

## **Reflections on the P&C Review Process: Challenges to achieving consensus**

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As a newcomer to the RSPO, Mr. Keatts gained his initial exposure to the diverse set of stakeholder objectives through the P&C Review process. He was therefore able to join the review process with no preconceived notions of the varying motivations and political dynamics which have cultivated over the past years. The challenges to building consensus on issues, small to large, became apparent through the first Task Force meeting (TF1). With an initial focus on contentious issues, the process was slow to gain momentum, perhaps due to lack of trust among members and/or the rigid expectations which substantive members held. The sides were drawn as those members seeking change, versus those members resisting change. The issue of strengthening the perception of the RSPO certification process was a shared goal, though the means by which to achieve this diverged. There is a sense among Malaysian and Indonesian growers that the certification process is robust, and challenges remain with the current P&C to expand certification among their constituency. The alternative view among ROW growers, supply chain actors and NGOs is that the RSPO needs to be a market leader, setting stricter standards in expectation of tightening buyer demands and market regulation. There seemed a limited willingness by members resisting change to seek middle ground. Conversely, non-growers displayed a limited understanding of the constraints faced by growers in implementing the P&C. As this dynamic emerged, there was an inability to reach consensus on the most hotly contested issues such as inclusion of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission standards and the regulation of the use of paraquat. There is evidently a resistance to accepting the recommendations which have come out of the technical working groups on these issues. While TF1 made little to no progress in achieving consensus on these issues, it served to illuminate the expectations of members. TF2 noticeably benefited from the lessons of TF1, and substantial progress was achieved on revising less contentious P&C. Consensus was reached through specialized, productive small-group breakout sessions followed by plenary to validate breakout group language proposed. This progress served to strengthen the trust among members, and may have laid the foundation for addressing more contentious issues productively in TF3 (TBD).