Labour Rights, Social Standards and the RSPO

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RSPO Standards

Recognition in the P&C that ‘sustainability’ encompasses both the social and environmental aspects of any kind of palm oil development and activity

- Principle 6 covers directly-employed and contract workers, both local and foreign, as relates to forced labour, child labour, non-discrimination, freedom of association, domestic labour standards, protection from harassment and abuse, and access to grievance mechanism.

Social Standards

- Principle 1.3 talks about doing business in an ethical manner
- Principle 6.13 guarantees respect of growers and millers for human rights
- On women, the directly relevant provisions are 4.6.12 on the use of pesticides by pregnant and breastfeeding women; 6.8.2 on non-discrimination; 6.9.2 on protection of reproductive rights
GAPS that need to be addressed

- Detecting forced and trafficked labour
- Monitoring of work hours viz., overtime, holiday premiums
- Per diem rate vs. legal minimum wage
- Legal minimum wage viz., decent living wage
- Promotion and respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining, including of foreign workers

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GAPS that need to be addressed

- Application of the non-discrimination clause to protect rights of women workers
- Various economic rights – right to food, clean water, livelihood
- Indicators for food security
- Clarity of standards on adequate housing
Initial recommendations

Find out –

- How your workers got to your facility; facilitated by whom
- How much your workers paid to get the job, and to whom
- What your and your outsourcing companies’ recruitment and employment practices are, and make them visible

Initial Recommendations

Find out –

- How working hours are monitored, and whether workers are paid for all hours worked
- The pay structure, especially when workers are paid by piece
- The pay practices, including when lump sum wage payments are given to the ‘boss’
- What women workers are doing when they are done with their ‘official’ tasks to ensure that all their productive work are compensated.
2014 Activities: Solidaridad-VSEA Program

- Draft audit checklist on standards on labour, ethics, human rights and gender
- Workshop with CBs on RSPO Social Standards and Mechanics of Social Auditing, 17-19 September

Forthcoming

- 2 workshops on RSPO Labour and Social Standards with growers, millers and smallholders
- Workshop on using the audit toolkit
- Setting up of the labour taskforce that may include members from outside the HR WG
- Development of an operational “road map” to define most urgent issues on migrant workers’ rights, child labour, including basic education, freedom of association, forced labor, and pesticide use
- Development of guidance on how to implement the P&C related to labour, esp. forced labour and freedom of association