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LEADING PALM OIL CERTIFICATION SYSTEM ADOPTS NO DEFORESTATION REQUIREMENTS

The High Carbon Stock Approach Welcomes the Integration of its Methodology into the RSPO's Updated Certification Standard

Kota Kinabalu, Sabah – The High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) Executive Committee welcomes the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) General Assembly's decision to adopt No Deforestation requirements into the Principles and Criteria at the RSPO 15th General Assembly, held earlier today at The Magellan Sutera Resort Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. The updated Principles and Criteria now includes the HCSA methodology.

Following more than a year of intensive work the RSPO Principles and Criteria Review Task Force 2017, comprising growers as well as environmental and social NGOs, has come to a consensus on No Deforestation requirements (under Principle 7 of the new Principles and Criteria framework). With the inclusion of the [HCSA methodology](#) under criterion 7.12, the RSPO is poised to become the global certification standard for deforestation-free palm oil, which has seen increasing demand from consumers and international markets over the last decade. Additionally, application of the rigorous social requirements of the HCS Approach by RSPO members will be integral to achieving positive impacts for communities that balance sustainable livelihood and poverty reduction with the need to conserve, protect and enhance ecosystems, and respect land users' rights.

The RSPO, alongside the HCSA, will now work rapidly to effectively monitor and enforce compliance of its enhanced No Deforestation standard. A formal RSPO-HCSA joint steering committee will be constituted to oversee implementation of the RSPO No Deforestation work.

About the HCS Approach

The HCS Approach is the first practical, field-tested methodology for distinguishing forest areas that should be protected or restored, from degraded lands that may be developed, using an integrated land-use planning approach. The methodology was developed with the aim to ensure a practical, transparent, robust, and scientifically credible approach that is widely accepted to implement commitments to halt deforestation in the tropics, while ensuring the rights and livelihoods of local peoples are respected. The HCS Approach has allowed major plantations and supply chain actors to reduce their impact by not clearing or purchasing goods from HCS forests and High Conservation Value (HCV) areas.

About the HCSA Steering Group

The HCSA Steering Group provides overall governance of the HCS Approach and oversees further development of the methodology, including refining its definition, its objectives, and its relationship to other approaches to halting deforestation. The Executive Committee is elected by the Steering Group and is the decision-making body for governance and organisation matters. For further information, please visit www.highcarbonstock.org.

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