

## A LABOUR OF LOVE *A FOCUS ON OUR LONG-TERM EMPLOYEES*

The success of a company is mostly dependent on acknowledging the important roles played by its employees. We at Wilmar recognize our employees as the backbone of our business that have, and continue to contribute towards our success.

In conjunction with Labour Day, we spoke to few of our long serving employees in Malaysia and Indonesia to learn about their experiences and expectations as we celebrate the immense contributions and pivotal roles played by our employees.

### Malaysia

Hailing from Indonesia, Isham and his wife, Mare Habe, shared concerns and expectations when they first joined Wilmar in 1998. They hoped that their new employer will take care of their welfare and well-being while ensuring they had a good working environment and facilities. Neither of them had any long-term career plans or aspirations as their sole focus was to make a living while staying together as a family. They certainly were not expecting to remain with Wilmar for 23 years and counting.



PHOTO: Mare Habe (left) and Isham (right)

Their 4 children were raised and educated in our Sabahmas plantation in Lahad Datu, Sabah. Two of their oldest children have since returned to Indonesia to start their own families and careers while their two younger children are still schooling. One is continuing her tertiary education in Indonesia while their youngest is currently in lower secondary in the Community Learning Center (CLC) that is co-managed by Wilmar and the Indonesian Consulate.



Isham and Mare both feel that among the reasons they have stayed on for such a long period with Wilmar is due to the approach and related-policies by Wilmar that is fair and mutually beneficial to the company as well as our employees. They are provided with a safe working environment with safe and comfortable living conditions that are conducive to raise a family.

They are also pleased that their children were provided free access to quality education and school facilities that is not typically available for children of migrant workers, till the children were able to continue their higher education in Indonesia. Additionally, with free medical access for both of them and their children at the clinics in the plantation, they also have added peace of mind. According to Mare, seeing that the welfare and rights of women and children are well protected, the women employees feel comfortable but also appreciated.

Isham shared that by working with Wilmar, they not only could afford for their children to further their studies but they were also able to build a family home back in their hometown in Indonesia.

They both revealed their experience of working in Wilmar, whereby they are able to voice out their concerns and opinions for improvements. All work tools and equipment are also provided for by the company without employees having to fork out any expenditure from their own pockets, as it should be.

As Indonesian nationals working in Malaysia, both Mare and Isham have felt welcomed and noted that they have never been treated as “outsiders” in Wilmar.

When asked, their advice to new and potential employees of Wilmar is to focus on working hard and that it is important to appreciate that there are many benefits that come from honest work in a good company.



## Indonesia

Nurmawati and her husband, Zein Azwan, have been working in Wilmar's plantation in West Sumatra, Indonesia, for 21 years and 14 years respectively. They have witnessed and experienced significant improvements throughout this time, including the upgrading from workers barracks to well built homes for both family units and individuals. Employees' housing is provided with free treated water and electricity, while clean drinking water is made available at the designated water depots. Clinics available in plantations also provide them with free medical services.

Nurmawati and Zein Azwan also spoke of how children of employees are provided with free bus service to ferry them to school, where they have access to free, quality education. They were also pleased that scholarships are made available to high-performing students, and therefore have encouraged their children to study hard. Their children are now in primary and lower secondary schools.

Prior to joining Wilmar, Nurmawati and Zein Azwan learnt from friends and family who were already attached to the company about how the good the

conditions were working here and how Wilmar management prioritized the well-being of employees. They were therefore determined to build a long-term career with Wilmar to improve their livelihoods with job security, provided they worked hard. They have been earning a good salary and annual bonuses that have since enabled them to own their own farm, home and personal vehicle while seeing their children's education through till they graduate.

Nurmawati added that she is pleased that she is provided with all the necessary tools and protective equipment to work in a safe environment. Furthermore, women employees have equal opportunities based on their capabilities, thus allowing them to operate machinery, be appointed as supervisors and so on. The creche facilities provided by Wilmar is also appreciated by working parents in Wilmar as their children can be cared for in a safe environment while they are at work.

Both Nurmawati and Zein Azwan are certainly appreciative for being able to have a successful working life and advise their colleagues and those interested to work in the plantation sector that as long as one is diligent and disciplined, they can be assured of building a good career and life.



PHOTO: Zein Azwan (*far left*) and Nurmawati (*far right*)  
with their children