



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## News Release

### Wilmar and SEARRP Collaborate for Scientific Research in Forest Rehabilitation

**Sandakan / Singapore, 18 April 2022** – Wilmar International Limited (Wilmar) and the South East Asian Rainforest Research Partnership (SEARRP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as a continuation of a joint commitment to scientific research in sustainability and conservation, including a stronger emphasis on forest rehabilitation.

This is in line with Wilmar’s direction set in its wider “No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation (NDPE) policy<sup>1</sup>” as well as to contribute to building a forest positive approach that supports conservation and rehabilitation of forest areas to strengthen ecosystem resilience. About 10 per cent of Wilmar’s oil palm plantation land area, approximately 31,640 hectares, are designated as conservation areas. These conservation areas, which are about the size of Penang Island, are set aside for conservation and biodiversity protection.

General Manager of Group Sustainability at Wilmar, Perpetua George said, “Wilmar is pleased to expand our collaboration with SEARRP, one of our long-standing scientific partners, into more specific research focused on forest conservation and rehabilitation of forest quality.”

“This ongoing collaboration with SEARRP is part of an overarching approach by Wilmar to identify and mitigate negative climate impacts from our value chain. This is in line with our pledge toward developing a 1.5 degrees Celsius pathway to be achieved by COP27<sup>2</sup>. Wilmar is among the 12 largest global agricultural trading and processing companies to make this commitment during the World Leaders’ Summit on Forests and Land Use at COP26”, she continued.

Under the MoU, Wilmar and SEARRP will collaborate for a five-year term focusing on Wilmar’s NDPE commitments to advance and support scientific projects relating to the best management practices of plantation and conservation areas.

Dr Glen Reynolds, SEARRP Director, said, “We are delighted to be renewing our long-standing partnership with Wilmar. For many years now, much of the science done through SEARRP in oil palm plantations has been based on Wilmar estates – research which has directly contributed to sustainability and biodiversity conservation in agricultural landscapes. The forest restoration focus of our new agreement is very exciting, especially given the urgent need to arrest the loss of biodiversity and address the drivers of climate change.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wilmar-international.com/sustainability/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/No-Deforestation-No-Peat-No-Exploitation-Policy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.wilmar-international.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sustainability/pr---1-5-degrees-pathway-commitment-by-agri-industry.pdf?sfvrsn=891ed427\\_2](https://www.wilmar-international.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sustainability/pr---1-5-degrees-pathway-commitment-by-agri-industry.pdf?sfvrsn=891ed427_2)

He added, "Industry partnerships are crucial if the independent science we support is to provide workable solutions to some of the great environmental challenges we face, not least in the agricultural sector, and we're very much looking forward to continuing our collaboration with Wilmar that we hope and believe will generate some really excellent, impactful science."

Wilmar and SEARRP have worked together since 2006 where the collaboration between both parties to support academic research has shed light on the impact and role of sustainably managed palm oil plantations in supporting and maintaining forest biodiversity in and around the plantations.

Among the key findings of the research were a proposed forest patch size that is viable for biodiversity conservation, the importance of forest quality to increase viability for conservation and the position of a conservation area in relation to other intact forest areas in the landscape.

The partnership had also culminated in a workshop organised in 2015 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, entitled "Enhancing biodiversity conservation in the oil palm industry: Translating science into action".

## **ABOUT WILMAR'S SUSTAINABILITY**

As a leading agribusiness group, Wilmar recognises that we have a fundamental role to play in developing quality products required by the world while ensuring we have a responsible and sustainable manner of production. We adopt a holistic approach to sustainability that is fully integrated with our business model.

Guided by the philosophy that our business must enhance stakeholder value while minimizing our environmental footprint, our business practices are aligned with universally acceptable social and environmental standards. Wilmar's No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation<sup>3</sup> (NDPE) Policy and NDPE Sugar Policy<sup>4</sup>, introduced in 2013 and 2021 respectively, underpin our aspiration to make a positive impact and drive transformation across the palm oil and sugar sectors.

For more information, please visit [www.wilmar-international.com/sustainability](http://www.wilmar-international.com/sustainability).

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wilmar-international.com/sustainability/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/No-Deforestation-No-Peat-No-Exploitation-Policy.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.wilmar-international.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sustainability/policies/ndpe-sugar-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=9367bb03\\_2](https://www.wilmar-international.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sustainability/policies/ndpe-sugar-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=9367bb03_2)