

The Swiss Coalition on Palm Oil, consisting of



in partnership with

WALHI West Kalimantan & WALHI EKNAS, Friends of the Earth Indonesia



Bern / Jakarta, February 2, 2018

## Open Letter to

Mr. Johann Schneider-Amman, Minister for Economic Affairs, Switzerland;

Ms. Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia;

Mr. Darmin Nasution, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Republic of Indonesia;

Mr. General TNI Dr. Moeldoko, Head of the Indonesia Presidential Staff Office, Republic of Indonesia;

Mr. Enggartiasto Lukita, Minister of Trade, Republic of Indonesia

Mr. Airlangga Hartarto, Minister of Industry, Republic of Indonesia

## FTA Switzerland – Indonesia: Respect human rights and nature - keep palm oil outside!

Honourable Mr. Schneider-Amann

Honourable Ministers

The undersigned civil society organizations from both Indonesia and Switzerland, engaged for human rights, environment and climate protection and sustainable development, urge you to keep palm oil out of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) being currently negotiated between our two countries.

We believe that a Swiss-Indonesia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) must first of all be approached as a means to serve the public interest. It should ensure that trade and investments contribute to equitable and sustainable development, the preconditions for which include a healthy environment, a climate-friendly economy, security of livelihoods and decent work for all.

In this context we're especially concerned about the issue of palm oil and we strongly urge that palm oil has to be kept outside of the negotiations on the Swiss-Indonesia Free Trade Agreement.

Indonesia is the world's largest palm oil producer and exporter. The production, processing and trade in palm oil products in Indonesia by domestic and foreign (including European) companies as well as bank investments are causing tremendous environmental, social, human rights and labor problems. These include large-scale deforestation, slashing and burning of primary and secondary forests for palm oil plantations, making Indonesia a major contributor to climate change and causing huge biodiversity loss; environmental pollution; land deprivation and human rights violations of local communities; and serious systemic labor rights violations in the sector.

Trade negotiations are not the right place to solve these issues. In an inclusive dialogue outside the trade negotiations, involving all stakeholders, Indonesia and Switzerland should pursue an ambitious roadmap to address the problems surrounding palm oil in a democratic, transparent and holistic way. Including palm oil access rules in FTA will result in increased trade in palm oil products, based on weak voluntary-based certification schemes and this will lead to further land related conflicts as well as environmental, social and human rights problems.

We strongly oppose any proposal in which weak voluntary-based certification schemes like RSPO, ISPO and ISCC qualify palm oil for lower import tariffs. They lack implementation and enforcement mechanisms and demonstrably fail to protect the interests of local communities, workers, smallholders and the environment. The complaint that Indonesian villagers just filed against RSPO at the OECD contact point in Switzerland, demonstrates once more that RSPO fails to implement its own standards.

Additionally, in Switzerland thousands of family farms that produce rape seed and sunflower as part of their crop rotation system are threatened to losing essential parts of their income. Furthermore, many consumers are concerned about palm oil while being increasingly unable to avoid it in the transformed products supermarkets provide.

We are convinced that the Swiss and Indonesian governments are open to the concerns and inputs from social partners and Civil Society Organizations and we appreciate a full and transparent communication on the envisaged Agreement.

Yours respectfully

The Swiss Coalition on Palm Oil

WALHI West Kalimantan & WALHI EKNAS (National Office), Friends of the Earth Indonesia



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Laura Regazzoni Meli, Segretaria Generale



*Urs Leugger*

Urs Leugger, Zentralsekretär



Arbeitsgemeinschaft  
Swissaid · Fastenopfer · Brot für alle  
Helvetas · Caritas · Heks

*Isolda Agazzi*

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*Thomas Braunschweig*

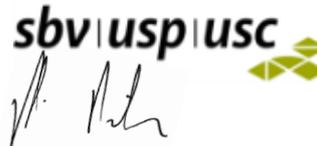
Thomas Braunschweig, Handelspolitik



*S. Lerch*

Sabine Lerch, Nachhaltiger Konsum Schweiz

Schweizer Bauernverband  
Union Suisse des Paysans  
Unione Svizzera dei Contadini



Markus Ritter, Präsident



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PAIN POUR LE PROCHAIN  
PANE PER TUTTI

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Bernard DuPasquier, Geschäftsleiter



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