

Jakarta, 7 April 2021

**Commissioner Frans Timmermans**  
**Executive Vice-President for the EU Green Deal**

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Cc:

**Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius**  
**Commissioner for Environment, Oceans & Fisheries**

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Dear Vice-President Timmermans,

1. We are aware that you have received a letter from Greenpeace, in relation to their latest report *Destruction: Certified*. We are writing to you, as representatives of all stages of the palm oil supply chain, to urge the European Union not to follow Greenpeace's destructive approach – but rather to engage with the constructive and mature approach of sustainability certification.
2. Greenpeace's conclusion on Certification does not serve the interests of the EU and palm oil producing countries. Certification provides certainty for producers; reassurance for consumers; data and information for governments; and transparency for media. EU's regulations need a tool to monitor compliance, which has been addressed in the certification schemes.
3. The current mandatory certification scheme for Indonesia i.e., the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO), was recently updated and approved by President Jokowi. ISPO should be included and recognised without prejudice across Europe. We will continue working with EU to make it more robust in addressing the three pillars of sustainability, i.e., environment, economic and social.
4. Certification provides certainty for producers; reassurance for consumers; data and information for governments; and transparency for media; and a seat at the table for civil society. Certification is not only the mature approach; it also has a track record of concrete results. It should be well noted that existing certification schemes are not only meant for the EU but also for other developing nations and developed nations, as well as for producing countries. Indonesia is not only the biggest producer and exporter but also the biggest market of palm oil. Indonesia meets the requirements nationally and set out by our partners, while

respecting our shared commitment to the protection of the environment and the respect of human rights.

5. The European market in particular is suffused with successful certification brands, from FSC to RSPO. Deforestation rates in many of the countries involved in certification schemes, have declined dramatically. Indonesia, through certification for palm oil, timber and other commodities, has cut its deforestation rates by extraordinary amounts in recent years.
6. The certification process allows for an open forum for these debates, with all global stakeholders able to participate. The discussions lead to a path forward to advance our shared goals. EU legislation alone will not be able to cover the full length of supply chains as it needs involvement of the governments and stakeholders of producer countries. The standards and norms should not only target the EU imported products, but should also cover and be applied for EU domestic products, including other vegetable oils such as rapeseed and sunflower.
7. Last January, ASEAN and the EU have agreed to find a fair solution to sustainable vegetable oils, including palm oil through the ASEAN – EU joint working group (JWG) on vegetable oils. The JWG is a good example of finding a diplomatic solution to address the concerns of both sides such as deforestation. SVLK certification of timber and timber products from Indonesia to the EU is an indispensable lesson learned for Indonesia and the EU to find a fair and just solution.
8. Deforestation and environmental damage is a global problem. It requires a global solution – one that can bring together developing nations and developed nations, producers and consumers – to ensure the widest possible support. Without this, there would exist only a fragmented and adversarial approach, such as that advocated by Greenpeace. Mutual recognition of certification schemes is the best solution rather than self-imposed or unilateral regulations as Greenpeace advocates. Strong cooperation between countries is the only way to deliver global solutions for a sustainable future for all.
9. The European Union has a leadership role as one of the world’s strongest advocates for environmental protection. We urge you, in forthcoming regulation, to send the message that working together matters, and that the approach advocated by Greenpeace – to tear down existing structures, rather than helping to build on them – does not fit with a collaborative approach to environmental policymaking. We ask you when considering legislation to work with all of us, to reject the voices of division and unilateralism.

Sincerely yours,

Joko Supriyono



Chairman of Indonesian Palm Oil Association

Sahat Sinaga



Chairman of Indonesian Palm Oil Board

Dedi Junaedi



Secretariat of National Action Plan of  
Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil

Gulat Manurung



Chairman of Indonesian Smallholder Oil  
Palm Association