

PRESS RELEASE

Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India launched to drive India's sustainable palm oil market



New Delhi, India: As the largest consumer and importer of palm oil, globally, India has the potential to play a significant role in driving sustainable practices in the palm oil sector. In order to address this, **Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (India-SPOC) was recently launched** as a collaborative effort between Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and Rainforest Alliance (RA) at a global convention on sustainable trade and standards in New Delhi.

In recent years, palm oil has become one of the most widely used vegetable oils in the food and FMCG industry, given its productivity and versatility in use. However, the factors that have made palm oil a success have also brought with it well-documented environmental and social challenges. Most prominent among these are links to deforestation, labour rights, and damaging effects on nature and the environment, particularly when grown unsustainably. India-SPOC will be working primarily with companies in India to facilitate collaboration within the industry and help improve sustainability performance across their palm oil supply chain. The coalition will work towards addressing barriers and challenges to sustainable palm oil by taking into consideration the unique characteristics of the palm oil sector in India, focusing on aspects including policy, best practices for production, trade linkages, and consumer sensitisation to sustainability.

The collaborative platform will consist of associations, civil society organisations, consumer goods manufacturers, food-service retailers, retailers, banks and financial institutions, and palm oil traders and

producers committed to increasing the use of sustainable palm oil and its derivatives in the Indian market. India-SPOC has opened its request for stakeholder participation with CRB playing the role of the Secretariat for the coalition.

Centre for Responsible Business

"The formation of India-SPOC is a timely and positive development in India and for the Asian region. I believe India-SPOC, to a great extent, will address the concerns and doubts of scholars and critics who argue that the increase in South-South trade in food, feed and fibre, for which India is a leading actor for both imports and exports, may undermine sustainability issues. I am sure India-SPOC will develop appropriate strategies, plans and activities for proactive engagement with palm oil producers, processors, users and other stakeholders in the value chain to address and arrest the challenges of deforestation, biodiversity loss, human and labour rights in palm oil industry in India and the region. Many congratulations and my best wishes to the leaders at Rainforest Alliance, RSPO, WWF and CRB for initiating and leading this initiative."

- Dr. Bimal Arora, Honorary Chairperson, Centre for Responsible Business and Faculty at Aston Business School, United Kingdom

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India

"As the world's largest consumer of palm oil, India could play a pivotal role in promoting the sustainable production of palm oil. India-SPOC provides an opportunity for the Indian palm oil industry to positively influence the domestic demand for sustainable palm oil."

- Mr. Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO

Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

"With approximately 98% of palm oil (crude, refined and processed) consumed in India, coming from imported sources, India-SPOC will bring a much needed dialogue of sustainable palm oil to India. On behalf of RSPO, I congratulate all of India-SPOC's founding partners and we hope the coalition will play a key role in helping achieve the shared vision of making sustainable palm oil the norm."

- Darrel Webber, Chief Executive Officer

Rainforest Alliance

"The time is right for the Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition. Palm oil is in high demand and provides a livelihood to millions of farmers and workers in the tropics. The negative social and environmental impacts from its production in South east Asia have been well publicised. A commitment from companies in India, the world's largest importer, to buy palm oil produced without those negative impacts will send a clear message through the supply chain and stimulate further progress in sustainable production practices."

- Mr. Edward Millard, Director

About Centre for Responsible Business

The Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) is an independent centre of excellence, working with business and stakeholders to promote responsible business strategies, policies and practices. For more information please visit, <http://www.c4rb.org/>

About WWF

WWF-India is a leading conservation organisation with a global network active in more than 100 countries dedicated to building a world in which humans live in harmony with nature. For more information please visit, www.wwfindia.org

About RSPO

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was formed in 2004 with the objective of promoting the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders. For more information, please visit RSPO's global website www.rspo.org

About Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance is an international nonprofit organisation working to build a future in which nature is protected and biodiversity flourishes, where farmers, workers, and communities prosper, and where sustainable land use and responsible business practices are the norm. For more information please visit, www.rainforest-alliance.org/

For further information, kindly contact:

Rijit Sengupta
Chief Operating Officer, Centre for Responsible Business
T: +91-9829285928
E: rijit@c4rb.in