

28 January 2015

For Release

**THE NETWORK OF RIAU'S PEAT COMMUNITY
Jaringan Masyarakat Gambut Riau (JMGR)**

**First Commemoration
*Sustainable Forest Management Policy (SFMP) APRIL***

APRIL (*Asia Pasific Resources International Limited*) one year ago, precisely on 28 January 2014 launched its commitment on sustainable forest management, where within their business they plan to keep the environment and also give benefit for local community.

Jaringan Masyarakat Gambut Riau (JMGR) assess that principles of new sustainable policy which also known as *Sustainable Forest Management Policy (SFMP)* has not been taken as reference in running their business. In fact, in many villages where they operate some conflicts remains take place.

As part of the commitment, APRIL stated to conduct moratorium in their concession area. But continuous land clearing and canal building that causing forest and peat destruction, conflict and and land grabbing continue to happen.

Current finding of JMGR reveal that on February 2014 PT. RAPP (APRIL group) clearing natural forest, build canal, and grab community land. PT. RAPP cleared peat land in Bagan Melibur village despite of this village has been excluded from their concession correspond to permit they hold (SK. 180/Menhut-II/2013) to use wood from the forest IUPHHK-HTI). This expresses contradiction between commitment and reality.

Although when Multi Party team has been formed to solve conflict, PT RAPP was not affected and continue to clear the forest and digging peatlands with guard from Mobile Brigade (Brimob) on Saturday, 17 May 2014. It ended with an incident of one community was hit by Mobile brigade officer when those people protested and asked PT RAPP to stop their activity in Bagan Melibur. AF, 45 years of age, resident of Teluk Belitung village was hit at his right ear by Brimob officer. In respond to the protest, on 22 May 2004 the team conducted field visit together with Kepulauan Meranti District government represented by DoF, District Secretary (Tapem), District Land agency, Merbau subdistrict leader, representation from Mayang Sari village, Lukit village representative, and PT. RAPP. PT RAPP insist that the cleared forest is part of their concession. Similar to that, currently same conflict also arise with community of Teluk Belitung Kelurahan/village (Pulau Padang).



(Left: Condition of Bagan Melibur village border in Pulau Padang when Kepulauan Meranti district government and district Parliament visited the site. It is a forest. Right: a villager from Bagan Melibur see village border sign where the forest has been destroyed by PT RAPP (Doc: JMGR)

APRIL commitment to stop sourcing from MTH until 2019 is also another sign of weak willingness considering the remaining forest in Riau where most of them is protected forest and the rest has permit. We predict there will be no longer forest at the time they commit not to sourcing from forest wood.

With regard to social responsibility, APRIL fail to ensure its group to apply it properly as what happen with PT RAPP in Pelalawan district. The issue of Tree for Community (Tanaman Kehidupan) at several villages like Pulau Muda, Teluk Meranti, Teluk Binjai, and Petodaan has not yet showed good result. While PT RAPP enjoy all the profit from harvesting, their social responsibility still in denial.



Tree for Community area at Teluk Binjai – Pelalawan district that has not been solved by PT RAPP (Doc: JMGR)

Same thing also happen in many other villages in Siak district such as Muara Bungkal village, Penyengat, and Lubuk Jering village; where most of villages did not accept any significant benefit of company presence. Moreover, PT RAPP cut down Sialang tree at Lubuk Jering village has causing lost of livelihood source of community. Many has lived from taking honey produced by bees nested

on Sialang tree. PT RAPP has taken and destroy community right to have livelihood and at the same time they ignore their own commitment.

Based on those facts and finding JMGR affirms that sustainable commitment proposed by APRIL is not stand for sustainability as they promise, but for company sustainability only. Nothing has been changed in the way they operate even after SMFP has been launched. APRIL remains focus to increasing capacity of production than making sure that social, economic, and environment aspect are properly considered in their operation.

As another proof of this. It is known that PT. RAPP possess concession of 338.536 ha, of it 53% equal to 179.000 ha located in peatlands with production capacity of paper as 820.000 ton and 2,8 million ton/year for pulp. In 2015 PT RAPP aims to increase their export market from 75 countries to 85 countries including Europe. With this ambitious target we doubt the issue of peat destruction, social conflict and disputes will be resolved at first place.

Because of that, we urge APRIL to evaluate implementation of its SMFP commitment, to involve stakeholders and to respect local community rights.

We also urge government to take important role in monitoring and ensure these principles properly implemented before issuing permit for any company and further to review permit that has been given to company particularly in peatlands area.

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