

Joint Media Release

Palm Oil Roundtable not welcome in PNG

A visit to PNG by representatives from the international 'Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil' (RSPO) has been criticised by a coalition of civil society organisations.

The NGOs say that the Roundtable is not welcome in PNG as "in our opinion there is nothing sustainable about Oil Palm estates and they alienate people from their land".

The NGOs believe that oil palm inevitably causes social disharmony and environmental pollution and deprives local people of the right to use their land for their own economic and social development.

"In our opinion the RSPO tries to deflect attention from the social and environmental damage caused by oil palm. It does not deal with the fundamental problems" say the NGOs.

They are also critical of the role of international conservation organisations in supporting oil palm and other forest conversion.

"We urge international conservation organizations to abandon their 'Forest Conversion Initiatives'. Instead they should stand with the people of Papua New Guinea and reject outright any expansion of our oil palm estates and further industrial logging".

The NGOs opinion is that the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil has been created to ensure expansion of oil palm plantations while ignoring local people. "We think the Roundtable is not genuinely concerned for sustainable livelihoods or environmental protection and it undermines local people and organizations".

The NGO's are appealing to WWF and other 'BINGOs' to distance themselves from initiatives that deprive people of their land and impose failed western models of so-called 'development'.

"WWF should support the people of PNG rather than initiating international forums that we see as greenwashing foreign industries", say the NGOs.

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