

Response of Sime Darby to the video documentary “Sumatra Burning: The Heart of Palm Oil”

30 September 2015

Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited Sime Darby to respond to:

- “Sumatra Burning: The Heart of Palm Oil”, Coconuts Singapore, 24 Sept 2015
<http://singapore.coconuts.co/2015/09/24/sumatra-burning-heart-palm-oil>

Sime Darby responded with the following statement:

Kuala Lumpur, 30 September 2015 - Sime Darby Plantation (SDP) is the world’s biggest producer of sustainable palm oil and it has practised zero burning since 1985. The company had pioneered the zero burning replanting technique, which is now the standard for the plantation industry.

SDP was mentioned in an online documentary titled “Sumatra Burning: The heart of palm oil”. The report quoted Greenpeace in 2013 saying there was fire on land owned by Sime Darby.

On four separate occasions, SDP responded, providing accurate information. SDP does not burn and is not responsible for starting any fires. Furthermore, there were no fires in its operating areas in Indonesia. All of these statements were published on its website (www.simedarby.com) in June 2013.

The releases and their issue dates are as follows:

28 June 2013 - PT Minamas Gemilang Calls For Proactive Measures.

26 June 2013 - Satellite Data Confirms No Fires on Sime Darby Areas.

24 June 2013 - Sime Darby Reiterates Stand on Zero Burning in Indonesian Estates

21 June 2013 - No Fire in Sime Darby's Indonesian Areas.

Fire prevention measures

SDP has and continues to implement measures to prevent fires in its concession areas. These include:

1. Masyarakat Peduli Api (Community Fire Fighting Teams)

The teams, comprising local communities, help to identify and fight fires. They are equipped with basic fire-fighting equipment funded by the company. In addition, they act as fire prevention ambassadors in their local communities. There are now 6 teams from 2 previously.

2. Fire Towers

There is a total of 42 towers, each with a height of 15 metres, located across our operation areas in Indonesia. The towers have been successful in the quick detection of hotspots from a distance and there are also patrol units making their rounds every 2 hours.

3. Satellite-based Fire Monitoring System

The system will automatically send alerts at any time when a hotspot is detected.

4. Developing canals along community areas which will assist in the putting out of fires.

5. Implementing water zoning to contain more water and prevent fires.

6. Increasing the number of fire-fighting equipment that comply and exceed local government regulations.

7. Increasing the number of community socialisation activities.

The company is partnering the Universiti of Riau to work with communities on fire awareness and zero burning techniques. They will be trained in sustainable farming practices. So far, results have been encouraging with hotspots reduced to 3 from 40 previously.

-ENDS-