

Response from Samling

24 August 2021

From: Ms. Tzee Ling Tia - Head of Sustainability Samling Group of Companies

RESPONSE TO BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTRE

We note that the Resource Centre has determined that Samling's lawsuit against SAVE Rivers bears the hallmarks of a strategic lawsuits against public participation or SLAPP and has thus been included in your database.

Samling wishes to clarify that the suit filed against SAVE Rivers was not in any way an attempt to prevent or hinder public participation in the certification process of our Forest Management Units. While we respect the concept of public participation in the certification process of our FMUs, we also reserve the right to defend our Group's reputation against allegations that are defamatory in nature.

It is our contention that the allegations made by SAVE Rivers in articles carried in their official website beginning 23 June 2020, formed an incorrect and unfairly negative impression that Samling Group did not consult with local communities in the certification process.

Indeed, when the first article appeared on 23 June 2020, the Malaysian Timber Certification Council issued a statement dated 13th August 2020 and titled "**Commentary: Processes involved in Granting Certification Under the MTCS**", which clarified that Samling had indeed satisfactorily fulfilled the requisite certification requirements.

We would also like to stress here that the suit filed against SAVE Rivers was an action of last resort after numerous attempts were made to reach out to SAVE Rivers director Peter Kallang to seek a more conciliatory resolution to the issue.

As we had stated in our press statement issued earlier this month, all our efforts to seek an amicable solution to the issue were unreciprocated and given the fact that the state of Sarawak has a one-year statutory limitation period for defamation suits, we had little choice but to file our suit before the expiry of that deadline on 23 June 2021.

We also attach here for your further information, the press statement that was issued in response to the statement from Bruno Manser Fonds regarding the same issue.

<http://www.samling.com/pdf/13%20August%202021%20Samling's%20Response%20to%20Article%20Titled%20Logging%20Company%20sues%20Environmental%20Defenders%20for%20RM5,000,000%20Published%20In%20The%20Bruno%20Manser%20Fonds%20Website.pdf>

I hope the above information have been useful. Please let us know when the above have been published on your website as we will be publishing the same onto our website as well.

Thank you.

Best regards, Z.