

Resolution GA13-6e

Proposed Resolution to be adopted at the 13th General Assembly of the
Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

10th of November 2016

TITLE: PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS, WHISTLEBLOWERS, COMPLAINANTS AND
COMMUNITY SPOKESPERSONS

Submitted by: Forest Peoples Programme

Supported by: Both ENDS, Oxfam, Verite, LEAP Spiral and Aidenvironment.

Background:

Noting that:

- The RSPO seeks to uphold internationally recognized human rights;
- There is an increasing number of reports of violence, harassment and death threats towards human rights defenders, whistle-blowers, complainants and community-spokespersons, notably but not only in Africa and Latin America,ⁱ associated with palm oil development;
- Palm oil development is now rapidly expanding in these regions;
- It is imperative to encourage sector accountability and transparency to ensure adherence to RSPO standards and;
- In conformity with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and with other international instruments and guidelines on these matters.ⁱⁱ

Potential Benefit/Risk:

Having clear procedures and standards helps RSPO members avoid conflicts, ensures transparency and accountability and demonstrates that RSPO is upholding human rights. This helps to distance RSPO from other actors in the palm oil sector who use illegal and violent means to acquire land and suppress dissent. This will enhance the credibility of RSPO and CSPO.

THIS RESOLUTION PROPOSES:

To mandate and resource the Secretariat to support and facilitate the members of the RSPO Human Rights Working Group to urgently develop:

- **accessible and adequately resourced procedures to allow human rights defenders, whistleblowers and community spokespersons to register their concerns with the Complaints Panel in anonymity and security;**
- **clear guidelines for RSPO members on how to uphold the rights of human rights defenders, whistle-blowers, complainants and community spokespersons in their operations;**

- a proposal for graduated corrective actions to be required of any RSPO members, which act in violation of these norms, to be submitted for adoption by the Board of Governors within 6 months.

Contact Information:

Marcus Colchester, Senior Policy Advisor, Forest Peoples Programme.
Email: marcus@forestpeoples.org Tel: + 44 1608 652893.

ⁱ On Dangerous Ground, Global Witness, https://www.globalwitness.org/en/reports/dangerous-ground/?gclid=CjwKEAjwfmf6-BRDi9fSN7Ijt1wUSJAASawcjz8U7qD84CFwsECUaogGPr5xXdu-G74StiLU050KwkxoCOKLw_wcB ; Friends of the Earth: Palm Oil's Toxic Legacy in Sayaxché, Guatemala <https://youtu.be/-XKXvHrL-GY>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/Declaration.aspx> UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, technically known as UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/guidelines/defenders/docs/16332-re02_08_en.pdf (this is an EU statement of policy, which supports the UN Declaration); <http://www.osce.org/odihr/119633?download=true> OSCE Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders