

Response to query from Business and Human Rights Centre on "Sumatra Burning: The Heart of Palm Oil", Coconuts Singapore, 24 Sept 2015

30 Sept 2015

- GAR regards the haze crisis as a very serious matter and has allocated significant resources towards the prevention, management and suppression of fires. We adopted a no-burn policy in 1997 and no development on peat in 2010. These policies apply to all our subsidiaries. Since November 2014, we have voluntarily stopped all new plantings in our concessions.
- Due to the El Nino phenomenon resulting in a prolonged dry season, fires have started outside of GAR concessions but have then spread into some of our plantations. Currently, both vegetation and soil are extremely dry and water levels in rivers and streams have fallen drastically creating a conducive environment for fires to catch and spread. Despite having prepared extra water tanks and ponds, fires have progressed into our concessions.
- Our approach to fire management takes several forms.
- Firstly, we focus on prevention through education. We have been consistently engaging with the farmers and the community in areas where we operate to educate and advocate no-burning. This preventive approach also involves ensuring all illegal fires are reported to the authorities so that they can take appropriate action.
- Secondly, we have set up a Fire Command Post at HQ in Jakarta, Indonesia to coordinate fire management and suppression with the teams on the ground. The teams work together to verify information about fire incidents. This enables the management and suppression of fires to proceed swiftly and accordingly.
- On the ground, we have put in place numerous measures to counter burning and to put out fires. These include:
 - Managing the hydrology of peat areas by rewetting the areas
 - Building fire-monitoring towers
 - Preparing Emergency Response Teams consisting of about 30 to 40 personnel each team within a 10 – 15ha area to handle fire suppression
 - Preparing water reservoirs around conservation areas to ensure adequate supply of water during a fire
 - Having fire trucks at the plantation
 - Transferring 20-ton water container tanks to areas that are burning
 - Ensuring adequate number portable pumps to be used for fire suppression
 - Using high-capacity pumps to pump water from the nearest river to wet peat areas
 - Increasing the frequency of fire patrols and involving the community in fire monitoring
 - Carrying out coordinated fire suppression with local authorities. A police report is also lodged for every incident.
- Thirdly, with regards to our third-party suppliers, GAR is currently monitoring and checking known hotspots against all our third-party suppliers' locations. We will engage pro-actively with suppliers in high-risk areas to help them build capacity in fire management, prevention and suppression.
- GAR will also continue to monitor media reports about companies allegedly involved in causing fires. In the event that a third-party supplier is identified in the reports, GAR will in the first instance engage with them to get clarification about the matter and their efforts to manage and suppress fires.
- We require our suppliers to be compliant with our sustainability policy and we are engaging pro-actively with our suppliers to help them in this. In certain situations, we have stopped trading with companies who have not been able to show compliance with our sustainability principles.



- For more information on GAR's sustainability commitments please see our updated and enhanced GAR Social and Environmental Policy at http://goldenagri.com.sg/sustainable_policies.php