

Justice Not Served

Wilmar's Response to the African Peoples Tribunal

Wilmar International (Wilmar) was referenced during the African Peoples Tribunal for alleged “human rights violations and environmental degradation” in ten African countries. The self-styled tribunal, which was held from 25 to 27 November 2020 in Lagos, Nigeria, was organized by Friends of the Earth Africa (FoEA). Self-appointed “jurors” for the tribunal (comprising mostly of NGO representatives) reviewed ten cases, questioned alleged victims and witnesses then passed “judgment” on companies, including Wilmar.

The tribunal organizers intentionally excluded key stakeholders from the process, namely the identified companies and government representatives, which renders the findings from this event biased and prejudicial. Regrettably, it is increasingly apparent that excluding key stakeholders (especially from private sector) from supposed “consultations” such as this recent tribunal appears to be the standard practise by FoEA, who have disregarded the numerous attempts by Wilmar to engage in constructive dialogue.

Wilmar was accused of various allegations related to labour and human rights violations during the tribunal, most of which we have previously responded¹ to in detail with credible testimonies and evidence, which included proof of misconduct, misdemeanour, encroachment and rampant theft of fresh fruit bunches. Much, if not all, of these have been duly ignored during the tribunal.

New accusations that were made during the tribunal also appear to be unsubstantiated. For instance, accusations related to non-transparent pricing for outgrowers by Wilmar. In actual fact, Wilmar only launched our outgrower pilot programme in 2017. The farmers began planting only in 2018 and therefore, have yet to start harvesting. Other examples include accusations of fatal accidents or deaths, none of which occurred and have yet to be substantiated with actual evidence.

Wilmar has in place a robust grievance mechanism to investigate and address any concerns or wrongdoings in our operations as well as that of our suppliers, which includes our No Exploitation Protocol², launched in September 2020. We also have an unwavering commitment to our Whistleblowing Policy³ to ensure employees are safe from any harm or reprisal.

We continue to emphasize on the importance of constructive engagement, working together to identify risks and concerns while aiming to develop pragmatic and long-lasting solutions. We remain prepared to engage with FoEA should they wish to reciprocate our calls for dialogue.

¹ Refer to Annex 1

² https://www.wilmar-international.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sustainability/policies/wilmar-no-exploitation-protocol.pdf?sfvrsn=e2b8c921_2

³ https://www.wilmar-international.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/highlights/sustainability/2016/08/wilmar-whistleblowing-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=a79a6564_2

ANNEX 1

- [Wilmar Refutes Allegation of Land Grab in Uganda](#) (February 2015)
- [Responsible Development in Nigeria](#) (July 2015)
- [Rebuilding the Nigerian Palm Oil Industry through Partnerships](#) (May 2018)
- [Response to The Guardian on Allegations of Cross River Communities Protests](#) (August 2018)
- [Wilmar in Nigeria: Responsible Operations and Equal Opportunity Employer](#) (June 2020)