

Minutes RSPO Sensitization Meeting for Palm Oil Sector of Ghana

In Framework of the Development of a National Interpretation in Ghana

Tuesday 3rd of March 2009

Date: Tuesday 3rd of March 2009

Venue: Centre for African Wetlands

C/O P.O Box LG67

University of Ghana, Legon

Accra, Ghana

Time: 9 am – 2 pm

Attendants

GROWERS AND MILLERS

Mr. Neneyo Asare Mate-Kole

Benso Oil Palm Plantation Ltd. / Twifo Oil Palm Plantation Ltd.

Mr. Samuel Avaala Awonnea

Benso Oil Palm Plantation Ltd.

Mr. Victor Tetteh Zutah

Benso Oil Palm Plantation Ltd.

Mr. Emmanuel Yao Ahiable

Twifo Oil Palm Plantation Ltd.

Mr. Charles Mate-Kole

Norpalm Ghana Ltd.

Mr. Felix Fynn

Juaben Oil Mills Ltd.

Mr. Ofori

Juaben Oil Mills Ltd.

Mr. Abraham Majdoub

Ayiem Oil Mills Ltd.

Mr. Isaac Darko Quarm

Golden Star Oil Palm Plantations Ltd.

Mr. Rolland Arthur

Asankoma Farms Ltd.

Mr. Daniel Anane Anom

Obooma Farms Products Ltd.

Mr. Gert Vandersmissen

Siat Group of Companies, Brussels

Mrs. Helena Vandebecck

Siat Group of Companies, Brussels

Mr. Emmanuel K. Wiafe

Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd.

Mr. Bashir Manu

Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd.

Mr. Isaac Afrifa Acheampong

Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd.

Mr. Baafour K. Opong

Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd.

Miss Laure Steer

Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd.

Miss Anke Massart

Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd.

PALM OIL PROCESSORS, MANUFACTURERS, RETAILERS

Mrs. Khadidiatou Gnagna Diop	Nestle Ghana Ltd.
Mr. John Berko	Nestle Ghana Ltd.
Mr. Stephane Achio	Unilever Ghana Ltd.
Mr. Emmanuel Baffoe Awotwi	PZ Cussons Ghana Ltd.
Mr. A.S. Alameddine	Ameen Sangari Industries Ltd.
Mr. Kristopher Klokenga	ADM/Wilmar
Mrs. Angela Ayichoe-Nelson	Fanmilk Ltd.
Mr. Joseph Appenteng	Fanmilk Ltd.
Mrs. Adelaide Ahwireng	Fio Enterprise Ltd.
Mrs. Nana Donkoh	Fio Enterprise Ltd.

BANKS AND INVESTORS

Mr. Peter White	International Finance Corporation
Mr. Kwame Abrokwa	International Finance Corporation
Mr. Davis Akorli	Ghana Commercial Bank
Mr. Martial S. Bukari	Ghana Commercial Bank
Mr. Kwaku Ofori-Amanfo	National Investment Bank
Mr. Ofori-Amankong	National investment Bank
Mr. Babatunde Ampah	Databank Financial Services Ltd.
Mrs. Abena Biritwum	Databank Financial Services Ltd.
Mr. Thomas de Guberatis	Agence française de Développement (AFD)
Mr. Amichia Biley	DEG Office Accra
Mr. Rüdiger Behrens	GTZ Market Oriented Agriculture Programme
Miss Linda Bausch	GTZ Market Oriented Agriculture Programme
Mr. Philip Boachen	African Development Bank
Mr. Patrick Agboma	African Development Bank
Mr. Emmanuel Mensah	Barclays
Mr. Eric Asae	USADF

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS & CONSULTANTS

Mr. Seth Ayitey Larmie	SAL Consult Ltd.
Emmanuel Kofi Acquah	SAL Consult Ltd.
Mr. Yaw Osei-Owusu	Conservation International
Mr. Nicholas Jengre	Conservation International

Mrs. Glen Asomaning	West Africa Forest Programme – WWF
Mr. Ketiboa Blay	Centre for Social & Community Advancement (CESCA)
Mrs. Arhizah Blay	Centre for Social & Community Advancement (CESCA)
Mr. Georgre B.K. Awudi	Friends of the Earth - Ghana
Mrs. Nana Ama Yirrah	Community Land & Development Foundation (COLANDEF)
Mr. Samuel Siaw	Community Land & Development Foundation (COLANDEF)

GOVERNMENT & RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Jonathan Addo Allotey	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Mrs. Florence Agyei	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Mr. Victor M. Mombu	Nature Conservation research Centre
Mr. D.K. Attuquayefio	Department of Zoology, University of Ghana
Mr. Kwame Addae	President’s Special Initiative (PSI) on Oil Palm

Background

Up to now the African continent has not been involved much in the activities of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. Though in the case of Ghana, the three biggest oil palm plantations are owned by members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, namely Unilever and Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd. (*i.e.* Siat Group of Companies). In addition, various RSPO members are also represented within the country such as Nestle Ghana Ltd., International Finance Corporation, Oxfam and WWF.

Therefore, as first step, a sensitisation meeting for the major palm oil producers was organized on the 24th of January 2009 to inform about the aims and organization of the RSPO and to measure the interest of the palm oil producers in Ghana for RSPO certification. The plantations owned by Unilever Ghana Ltd. confirmed that Unilever has publicly announced commitment to the RSPO by stating that they will only purchase RSPO certified sustainable palm oil by 2015.

During the closure of this first meeting, it was agreed to involve as soon as possible the various stakeholder groups within the country to accelerate the sensitization on RSPO and to accelerate the National Interpretation kick-off.

Therefore, a sensitization meeting for the palm oil sector of Ghana was organized on the 3rd of March 2009.

Objectives of the sensitization meeting

The objectives of the sensitization meeting were threefold:

- To inform the palm oil sector of Ghana about the aims and organization of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).
- To discuss upon the key documents created by the RSPO to guide supply chain members in achieving an RSPO certificate.
- To discuss upon the National Interpretation of the RSPO P&C and implementation of the RSPO P&C in Ghana.

Tentative Programme

Date: Tuesday, 3 rd of March		
9.00 - 9.15	Welcome address by Gert Vandersmissen	Centre for African Wetlands Building
9.15 - 11.30	Introduction movie on RSPO Presentation on RSPO Aims and organization of RSPO RSPO Key documents Discussion	
11.30 - 12.30	Refreshment and lunch	
12.30 - 14.00	RSPO Principles & Criteria RSPO National Interpretation – Ghana Discussion	
14.00 - 15.00	Way forward & Closure	

The whole programme was executed though it ended earlier than expected. In addition, Mr. Peter White of the International Finance Corporation gave a presentation on IFC's "Biodiversity and Agricultural Commodities Programme (BACP)" and he explained the interests for financiers to get involved in RSPO.

Subjects of the sensitization meeting

Welcome address (by Gert Vandersmissen)

Gert Vandersmissen, Deputy Managing Director Siat Group - Field Operations, welcomed the participants to the Centre for African Wetlands at the University of Ghana, Legon – Accra. In his address, he informed the participants about some bad practices in palm oil production industry and consequently the establishment of the RSPO to regulate these practices. Further, he unveiled the main reasons for the sensitization meeting concerning RSPO. Firstly, the meeting was organised to measure the current RSPO knowledge and interest of the Ghanaian palm oil sector. Secondly, the meeting had to brief the participants on the work done so far by the RSPO. And thirdly, it had to focus

on the way forward in developing a National Interpretation of the RSPO P&C in Ghana. It was said that RSPO certification is not an obligation, but it will become of high importance in the near future.

Introduction movie on RSPO: "The Gathering Momentum"

The movie was shown during the opening session of Roundtable 6 in Bali, November 2008.

General Presentation on RSPO (by Anke Massart)

The participants were informed about the:

- Increasing demand for palm oil in the world;
- Bad practices that led to the establishment of the RSPO in 2003;
- Global, transparent and multi-stakeholder RSPO organization with its vision, mission and membership;
- Progress made since the start by looking at the outcome of the 6 Roundtable Meetings;
- Key documents created by the RSPO:
 - o RSPO Principles & Criteria
 - ✓ A softcopy of the document was spread in advance, though during the presentation it was shown how to download the document from the RSPO website.
 - ✓ It was explained that the document is the guide for growers and millers to achieve RSPO certification.
 - ✓ The structure of the document (Principle, Criteria, Indicators and Guidance) was discussed in detail and examples for each principle were given.
 - ✓ In addition, the Smallholder Task Force was discussed and it was shown where to find more information on their activities.
 - ✓ A remark was made that though the document is very voluminous, the practices mentioned are Good Agricultural Practices and Good Management Practices which help companies to improve the sustainability and efficiency of their operations. In addition, the RSPO requirements are often covering loan requirements of banks and investors, requirements from environmental institutions within the country, etc.
 - ✓ Apart from the oil palm growers, the majority of the participants had never seen the document. Only few of the attendants had read the RSPO P&C before.
 - ✓ One open question was raised on Principle 1: Commitment to transparency: "Would it be possible for plantation and mining companies to be transparent where a lot of destruction of surroundings appears? Often, important cultural sites within communities are destroyed during land preparation. A member responded that companies should work together with the communities to identify these important cultural and historical sites before land preparation activities can take place. In addition, it was added that RSPO requires an Environmental & Social Impact Assessment for new developments and operations. This assessment should take into account such issues.

- ✓ Another question was on Principle 5/7: “Is there enough land available for the cultivation of oil palm as it is a fact that palm oil contributes the highest share to global demand for oil? Can we preserve forest reserves and high conservation value areas?” The question was addressed to by Gert Vandersmissen with the example of the Okumaning plantation (GOPDC Ltd.) which is developed on degraded land.
 - ✓ It was suggested that more focus is needed on smallholder production as their operations were said to be more environmental friendly than large scale production.
 - ✓ There were no questions on the structure and the purpose of the document itself, though some participants stated that more questions would arise after having studied the document and when the National Interpretation is being developed.
- RSPO Guidance for National Interpretation of P&C
- ✓ A softcopy of the document was spread in advance, though during the presentation it was shown how to download the document from the RSPO website.
 - ✓ It was explained that a National Interpretation is necessary to avoid potential conflicts between the international standard and national/local laws and regulations.
 - ✓ Focus was made on the multi-stakeholder approach of the development of a National Interpretation.
 - ✓ Examples of the National Interpretation document from Malaysia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea were shown during the presentation to illustrate the physical outcome of the National Interpretation process.
 - ✓ One question was on the use of agro-chemicals: a member wanted to know how the use of certain abandoned chemicals would be avoided in Ghana as required by one of the RSPO Principles. It was explained that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the regulation of chemical importation and use in the country. Therefore, they will play a role in the development of National Interpretation.
 - ✓ Another question was on the possibility of achieving a certificate without the National Interpretation. It was said that it is impossible to achieve an RSPO certificate a country without a National Interpretation of RSPO P&C or without approval from RSPO Board to use the general P&C document.
- RSPO Certification Systems
- ✓ A softcopy of the document was spread in advance, though during the presentation it was shown how to download the document from the RSPO website.
 - ✓ It was explained how a production unit can obtain an RSPO certificate once the National Interpretation has been developed and compliance to the P&C is met.
 - ✓ There was a special focus on the various annexes that make up the certification triangle (certification standard, accreditation requirements and certification process requirements).
 - ✓ Examples of Certification Bodies were given and the Public Summary Report were said to be found on the RSPO website.

- ✓ There was a question on the availability of certification bodies, especially when it appeared that there were no certification bodies in Africa yet.
- ✓ A second question was about the duration period to obtain a certificate. It was stated that once the National Interpretation has been developed and once a plantation is ready to be audited, a certificate can be achieved within a few months.
- ✓ A final question was about the benefit of having an RSPO certificate. What is for Ghanaian palm oil producers the benefit of having an RSPO Certificate? It was explained that there are 4 supply chain options and that one of them (i.e. Book & Claim) is similar to the carbon credit system, where you can get a credit per tonne of RSPO oil produced.
- RSPO Supply Chain Certification Systems
 - ✓ A softcopy of the document was spread in advance, though during the presentation it was shown how to download the document from the RSPO website.
 - ✓ The participants were informed about how to make the trade of RSPO CSPO credible and practical. Traceability needs to be proven throughout the supply chain.
 - ✓ The 4 supply chain options (identity preserved, segregation, mass balance and book & claim) were discussed in detail, including their advantages and disadvantages.
 - ✓ The participants became familiar with the fact that other members of their supply chain (e.g. refiners, consumer goods manufacturers, tank farms) also need to be involved to ensure a traceable trade of RSPO CSPO.
 - ✓ Annex 6 of the document “Supply Chain certification Requirements for different supply chain models” was presented as an extra “to do” list upon trading RSPO CSPO.
 - ✓ More questions would certainly arise during the following meetings after going through the document and the supply chain options in detail.
- RSPO Guidelines on Communication & Claims
 - ✓ A softcopy of the document was spread in advance, though during the presentation it was shown how to download the document from the RSPO website.
 - ✓ The guidelines for communication and claims were discussed and examples of claims were given.
- RSPO realisations at the end of 2008 and future ambitions;
- RSPO in Ghana?

It was explained that the main reasons for the multi-stakeholder sensitization meeting are the work to be done in Ghana on the following two levels:

- LEVEL 1: Start the development of a National Interpretation of the RSPO P&C in Ghana.
- LEVEL 2: Continue individually the implementation of the P&C in the various companies.

LEVEL 1: Start the development of a National Interpretation of the RSPO P&C in Ghana.

The following steps were proposed and approved upon.

Step 0: Discuss with other palm oil industries before starting the process. DONE

Step 1: Sensitization of all stakeholders (government, research, processors, banks, ngo's,)

Step 2: Establish a Steering Committee: Its role:

- Who should be in the Working group? - to create the NI Working Group (NIWG)
- How should the process be undertaken? -- to create TOR, Code of Conduct, consensus model
- When will the guidance be delivered? -- to develop a timeline with mile stones and outcome

Step 3: Appoint a national facilitator (or co-ordinator) and seek RSPO Executive Board approval.

Step 4: Let TOR and CoC be approved by foreign experts in addition to approval by NIWG during first meeting (> consensus).

Step 5: Organize minimum 2 (but better 4) physical meetings with NIWG (> minutes on RSPO website).

Step 6: Organize two or more separate public consultations periods of 30 days each.

Step 7: Make during the process several drafts of the NI P&C.

Step 8: Submit final draft to the Executive Board for endorsement.

Decisions taken concerning National Interpretation

- It was decided that the Steering Committee would be formed by:
 - Samuel Avaala Awonnea – Unilever Ghana Ltd. (Benso Oil Palm Plantation Ltd.)
 - Anke Massart – GOPDC Ltd.
 - Gert Vandersmissen – SIAT Group of Companies, Brussel

No other volunteers turned up during the meeting, though an email would be sent later on to give other parties the chance to be part of the Steering Committee. The tasks of the Steering Committee are to propose the composition of NI Working Group, the Terms of Reference (TOR), the Code of Conduct (CoC) and the time line for

NI development. Afterwards the Steering Committee will be unbound. It was agreed that the TOR and CoC would be approved upon by the NI Working Group once established.

- Gert Vandersmissen (Siat Group of Companies, Brussels) was appointed as National Facilitator for the development of a National Interpretation. He became recently alternate for the “Rest of the world” - chair in the Executive Board of RSPO and therefore has a good contact with the Board.

LEVEL 2: Continue individually the implementation of the P&C in the various companies.

Growers and millers that are interested to achieve an RSPO certificate in the long-term can already study and start implementing the general RSPO P&C document. While the processors, manufacturers and retailers can focus on the RSPO Supply Chain Certification Systems requirements.

During the meeting it became clear that growers, millers and smallholders will need a lot of assistance from environmental and social non-governmental organizations and consultants due to their experience within the country. Furthermore, banks and investors might want to focus their development programmes more on topics related to or mentioned in the RSPO P&C. A nice example is the Biodiversity & Agriculture Commodities Programme (BACP) of IFC. Finally, assistance is also required from governmental institutions and research centres.

Prepared by Anke Massart