

## Response from Ocho Sur

28 September 2020

The Business & Human Rights Resource Centre invited Ocho Sur to respond to allegations in the following article:

- "*Human rights defenders call on Consumer Goods Forum companies to prevent violence and killings in their supply chains*", 4 September 2020, Zero Tolerance Initiative: <http://www.forestpeoples.org/en/news-article/2020/human-rights-defenders-call-consumer-goods-forum-companies-prevent-violence>

### Ocho Sur' sent the following response:

"Ocho Sur is saddened by misrepresentations about it in some publications. Below are some interesting facts about Ocho Sur:

- In conformance with Peruvian law, Ocho Sur maintains more than 20 permits and authorizations to perform its activities.
- During the health crisis in Peru Ocho Sur has continued its operations under specific permission granted by the Peruvian authorities.
- Ocho Sur has become the largest employer in the region in which we operate. We offer good wages, fully paid housing, all meals (free of charge) and formal, electronic paycheck deposits to more than 1,700 people. The benefits of this extend to the thousands of their direct and extended family members.
- In addition to wages, Ocho Sur contributes almost 6 million soles annually to their healthcare, pensions, life insurance and payroll taxes. All this in a region where a great deal of the other employment is informal and does not pay these expenses.
- During the pandemic as prices collapsed and demand for products shrunk dramatically, and companies throughout the country were laying off employees, Ocho Sur actually increased what it pays to its people. We started by simply giving them payroll advances to send home to their families, then we started giving loans for those whose families needed more, and when their needs continued to grow, we simply gave out bonuses that never need to be paid back.... Thousands of them in total.
- A few of months ago, when we learned that, due to a lack of resources during the pandemic, medical services were no longer being provided in some of the communities (native and otherwise) in our region and those people were suffering greatly, we paid doctors and nurses to visit them. We bought the medications they needed. And we sent them in our own vehicles, using our drivers to provide care for these marginalized and forgotten communities. All of this was done in coordination with the local government.
- We offer daily free transport across the river on our boats to those who cannot afford it in the region, both with and without their produce – more than 9,000 trips per month.
- We participate in countless projects assisting neighboring governments with needed infrastructure repairs – roads, bridges, soccer fields, medical posts etc.
- With respect to our care for the environment, Ocho Sur has:
  - Focused exclusively on improving the agronomy on already planted palms – we have not expanded these areas at all and have no plans to plant any additional palms
  - Invested significantly in renewable energy projects – almost all of our operations are now powered by photovoltaics or waste to energy (mill residuals)
  - Adopted world class recycling activities using 100% of the mill outputs for beneficial re-use
  - Provided ongoing training and financial assistance to small farmers to adopt long-term agronomical practices that break the chain of slash/burn/use/abandon land
  - Maintained more than 1000 Ha of reserve areas on our property and are actively seeking more areas where we can help build and maintain preserves"