

# CSR Tribune

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On 26 March 2010, people around the globe turned off their lights in commemoration of Earth Hour.



Find out more on page 13

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## Wilmar Becomes The First Plantation Company In Sarawak To Be RSPO-Certified




**R**efineries in the State of Sarawak, East Malaysia, can now look to source sustainable palm oil from the region as Wilmar becomes the first plantation company in Sarawak to receive the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certifications for two mills and their supply base of six plantations.

Our two mills in Sarawak collectively produce about 104,000 metric tonnes of certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) from 20,858 ha of plantations, bringing our total CSPO capacity to about 227,000 tonnes per annum. This makes up about 10% of the total CSPO output currently available in the market. This new milestone will enable us to fulfill growing customer demand for responsibly produced palm oil.

Palm oil certification is a high-priority issue today in the industry, driven by customers seeking to align their social and environmental philosophy with their purchasing practices.

Said Simon Siburat, Group Sustainability Coordinator for Wilmar, "We know a sustainable business approach is of a of critical value to our customers and we work to ensure that our certification pursuit is on-track. We have completed audits for some of our upstream operations in Sumatra and Central Kalimantan in Indonesia and are awaiting approval from the RSPO."

Amidst growing concerns on how everyday consumption can continue with minimal disturbance on the environment, Wilmar hopes more producers will participate in this certification scheme so that sustainable palm oil will become a mainstream commodity in the market. 

## Why A Sustainable Supply Chain Matters

**S**ingapore – Hon Hai Precision Industry Company, the Taiwanese electronics manufacturer that supplies iPads and iPhones for Apple and a range of gadgets for other companies, including Hewlett-Packard and Nintendo, faced a series of suicides among its employees, a reflection of poor working conditions. This string of deaths sparked off incessant inquiries by concerned stakeholders.

In Europe, for nearly two weeks, the food company Nestle found itself at the centre of a raging controversy, fanned by fuming environmentalists who used social media as the new “guerrilla warfare”. The root cause of the protest was against the Swiss Goliath’s use of palm oil in its products. Critics of palm oil often highlight deforestation and loss of biodiversity as a consequence of oil palm cultivation.

The common thread linking the food company and the electronics company is sustainability or lack thereof. For Hon Hai, it is about providing a fair wage for its workers. For Nestle, it is about protecting the environment in the quest for profits. For a corporation, at the heart of sustainability is a three-part bottomline – People, Planet and Profit.

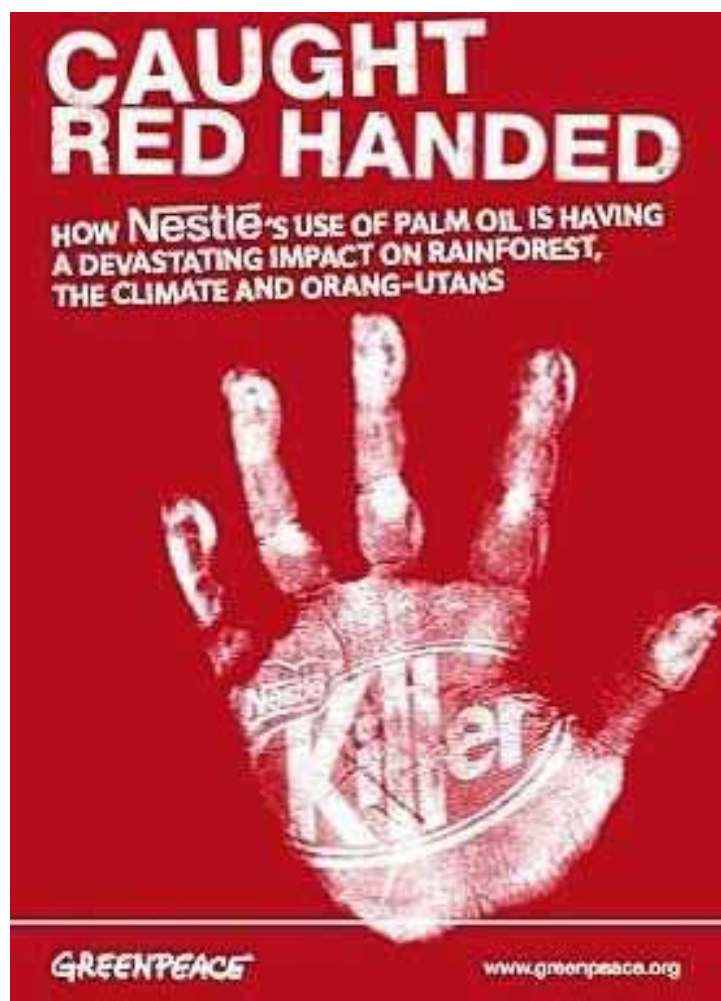
The other similarity is interdependence in the supply chain where suppliers are connected with the customers’ customers. As a supplier, Hon Hai will need to address the concerns or risk losing their customers. As a food company, Nestle will need to pressurize its suppliers or risk facing continual backlash and boycott from environmentally-conscious consumers. No one can be insulated from the blame when one segment within the chain gets blamed.

### Why The Demand For Sustainable Palm Oil Is Here To Stay

In the late 1970s, the saturated fats in palm oil were criticized for promoting cardiovascular diseases. In defense of palm oil, supporters of palm oil said that it increases good cholesterol and reduces bad cholesterol in the blood. They also cited that palm oil contains zero trans fats.

The situation improved only after the US Food and Drug Administration introduced a legal requirement for food labels to list a product’s content of trans fat, (from partially hydrogenated vegetable oil) which is a major cause of heart disease. Palm oil was found to be free of trans fat.

Palm oil faces a fresh challenge to its popularity now, especially regarding oil palm cultivation. We can choose to ignore the criticisms, or perhaps simply wait it out. However the current challenge for the palm oil industry is different from the past. It is no longer about changing the public perception of palm oil. Rather, it involves solid actions to right the wrongs.



*Report by Greenpeace on Nestlé's use of palm oil and its impacts on the environment*

The criticisms directed at palm oil are not unique; many other agricultural commodities have faced similar criticisms. Rachel Carson's 1962 publication, *Silent Spring*, introduced the notion that humans have powerful – and often negative – effects on the natural world. People have extended this realization to the poor and disenfranchised in the developing countries. As a result, companies and governments are under intense scrutiny and pressure to relook their business-as-usual practices.

Mainstream sustainability is gaining momentum and there are numerous examples: coffee beans with its issue of fair and equitable prices for the farmers, banana with its issues of fair treatment of workers and environmentally responsible farming practices, as well as forestry products that have vastly similar issues with palm oil.

While Carson demonstrates the importance of sustainability, fellow American Abraham Maslow demonstrates its longevity. The psychologist is most famous for his work on the “hierarchy of needs.”

Maslow brought forth the idea that every person has a strong desire to realize his or her full potential in life. Beyond the routine of basic needs, Maslow envisioned moments of extraordinary experience, which are moments of love, understanding, happiness, or rapture, during which a person feels more whole, alive, self-sufficient and yet a part of the world, more aware of truth, justice, harmony, goodness, and so on.


As countries and individuals become more affluent – China and India included – people will look beyond the basic needs like nutrition, shelter and safety, to fulfil their full potential in life. One of the ways is to heed Carson's vision.

The call for sustainability is blind to industry, race or nationality. From basic raw materials like agricultural commodities to value-added products like electronics, companies will find themselves vulnerable if they do not incorporate their stakeholders' concerns in their operations, because the repercussions will hurt the bottomline.

## Sustainable Palm Oil - Growing From Strength To Strength

Compared to other agricultural commodities, palm oil is relatively new to sustainability. Moreover, it takes time to achieve broad acceptance and implement change. It is also hindered by being perceived as something imposed by the West, reminiscent of the colonial times – an era which is not savored as nostalgia.

In spite of this, since its inaugural meeting in 2003, the RSPO has achieved commendable milestones. It has since come up with standards and benchmarks for sustainable palm oil. There is also progress on the traceability of sustainable palm oil to its source, the plantations.

At Wilmar, we recognize that the quest for sustainability does not have a destination. It is a long and never-ending route of continuous improvement. Implementing a sustainable supply chain is a structural change in our business operations, which takes time to implement and fine-tune. We are making some headway and we will continue to work hard to ensure that even bigger strides are made. 

### TYPES OF SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS

The supply of palm oil comes from different plantations, mills and even countries. These supplies are intermingled at each stage of the production and delivery process. It is almost impossible for purchasers of palm oil to know exactly where their oil has come from, or how it has been produced.

#### SEGREGATION

One solution is processing and shipping the sustainable palm oil separately from the conventional oil. There is a supply chain system for this: Segregation.

#### MASS BALANCE

Another option is allowing certified palm oil to be mixed with conventional palm oil but the process is monitored administratively.

#### BOOK AND CLAIM

The third option - the cheapest and the least stringent – is allowing certified palm oil to be part of the conventional oil. Suppliers sell certificates to users and the claimed volumes are matched to prevent double-counting.



## Wilmar Joins The Asia-Pacific Business And Sustainability Council As A Founding Member


**S**ingapore – Together with Washington DC-based Conservational International (CI), Wilmar hosted the inaugural meeting for the Asia-Pacific Business and Sustainability Council (APBSC) at the Shangri-la Hotel in Singapore, on 2-3 March 2010.

The APBSC is a business-led regional association dealing exclusively with business and sustainable development. It aims to serve as an action-oriented forum for leading companies from various industries in the region to explore and share knowledge, experiences and best practices; advocate business positions, and work with governmental and non-governmental organisations to find solutions for some of the environmental problems plaguing the world. Wilmar is one of the founding members of the council, along with Walmart Asia, Monsanto and Medco. The US counterpart to APBSC was started in 2003.

The inaugural meeting attracted the participation of many multi-national companies, such as Procter & Gamble, Pepsi, Starbucks and HSBC, who shared their views on a broad range of topics covering water, land-use and supply chain issues, amongst others.

CI is an NGO which has a strong foundation in science, partnership with corporations and field demonstrations. It empowers societies to care for nature responsibly and sustainably. CI works in more than 40 countries on four continents, including Singapore. Some of CI's corporate partners are Shell, Starbucks, McDonald's and Goldman Sachs.

Council members meet twice a year to share knowledge and develop innovative strategies to address the most pressing environmental issues facing companies today. Past council meetings had focused on priority topics such as sustainability criteria for global supply chains, engagement with activist campaigns, and marketing of environmental actions and products.

Like its US counterpart, the APBSC's mission is to contribute to sustainable development in this region, this being one of the world's fastest growing economies and populations, whose development will have bigger and far-reaching implications for the environment. 





**Living Up To  
The Equator Principles –  
*Bankers Visit  
Our Plantations  
To Experience  
Sustainability In  
Practice***

*Ms Françoise Roche, Head of Agri & Metals,  
Rabobank International*

Central Kalimantan, Indonesia – We had a visit from one of our bankers, Rabobank. As a Dutch, Triple-A rated bank leader in Food & Agribusiness financing and a signatory to the Equator Principles, Rabobank prides itself on providing sustainable and socially responsible banking services and strives for its clients to achieve the same Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standard.

From 2-4 of December 2009, Ms. Françoise Roche, Head of Food & Agribusiness and Metals Trade & Commodity Finance and Ms. José den Toom, Chief Risk Officer of Rabobank Singapore, visited Wilmar's Central Kalimantan Plantations (CKP) operations in Indonesia.

Ms. den Toom sits on the Executive Board of the Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and plays a vital role in representing the perspectives of the bankers.

We interviewed Ms. Françoise Roche to give her views on the trip.

**Why have you come all the way to Central Kalimantan to visit an oil palm plantation?**

We wanted to understand how Wilmar's Indonesian palm oil plantations are operated and observe how Wilmar is practising its CSR principles in its operations, as well as witness how the RSPO's Principles & Criteria are implemented locally.

We were accompanied by staff from Wilmar Singapore's CSR department as well as representatives from ING Bank.

### How did you find our plantation?

The CKP operation is located in the Kalimantan Tengah (Bahasa Indonesia word for central) province and covers an area of about 120,000 ha – almost twice the size of Singapore.

Upon arrival in Sampit, we met the estate management and were given an overview of the plantation, operations and infrastructure. We were pleased to see the supporting infrastructure, consisting of permanent housing for staff, a school, provision of clean water to plantations staff and recreational facilities. We also visited the staff housing quarters, the clinic, as well as the estate school.

The infrastructure was far above the standards which were observed in the underdeveloped areas outside the CKP operations.

### Any other interesting observations?

On our way to one of the High Conservation Value (HCV) areas in CKP's plantations, we visited the nearest town Bangkal, where we witnessed increased local development and economic activities such as restaurants, shops and different workshops.


We saw first-hand how an oil palm plantation in the area can help stimulate economic development. Due to its climatologic requirements, oil palm is cultivated in some of the most bio-diverse regions in the world. On the other hand, global palm oil demand is rapidly rising and the industry provides the means for underdeveloped areas to gain more economic development.



*Ms Jose den Toom, Chief Risk officer,  
RaboBank International*

### What do you think are some of the more challenging issues for Wilmar?

As land licensing has been decentralised in Indonesia to the local governments, at times there are conflicts of interest whether or not to develop an area and how fast this can be implemented while simultaneously doing the necessary due diligence.

Other challenges near or in the plantation areas include illegal burning, illegal zircon (a common mineral, zirconium silicate) mining by locals and illegal logging – all of which can be operationally challenging for the plantation managers. 

## Close Up With Melissa Tolley



**Close up:** Primatologist and Conservation Manager

**Name:** Melissa Tolley

**Nationality/Current Country of Residence:** British/ Indonesia

**Date of Joining Wilmar:** 15th October 2009

**Appointment:** Primatologist and Conservation Manager

#### Previous Work Experience:

- Primate Research Program Coordinator, NGO Azafady, Madagascar
- Conservation Infrastructure Program Coordinator, Orangutan Foundation UK, Indonesia
- Information Officer at Camp Leakey Research Site, Orangutan Foundation UK, Indonesia
- Volunteer Keeper, Gibbon Rehabilitation Project, Thailand
- Residential Warden, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), UK
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle Program Volunteer, Sea Turtle Protection Society, Greece





**Having worked and lived in so many exotic countries, which would you say has been your favorite? Why?**

Aside from the UK (which will always be my favourite place in the world), I love Indonesia. I was initially drawn here to see the orangutans, but once here everything interested me – the wildlife, the forest, the people, the culture. I even love Indonesian soap operas – they're so melodramatic – it's hilarious! In 2005, I carried out a 3 month research study on forest-dependent human communities in Borneo for my Masters. It was the most amazing experience that completely changed the way I viewed conservation. I lived in the villages I was working in, experiencing first-hand the lives of the local people. These were very remote villages in the north of Central Kalimantan surrounded by beautiful forests. I was the first westerner to set foot in some of these villages. It's hard to explain that feeling. I studied the dependency of local people on the forest and how it is possible to link that need to conservation. Prior to that, I was only really interested in animals and the forest, so those three months opened up a whole new world to me – that of local people and their traditions and beliefs. Whilst I am still most at home in the forest and with nature and wildlife, I also love sitting crossed legged on the floor of a little wooden house listening to the stories of local people. The diversity of the human race is really incredible.

**You are fluent in four languages – Bahasa, French, German and English. Why the decision to learn Bahasa Indonesia?**

Unfortunately I'm not fluent in four languages – my curriculum vitae oversells me! I studied French and German at school and have a basic command of these languages but school was a long time ago so they are very, very rusty! But I am fluent in Bahasa Indonesia.

I think there is often a huge arrogance in English-speakers travelling the world that makes them assume that local people will speak English to them everywhere they go. I feel embarrassed if I have to use English in a country where that is not the mother tongue. However, in reality it is also difficult

to learn a language to the point where you are truly fluent. I was afforded, albeit unintentionally, the most fantastic opportunity to learn Indonesian in a total-submersion situation. When I began my Masters research-study, I knew some Indonesian vocabulary but really couldn't communicate. I was told I would have a translator to help me interview local people but when I arrived in the villages, it turned out his English was in no way good enough to translate. He left the day after meeting me to go on a shopping trip, got malaria, ended up in the hospital and didn't return for weeks. So, I was left stranded in the villages, surrounded by Indonesian speakers, with no English speakers and a lot of time on my hands. Armed only with a pocket dictionary, I had no choice but to learn. I looked up every word I heard and eventually began to understand. It is an incredibly lonely and tiring way to learn a language, but easily the most effective. By the time my "translator" came back, we communicated mostly in Indonesian. By the end of 3 months, I was sufficiently fluent in Indonesian, although I still made many mistakes. After that, I worked in Indonesia, so I had plenty of opportunity to practise and I'm still constantly learning. Now I never speak to Indonesian people in English and am often unaware when they possess that language capability.

**What was working for the NGO Azafady like? How was your experience in Madagascar?**

Before arriving in Madagascar, I naively assumed it would be similar to Indonesia. Madagascar was initially colonized by Indonesian and Malaysian people, but that was 1000 years ago and whilst the odd word from the Malay language crops up in Malagasy (the national language), the country is heavily dominated by an African influence and the culture and way of life are most definitely African and not Asian. This was my first time to Africa and it is a world away from Asia. The aspect that struck me the most is the level of poverty in the country Madagascar. It is one of the poorest countries in the world and it is difficult to comprehend the standard of living – a life without sanitation, healthcare, basic

amenities, clean water (sometimes completely without easy access to water whether clean or not). It is hard not to feel guilty for the affluent lifestyle that you live in comparison.

Madagascar has incredible levels of endemism (plant and animal species found only on this island). The wildlife is amazing and it was a fantastic experience to live in a tent within or on the edge of remote forests and spend every day trekking through those forests investigating the wildlife. A truly unforgettable time. However, there was always a nagging thought in my mind that we need to tackle human poverty first before focusing on wildlife conservation.

### **You are a staunch vegan. Why this choice of lifestyle?**

I do not want animals to die or suffer for my benefit. Whilst humans are the most intelligent species on Earth, all animal species possess intelligence, most likely emotions too, and I also believe they each have a soul. I cannot take that away for the sake of satisfying my stomach. I have been vegetarian since the age of thirteen and became vegan in my early twenties when I became aware of the conditions prevalent in industrialized farming. I have nothing against eating animal products (milk and eggs) if the animals are treated humanely and given the lifestyle they deserve. However, I totally disagree with industrialized milk production and battery farming for eggs, hence the veganism.

However, veganism is not overly easy in countries where the concept of vegetarianism is seen to be strange (let alone one step further to veganism) so I'm not sure I would qualify as "staunch vegan" but I try to do the best I can!

### **Why did you decide to go specifically into primate studies and conservation?**

Nature is incredible and it is amazing how every ecosystem can self-regulate itself and always return to stability. The processes and intricacies of nature are so complex, they are vastly in excess of anything the human mind could create. I am fascinated and stunned by nature on a daily basis. However, a massively increasing world population and an insatiable desire for modernization means that we are steadfastly obliterating the natural landscape and the wildlife it supports. Therefore I think we have an obligation to help repair and protect what is left. Conservation would not be necessary if human interference in the first place had not upset the balance. Now we have to be committed to restoring the balance as best we can.

The genetic similarity between primates and ourselves is really interesting and gives us some clue as to our own ancestry. Primates exhibit many characteristics shared by humans which can at times be uncanny to observe. Their developed social structures and personalities are really fascinating and they can clearly exhibit characteristics such as greed, jealousy, grief and mischief. However, whilst I have made primates my specialism, many species intrigue me, so I am not confined to just primates, but I do tend to like large colourful animals, so big orange apes fit the bill!


### **Do any particular moments in regard to your work, both in Indonesia and elsewhere, stand out? What are some of your most interesting experiences?**

I have run in wet, slippery flip-flops, wrapped only in a sarong, down a jetty in the dark chased by an angry dominant male orangutan (weighing in at 120 kg), considering whether it would be better to stand my ground against the orangutan or jump off the end of the jetty into the river with crocodiles (I would have chosen the orangutan but fortunately it didn't come to that). I have crawled on my hands and knees up a beach in the night behind a one meter long sea turtle and watched her lay her eggs. I have been urinated on by gibbons (unfortunately more than once). I have narrowly missed standing on the head of a boa. I have camped in a cyclone. I have got lost in the forest too many times. I have heard incredible stories of magic and curses and intricate tales used by remote human communities to explain natural phenomena (as they lack the scientific knowledge to explain it and thus interpret it in their own way). I have witnessed a little girl stare in wonderment at a wild baby orangutan who was looking at her with the same fascination. And I have disgracefully (and unprofessionally) laughed outright when someone told me their daughter was more closely related to orangutans because she was more hairy than other children.

### **Tell us something about orangutans that will surprise us!**

Orangutans can weigh up to 120kg and yet build and sleep in nests in the trees. They make waterproof hats / umbrellas from leaves to protect their heads when it rains. When they are ill, they self-medicate using medicinal plants in the forest. Infants spend more time with their mothers than any other species on Earth except humans.

### **What other hobbies and interest to you have? Tell us more about yourself!**

Conservation is a lifestyle that, by its nature, puts you in very remote locations with limited communication and little company. This makes hobbies somewhat difficult to follow! However, I am keen on wildlife photography and have been afforded many unique opportunities to indulge in this. I like cycling and walking which I did a lot of in the UK. I am somewhat fanatical about wildlife and so much of my free time will be spent somewhere remote and amongst nature. This affords me a huge amount of tranquility. 




## Helping A Young Girl Gain Dignity And An Identity



*Rozita's humble abode*

**B**orn on 3 August 1994, 16-year-old Rozita Sabindong has been living a life completely forgotten by her government and left in the care of her elder sister and guardian, Rosinah Sabindong. After suffering from a high fever at the age of one and due to improper treatment, Rozita Sabindong was permanently disabled. For the past fifteen years she has lain on her back and is only able to communicate via a few noises and slight movement of her limbs.

Calley Beamish, our conservation and biodiversity manager was the first to inform the estate about the plight of this handicapped girl. Initially the group at the Ribubonus Estate in Sabah, East Malaysia, thought that the task at hand was something that could easily be fixed by simply informing Sabah's Welfare department about her situation. However, the team gradually found out that Rozita Sabindong is not recognized as a Malaysian due to lack of documentation. Rozita did not even have an identity card and was therefore not entitled to get any form of welfare assistance from the government. After informing her older sister, Colman Ng, manager of the Ribubonus Estate and his team decided to help Rozita gain recognition as a Malaysian citizen.

In May of 2009, Rozita's name was listed under the late registration programme by the government and Mr. Ng and his team were informed that the Welfare department had received her application and information. The registration process was followed closely by Mr. Ng's team. Finally, in November of 2009, after a long and tedious process, everything was complete and Rozita is now a proud citizen of Malaysia and receives a monthly welfare stipend of MYR300. 



*Rozita with her sister Rosinah, who looks after her*



*Wilmar helped the family open a bank account into which monetary aid from the Welfare Dept will be deposited*



# Wilmar Celebrates World Environment Day With “Plant A Tree” Activity



**WED2010**  
WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY • 5 JUNE  
MANY SPECIES ONE PLANET ONE FUTURE



## In Pursuit Of Sustainability – Everything That Counts Cannot Necessarily Be Counted



*Datuk Mannan, Director of Sabah's Forestry Department, officiated the launch of the Riparian Management Project*

**S**abah, East Malaysia – The father of modern physics, Albert Einstein, once said that “everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

This quote could not have been more apt to sum up how companies should view sustainability. A positive attitude towards sustainability brings intangible benefits which may be difficult to quantify, at least initially.

A case in point is the five-year programme our subsidiary, PPB Oil Palms Berhad (“PPBOP”), has undertaken to propagate, nurture and plant an estimated 150,000 trees along the 47 kilometre stretch of the Segama River’s riparian zone. The project zone which is within our Sabahmas plantations in Lahad Datu, will cost about MYR3 million or about USD935,000.

Otherwise known as a streamside forest, a riparian area mitigates the impacts that agriculture may have on the quality of the river, such as helping to control pollution from chemical and sediment run-offs, and prevent soil erosion. Additionally, it has complex ecosystems that provide food and habitat for for the fauna residing in those riparians, in this case the proboscis monkeys, a Sabah totally-protected species and endemic only to Borneo

A healthy and clean river is vital for our operations. We rely on the river for our people, our nurseries, and our mills. Furthermore, the local communities around our operation also depend heavily on the river for their survival. The riparian area will help us to safeguard the sanctity of the river.


While riparian areas are mandatory by the Sabah State law, PPBOP is extending the strip by a further 30 metres from the statutory 20 metres, giving a total 50 metres riparian belt for this project. The project zone will cover about 382 hectares.

We are working with the Sabah Forestry Department to help with the technical expertise. Part of the Forestry Department’s counsel includes recommendation on the type of tree species to plant. There is currently very little research done on ecological rehabilitation in the tropics and this project will contribute significantly to the knowledge pool.

The Sabah Forestry Department is responsible for managing the forest resources in the state of Sabah, in accordance with the principles of sustainable forest management. It is headed by Datuk Sam Mannan, Director of Forestry, Sabah who is a forester by training.



In his speech at the inauguration ceremony for the project on World Environment Day (5 June 2010), Datuk Mannan said, "Sabah is too small a player to compete on the basis of size on oil palm plantation (relative to Indonesia). Therefore, it is more appropriate and wiser to compete on the basis of governance instead – i.e. setting a very high standard of environmental management. This is critically important. In time to come, consumers will demand higher and higher standards of production. The criticisms of rainforest destruction due to oil palm cultivation will continue unabated." Dr Mannan has rightly pointed out that sustainable oil palm cultivation will be a key competitive advantage for palm oil companies in the long-run.

Our sentiments exactly. Just as Einstein had highlighted, while it is difficult to quantify the tangible returns from sustainable oil palm cultivation, it is easy to see the general trend in the growth of demand for sustainable palm oil. The pursuit of sustainability is not only about meeting legal requirements or making peace with the critics of oil palm cultivation outwardly; we see it as a long-term strategic decision simply because it makes business sense. It is also more expensive and difficult to fix problems, environmental or otherwise, than to avoid them at the outset. The riparian restoration project is one of Wilmar's environmental initiatives, part of the overall strategy towards sustainable cultivation. 



*Director of Sabah's Forestry Department, Datuk Mannan, and Managing Director of PPBOP, Mr Goh Ing Sing doing their bit for the environment*



*Seedlings that are nurtured for the riparian rehabilitation programme*

## Clocking In Earth Hour – Climate Action At Wilmar



*Singapore skyline during lights out, Earth Hour 2010  
Credit: © WWF Singapore / Jacky Ho*

**S**abah, East Malaysia – On 21 October 1931, three days after the death of the great inventor, Thomas Edison, many people in the United States turned off their lights for one minute, in honor of his great contribution to mankind – the incandescent light bulb.

On 26 March 2010, hundreds of millions of people around the globe turned off their lights for one hour, in protest against the harmful side effects of light bulbs (and electricity consumption) and in commemoration of Earth Hour.

After less than a century, people have begun to realise the negative impact of the need for electricity to power our light bulbs and other appliances, as well as machines. The intensive energy consumption is harming our global climatic system. The Earth Hour movement was thus promoted as a public display of an affirmative stand for climate action.

In support of the global effort, our plantations in East Malaysia switched off their lights, mostly in the residential areas such as the workers' complexes and the managers' quarters. Non-residential employees were also asked to participate in Earth Hour at home.

At Wilmar, the Earth Hour stint is not a mere gesture of support for climate action; there are concrete actions to complement this global movement.

For a start, our palm oil mills are almost self-sufficient in terms of fuels for energy. We use by-products from oil palm mills to provide the energy to run the mills and provide electricity for the housing complexes. These by-products include shells, fibres, palm kernel cake, empty fruit bunches and palm fronts, which help to cut down our consumption of fossil fuels. As a result, we can reduce our dependence on electricity from the national and local grids, as well as diesel-fired generators.

We are also embarking on methane capture projects that aim to convert greenhouse gases (GHG) such as methane - which is 21 times more potent a GHG than carbon dioxide – into electricity. Such initiatives help to reduce GHG emission into the atmosphere as well as further reduce fossil fuel usage.

Nonetheless, critics of oil palm cultivation continue to highlight the issues of rainforest loss, conversion of peatland, soil fertility and destruction of biodiversity – all of which contribute to the emission of GHG.

As a commitment to sustainable oil palm cultivation, we develop lands that are licensed by the local governments for oil palm cultivation. These lands are degraded and logged-over secondary forests that have little or no environmental and economic value. We do not develop on peat with soil depth of three metres and more. Moreover, we do not use fire to clear our lands but clear via mechanical means.

## About Earth Hour

This is a one-hour event in support of global sustainability awareness that aims to switch off as many lights as possible all over the world in an hour to give the planet a well-deserved respite from the choking greenhouse gases.

Sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and incepted three years ago in 2007, the movement has since inspired hundreds of millions of people around the globe - from businesses, governments and communities – to participate to take responsibility, get involved and join the global journey to a sustainable future. 



*(Left to Right)  
Jakarta Special Province Deputy Governor Prijanto turned off the lights of Indonesia's National Monument compound to mark the start of EH Jakarta 2010.*

*Credit: © WWF / Roni Sambiangga*

*A group of Chinese volunteers prepare to set off a lantern during a ceremony to officially launch the countdown to Earth Hour in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Wednesday, 10 March 2010. Earth Hour is a WWF initiative where citizens around the globe show their support for action on climate change by turning off lights for one hour. Chengdu is the first city in China to commit its support to Earth Hour 2010.*

*Credit: © WWF / Simon Lim*

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Wilmar International Limited is Asia's leading agribusiness group. Our business activities include oil palm cultivation, edible oils refining, oilseeds crushing, consumer pack edible oils processing and merchandising, specialty fats, oleochemicals and biodiesel manufacturing, and grains processing and merchandising.

Headquartered in Singapore, our operations are located in more than 20 countries across four continents, with a primary focus on Indonesia, Malaysia, China, India and Europe. Backed by a staff force of more than 70,000 people, over 170 processing plants and an extensive distribution network, our products are sold to more than 50 countries globally.

*For more information, please log on to [www.wilmar-international.com](http://www.wilmar-international.com)*

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