



Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin
Minister of Plantation Industries and
Commodities of Malaysia

"Although GFP-SPO is developed through the palm oil lenses to measure the contribution of palm oil towards achieving sustainable development, it can actually be used as sustainability reference for other types of vegetable oils such as soya bean, rapeseed, sunflower, and others. Therefore, it is important for ECOSOC HLPF to recognize the GFP-SPO as a step forward in accepting palm oil as sustainable vegetable oil in line with the SDG principles."

Photo: Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC)

From RSPO, ISPO, MSPO - palm oil certification gets another standard in GFP-SPO

KOTA KINABALU: Palm oil certification is an unending musical chair.

When the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) came into being in 2004, the multi stakeholder grouping was expected to come up with a set of certification standards to pacify palm oils' many critics. It did. But then oil palm players themselves began to feel uncomfortable feeling that their interests were being dictated by non-oil palm members representing conservation, environment and human rights.

Indonesia, the largest palm oil producer of the world, then came up with its Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) label, followed by Malaysia and its MSPO. And now, the Global Framework of Principles for Sustainable Palm Oil (GFP-SPO).

The GFP-SPO was introduced in a webinar on July 11 at a side event during the 2022 United Nations Economic and Social Council High-Level Political Forum (ECOSOC HLPF).

The event was high on rhetoric but offers no noticeable solutions to industrial concerns such as a muddled playing field, buyers' reluctance to pay for higher sustainably produced palm oil and inhibiting compliance procedures etc.

The event was conducted by the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC) in cooperation with the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines and the International Coconut Community.

It is hailed by its promoters as a tool to be used as a common reference across different certification schemes and "applied primarily to palm oil production which anchored the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) as its base".

According to a July 12 report in The Edge, the event was graced by the presence of Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin and Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto.

Zuraida said although the GFP-SPO is developed through the palm oil lenses to measure the contribution of palm oil towards achieving sustainable development, it can actually be used as a sustainability reference for other types of vegetable oils, such as soybean, rapeseed, sunflower and others.

"Therefore, it is important for the ECOSOC HLPF to recognise the GFP-SPO as a step forward in accepting palm oil as a sustainable vegetable oil in line with the SDG principles," she said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Airlangga said the size of the global vegetable oil market is predicted to increase from 199.1 million tonnes in 2020 to 258.4 million tonnes by 2026 by taking into account the growing global population and widespread use of vegetable oils in various industries.

"As such, it is important to ensure the continuity of enough supply of vegetable oils to the global

market to prevent further price volatility and shocks to the global economy,” he said.

He said Indonesia emphasises agriculture commodities, including vegetable oils, to meet the global sustainability standard.

“In this regard, common efforts to ensure sustainability in the global vegetable oil market should be conducted in holistic and non-discriminatory manners.

“Furthermore, such efforts should broadly take into account international agreements such as the UN SDGs 2030 as well as the Paris Agreement,” he added.

Themed “Catalysing Actions for Sustainable Vegetable Oils in Support of Sustainable Development Goals”, the event served as an avenue to promote public awareness of emerging trends and actions in ensuring sustainability across all types of vegetable oils and identify opportunities for the next steps and joint efforts in promoting sustainable vegetable oils across both producer and consumers countries.

Executive director of CPOPC Dr Rizal Affandi Lukman said the council hopes that the framework can be globally considered as the foundation for the establishment of sustainability of the vegetable oil platform.

“The CPOPC stands ready to be engaged in realising the commitment towards global sustainable development,” The Edge quoted him as saying.

The event is also displaying a virtual exhibition (VE) from July 10 to 15, where 24 exhibitors and stakeholders from vegetable oil-producing countries showcase their best practices and experiences supporting the SDGs.

(The VE is available at <https://sustainablevegetableoilshlpf2022.com>)



Photo: FOOD navigator.com