

NEWS RELEASE

LATIN AMERICA PLEDGES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

April 5, 2012, - Ecuador – At the recently held RSPO III Latin American Conference in Quito, Ecuador, on Sustainable Production of Palm Oil organized by the National Association of Oil Palm Growers (ANCUPA) and the Ministry of Industry and Competitiveness (MIPRO) with support consultant Total Environmental Solutions (SAMBITO), leading companies came together and unanimously pledged their commitment towards social and environmental responsibility.

Attended by eminent international specialists on issues of sustainable agriculture, bio-fuels, agriculture business, new farming practices and clean development mechanisms, the conference was inaugurated by Government of Ecuador.

The 3 days meeting witnessed over 400 delegates from 12 countries in the region comprising main players in the palm oil sector in Latin America pledging to promote and adopt the implementation of international certification standards for sustainable palm oil set by the RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil), an international multi stakeholder organization.

Speakers at the conference included Veronica Sion, Minister of Industry and Productivity in Ecuador, Marcela Aguinaga, Minister of Environment of Ecuador, Darrel Webber, Malaysian-based RSPO Secretary General and Francisco Davila, president of National Association of Oil Palm Growers (ANCUPA).

Francisco Davila, president of ANCUPA, highlighted that: “The commitment of oil palm growers in Ecuador for RSPO certification will soon become a reality that assures the sustainable source of national palm oil. We are currently progressing with the National Interpretation of RSPO Principles and Criteria in Ecuador and expect this to complete soonest so that we can proceed to the next step in adopting the standards. 80% of palm oil in Ecuador is grown in areas that have a long and productive agricultural use for over 100 years. The remaining 20% of crops are in other areas of new agricultural production and less than 1% has been detected that may be in protected areas.”

Davila continued to comment that: “The palm oil sector is critical for the growth of our nation, generating nearly 2% of Ecuador’s GDP, 15% of agricultural GDP and supports over 170,000 jobs directly and indirectly.”

Ecuador’s Environment Minister Marcela Aguinaga emphasized the need for the palm oil sector to work together towards environmental responsibilities, to ensure a culture that is responsible which maintains high quality production processes.

Veronica Sion, Minister of Industry and Productivity in Ecuador shared that: “There is a need for public-private partnership to promote sustainable development of palm oil sector, given its high contribution to employment generation, taxes and currencies as Ecuador is one of the largest exporters of palm oil in Latin America. The government is willing to invest resources to facilitate the entry of oil palm sector responsible cultivation models, such as the RSPO standards.”

Darrel Webber, Secretary General of the RSPO who was a speaker at the conference commented that: “Certified Sustainable Palm Oil is currently 11% of global production of crude palm oil, a sterling achievement by our members in the growers sector in just over 3 years since certification begun. So far, the annual production capacity of Latin America (Brazil and Columbia) is approximately 2.4% of the total 5,704,342 metric tonnes of CSPO. It is without a doubt that Latin America and its contribution towards sustainable palm oil will significantly catapult when Ecuador, as the second largest producer and leading exporter of palm oil in Latin America, gets on board as well. The conference today attests to this promising outlook – and the RSPO commits to guiding, supporting and encouraging growers from this new frontier to take their progress to the next level.”

Jens Mesa, CEO of FEDEPALMA of Colombia (National Federation of Oil Palm Growers) meanwhile, spoke about the successful process that Colombia has practiced in the implementation of the RSPO principles and criteria.

The RSPO III Latin American Conference on Sustainable Palm Oil successfully established a consensus to accelerate the process of national interpretation of the principles and criteria of RSPO, so that certification of sustainable palm is a reality in Ecuador from second half of this year.

About RSPO

In response to the urgent and pressing global call for sustainably produced palm oil, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was formed in 2004 with the objective of promoting the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders. The seat of the association is in Zurich, Switzerland, while the secretariat is currently based in Kuala Lumpur with a satellite office in Jakarta.

RSPO is a not-for-profit association that unites stakeholders from seven sectors of the palm oil industry - oil palm producers, palm oil processors or traders, consumer goods manufacturers, retailers, banks and investors, environmental or nature conservation NGOs and social or developmental NGOs - to develop and implement global standards for sustainable palm oil.

Such multi-stakeholder representation is mirrored in the governance structure of RSPO such that seats in the Executive Board and project level Working Groups are fairly allocated to each sector. In this way, RSPO lives out the philosophy of the "roundtable" by giving equal rights to each stakeholder group to bring group-specific agendas to the roundtable, facilitating traditionally adversarial stakeholders and business competitors to work together towards a common objective and making decisions by consensus.

About the 2011 RSPO CSPO Growth Interpretation Narrative (2011 GIN)

The latest 2011 RSPO CSPO Growth Interpretation Narrative (2011 GIN) reported the upward trend in the supply and sale of sustainable palm oil and is available on http://www.rspo.org/files/pdf/2011%20RSPO%20CSPO%20GIN_web.pdf. A summary of quick facts are also available on <http://www.rspo.org/files/pdf/QUICKFACTS-MAR12.pdf>. The first and only report in the market on certified sustainable palm oil aimed at analyzing, shaping and facilitating commitment and discussions towards sustainable palm oil.

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This document is available at : <http://www.rspo.org/content/news-release-latin-america-pledges-towards-sustainable-palm-oil>.