it is costly and time-consuming to enter into legal issues, let alone to develop good governance. The emergency of the situation in Tripa calls for immediate action.

Relocating palm oil concessions onto fallow land:

There are an estimated 2 million hectares of fallow land in Aceh alone! With the pilot study "Palm Oil Cultivation according to RSPO Criteria and Principles on Fallow Land in the Context of Relocating Palm-Oil Concessions Threatening HCVF", endorsed by RSPO in 2006, PanEco has started a programme to support the responsible development of RSPO plantations on fallow land and to develop technical and legal mechanisms for relocating concessions on forested land onto fallow land. In cooperation with UNEP and ICRAF, PanEco is preparing Tripa for REDD and forest carbon stock retention with multiple benefits. The sale of carbon credits provides a chance to develop a financial model to protect areas, which fall inside legally awarded concessions.

We herewith urgently request the RSPO to take action to stop the destruction of Tripa peat swamp forests.

Furthermore we request the RSPO to adhere to the credibility of its role and drastically improve its efficiency by implementing an effective mechanism to control bad practices of the palm oil industry.

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