

Statement from Olam

Protecting forests and areas of high conservation value and eliminating unacceptable land use practices is a priority for Olam across our agricultural supply chains worldwide and is set out in our Living Landscapes Policy. This cross-commodity Policy is focused on putting more back into food and farming systems than is taken out, and to create landscapes where prosperous farmers, thriving communities and healthy ecosystems can co-exist. It applies to our own plantations and our third-party supply chains, and represents a step-change by going beyond forest policies, which we believe are insufficient to meet the challenges of deforestation and ecosystem degradation.

We only operate oil palm plantations in Gabon and since our palm oil business began we have been committed to sustainable palm oil production and sourcing both in our own plantations and through our third party supply chain. Our 2018 Sustainable Palm Update outlines the strong progress we are making to implement sustainable practices and achieve full RSPO certification on our own plantations in line with the time-bound action plan in our Sustainable Palm Oil Policy. We are proud that our palm plantations in Gabon are held as a positive example of environmentally and socially responsible palm production.

We strongly refuted points put forward by Mighty Earth when it published its report, which contained some important factual errors and misinterpretations of our policies. We have since hosted Mighty Earth and other external stakeholders in Gabon to see first-hand our environmentally and socially responsible approach.

Each of our palm plantations has been developed in line with RSPO Principles and Criteria, with independent third-party assessments. In order to minimise ecological impacts, our palm plantations have been developed only on areas of land that were identified and mapped as savannahs, regenerated farmland and degraded logging areas; not on areas identified as High Conservation Value (HCV) forest.

Of our overall oil palm concession area of 144,000 ha in Gabon, we are protecting 72,000 ha of HCV forest – 50 per cent of the total concession area. In 2015, we presented LiDAR biomass map and data of our oil palm development as part of the High Carbon Stock Science Study; LiDAR assessment is now integrated as part of the HCSA toolkit.

Since January 2017, we have upheld a moratorium on new plantation expansion in Gabon, and we are committed to no further development or expansion until all our plantations achieve full RSPO certification in 2021.

We continue to monitor this area by working with local communities, the National Park Agency, WWF and GIS unit to control illegal access, conduct monthly field assessment, apply drone technology and a SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) system for conserving and protecting the area.

We have completed and published HCV reports for each of our oil palm concessions, with a national and international consultation process in each case. We have submitted all our HCV assessments for RSPO New Plantings since 2015 to independent peer reviewers, and we were the first company globally to use the HCV ALS review process.