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Joint Press Statement

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Palm Oil Innovation Group Responds To Amnesty International Palm Oil Report

New report on labour rights violations shows critical need for stronger protection of workers in conventional palm oil industry

Singapore — The Palm Oil Innovation Group (POIG) welcomes the recent release of a [report](#) by Amnesty International exposing shocking labour violations – including children as young as 8 engaged in work that is hazardous to their health – in the palm oil sector. Two of the five Indonesian growers investigated for the report are owned and operated by palm oil giant Wilmar and have been certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

This report adds to a growing body of evidence that brings to light critical issues, such as forced and child labour, human trafficking, low wages and poor working conditions, facing large numbers of workers on plantations across Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Palm Oil Innovation Group Charter strictly prohibits child labour, forced labour, and other violations profiled in Amnesty’s report. A major strength of the Palm Oil Innovation Group is that its grower members are required to achieve third party verification of compliance with high labour standards aligned with the ILO and *Free and Fair Labor in Palm Oil Production Principles*.

POIG recently released a publication titled *Palm Oil Innovations: Labour Rights* which highlighted innovative labour practices that have been implemented by three POIG members on their plantations. These innovations should be incorporated into the existing RSPO Principles and Criteria to uphold workers’ rights and break the link between palm oil and labour exploitation. Key recommendations include:

- Paying a decent living wage, as agreed through meaningful collective bargaining agreements with independent unions;
- No fees or costs are charged to workers, directly or indirectly, for recruitment or employment services;
- No retention of passports, other government- issued identification and any personal valuables;
- Limiting precarious work by ensuring that casual, temporary and day labour is limited to jobs that are genuinely temporary or seasonal, and account for no more than 20% of the workforce;



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- Providing access to accessible, equitable and legitimate grievance mechanisms.

All actors in the palm oil industry, including major brands and retailers sourcing palm oil, must respond to the growing body of evidence of labour exploitation with comprehensive improvements to procurement policies and practices. Responsible brands and retailers must seek suppliers who have committed to and implemented additional steps to ensure workers enjoy their fundamental human rights.

The *Palm Oil Innovations: Labour Rights* publication can be downloaded directly, [here](#).

For media comment contact representatives of the Palm Oil Innovation Group:

Tulio Dias Brito, Agropalma: tuliodias@agropalma.com.br

Emma Rae Lierley, Rainforest Action Network: emma@ran.org

Eric Gottwald, International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF): egottwald@ilrf.org

The Palm Oil Innovation Group is a multi-stakeholder initiative that strives to achieve the adoption of responsible palm oil production practices by key players in the supply chain through developing and sharing a credible and verifiable benchmark that builds upon the RSPO, and creating and promoting innovations.

Its members include leading brands like Ferrero, Danone, Stephenson and Boulder Brands, palm oil growers and traders Agropalma, DAABON and Musim Mas Group along with international NGOs including Greenpeace, WWF, Rainforest Action Network (RAN), Forest Peoples Programme (FPP), International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), Verite, Orangutan Land Trust, Sumatran Orangutan Society and Wetlands International.

For more information visit www.poig.org