

Institutionalisation of respect for free, prior and informed consent: towards RSPO implementation and verification work for forest, lands and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities

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The RSPO standard accords with international law and makes requirements of companies that go beyond the minimum standards required by national statutory law and ratified international treaties. **The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent is central to the RSPO's Principles and Criteria and guides the way companies deal with local communities (including indigenous peoples), provide information, carry out impact assessments, acquire land, agree payments and benefits, settle differences and resolve conflicts and pay compensation.**

The FPIC exists in the RSPO Principles and Criteria for both existing mill and supply operations 2.3, 6.3, 6.4, as well as 7.5, and 7.6 responsible new planting requirements. Subsequently a helpful and process based guidance has been developed for RSPO members through series of RSPO sponsored multi-stakeholder training workshops in Riau, Central Kalimantan, Jayapura-Papua, and Miri-Malaysia in 2008.

The current RSPO Principles and Criteria are due for review in 2012. An improved FPIC implementations in both processes and outputs are extremely important to RSPO. Sawit Watch and Forest Peoples Programme recently review FPIC implementations in RSPO member operations in Indonesia, and with other regions in Malaysia, Liberia, Cameroon and DRC.

The FPIC institutionalisation in RSPO should ensure, first, smooth process of improvement in the way palm oil companies adhere to the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and respect customary rights to land when acquiring new lands for expanding their operations. Second the process should to clean up the RSPO process so that bad certifications and coercive consents can be more readily challenged by impacted communities and concerned NGOs. Lastly promote reforms in both voluntary best practice and national statutory law to secure communities rights to lands and

forests and FPIC.