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Impact of RSPO on Plantations and Development of a Gender-based Policy - Sime Darby Plantation's Experience*

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Independent baseline assessments carried out by Wild Asia between 2005-7 against the Principles and Criteria (P&C) of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) showed that the company had difficulties complying with the specific requirements of Principle 6, despite having Group-level policies and grievance procedures in place.

Criterion 6.9, in particular, requires that a policy to prevent sexual harassment and violence against women and to protect their reproductive rights be developed in consultation with employees and other relevant stakeholders, and that there is a committee to address women's concerns in plantations.

To comply with Criterion 6.9, Sime Darby Plantation is collaborating with social organisation Tenaganita, whose expertise in dealing with women and migrant issues would assist the company in developing a gender-based policy and its supporting grievance procedures.

Three hundred women plantation workers from the company's operating units were consulted and the issues and concerns raised during the consultative workshops formed the basis on which the Framework of the Gender-based Policy was developed, where the company shall endeavour to comply with ratified international laws over and above local regulations.

This paper aims to share the company's experience in implementing the RSPO P&C and the impact it has had on the plantations, focusing in more detail on the development of the Gender-based Policy.

Keywords: *Consultative, gender-based policy, grievance procedures, health and safety, reproductive rights, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).*