Joint Press Statement

The European Commission, Indonesia, and Malaysia agree to set up a Joint Task Force to strengthen the cooperation for the Implementation of EU’s Deforestation Regulation

A mission jointly led by YAB Dato’ Sri Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Plantation and Commodities of Malaysia, and H.E. Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, facilitated by the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), was conducted to meet with the political leaders of the European Union (EU) in Brussels at the end of May. In the meetings, both ministers expressed concerns with the newly legislated EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) and reiterated the importance of commodities, particularly palm oil, to the economy and the well-being of its people in both countries in particular toward smallholders.

The European Commission underlined that its policies respond to common international commitments. The main objective would be to ensure that Europe would not drive global deforestation through its own consumption. Moreover, the EU reassured the producing countries that they would continue to be engaged during the whole process. Executive Vice President for the European Green Deal, Frans Timmermans, and the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans, and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius agreed to the establishment of a consultative engagement process with both Indonesia and Malaysia to discuss ways and practical means of the implementation of EUDR.

As a follow-up to the Joint Mission, Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director-General for the Environment of the European Commission visited Indonesia and Malaysia on 26 - 28 June 2023.

Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer met with Mdm. Musdhalifah Mahmud, Deputy Minister for Food and Agribusiness, Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, the Republic of Indonesia, and representatives of the Government of Indonesia on 27 June 2023, and YAB Dato’ Sri Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Plantation and Commodities of Malaysia, and representatives of the Government of Malaysia on 28 June 2023.

The meetings resulted in the agreement to establish a Joint Task Force comprising representatives from the governments and relevant stakeholders from both countries, including relevant commodities associations, smallholders, workers associations, and civil society organizations, amongst others to enhance dialogue on supply chain traceability and transparency.

Indonesia and Malaysia agreed that this Joint Task Force with the European Commission will focus on the relevant commodities in both countries in particular palm oil, wood, rubber, coffee,
and cocoa. When needed, matters may be addressed based on the country-specific approach in an inclusive and transparent manner under the framework of the Joint Task Force.

The Task Force will examine the situation for relevant commodities in Indonesia and Malaysia within the scope of the EUDR for the EU market.

All three partners will appoint a single point of entry and immediately discuss and conclude the TOR of the Joint Task Force. With regard to palm oil, the Secretariat of CPOPC will facilitate and coordinate with the respective officials in Indonesia and Malaysia, together with the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission to ensure the progress and advancement of the Joint Task Force to achieve the desired outcomes and a win-win solution for the successful implementation of the regulation by all parties.

The first meeting of the Joint Task Force is scheduled for the first week of August.