

# Public Letter to Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil re:

## ***Decision to Lift Stop-Work Order on Golden Veroleum Liberia – Golden Agri-Resources***

October 29, 2025

**TO: Joseph D’Cruz, Chief Executive Officer, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil**

**CC: Pravin Rajandran, Head of Grievance, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil**

**Dear Mr. D’Cruz:**

This June, the RSPO announced that it was closing post-complaint monitoring of the 2012 [Complaint](#) filed by Liberian communities and civil society against Golden Veroleum Liberia (GVL) and lifting the stop-work order issued to the company, which was the result of a 2018 RSPO Complaints Panel decision.

We, the undersigned, strongly urge the RSPO to reverse its decision and maintain the existing stop-work order on GVL until the company fulfills the conditions set by the RSPO and High Carbon Stock Approach, including restoring one thousand hectares of forest, renegotiating agreements with impacted communities, receiving the Free, Prior, Informed, Consent of rightsholders to operate on their land, and developing the required integrated conservation land-use plan.

A [February 2018 RSPO Complaints Panel decision](#) determined that GVL had not received the consent of communities to operate on their lands, employed violence and intimidation to coerce rightsholders, and failed to conduct adequate participatory mapping. As part of its decision, the RSPO placed a stop-work order on GVL expansion. In 2021, the High Carbon Stock Approach (HCSA) found that GVL destroyed 1,000 hectares of high conservation value and high carbon stock forests. The HCSA called for the RSPO stop-work order to be maintained until GVL restored 1,000 hectares of forests, developed an integrated conservation land-use plan, and renegotiated agreements with communities.

According to civil society [research](#), GVL, which is controlled by Indonesian palm oil company and RSPO member Golden Agri-Resources (GAR), has not fully implemented the 2018 Complaints Panel decision or met the HCSA conditions to lift the stop-work order despite publicly committing to do so. Furthermore, GVL has not received the Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) of several communities to operate on their lands. The RSPO’s decision to lift the stop-work order effectively allows GVL and GAR to relinquish their responsibilities toward forest protection and their obligations toward respecting communities’ rights, including the right to FPIC.

In July 2025, the [HCSA wrote to the RSPO](#) questioning the decision to lift the stop-work order and highlighting community and civil society concerns about the absence of remediation in the case.

We echo the [concerns](#) put forth by the Civil Society Organizations Oil Palm Working Group of Liberia that by lifting the stop-work order the RSPO is endangering communities and rightsholders seeking redress by creating the conditions for renewed conflict, threatening forests and biodiversity, and undermining its own legitimacy by abandoning its Principles, particularly those related to FPIC, deforestation, accountability, and community benefits.

For years, the RSPO has been criticized for not effectively implementing Complaints Panel decisions in a timely and meaningful manner, for not preventing deforestation and land rights abuses by member companies, and for not upholding its own standards. The decision to lift the stop-work order only serves to deepen mistrust from Indigenous and local communities for the RSPO and further weakens the body's legitimacy. Conversely, maintaining the stop-work order until RSPO's 2018 Complaints Panel and 2021 HCSA decisions are fully implemented can prevent further harm to rightsholders and invaluable forests and biodiversity. Such a decision would allow communities to formalize their customary land rights under Liberia's Land Rights Law and develop much-needed community-led land and forest governance amidst the last stronghold of West Africa's Upper Guinea Forest.

The world is watching.

Sincerely,

- |    |                                                                                     |    |                                                                           |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Acción Ecológica — Ecuador                                                          | 16 | Dogwood Alliance — United States of America                               |
| 2  | Alliance for Rural Democracy (ARD) — Liberia                                        | 17 | FIAN Belgium — Belgium                                                    |
| 3  | AMAN Wilayah Maluku — Indonesia                                                     | 18 | Earth Ethics, Inc. — United States of America                             |
| 4  | Amnesty International Sierra Leone — Sierra Leone                                   | 19 | EarthSight — United Kingdom                                               |
| 5  | Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE) — Armenia                 | 20 | Earth Thrive — United Kingdom/Balkans                                     |
| 6  | Asegis Community Network — Kenya                                                    | 21 | Economic Justice for Women Project (EJWP) — Zimbabwe                      |
| 7  | Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE) — Asia | 22 | Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) — Egypt                    |
| 8  | Asociación ProPurús — Peru                                                          | 23 | Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) — United Kingdom                           |
| 9  | Association for Farmers Rights Defense (AFRD) — Georgia                             | 24 | Forum Ökologie & Papier — Germany                                         |
| 10 | BankTrack — Netherlands                                                             | 25 | Foundation for the Conservation of the Earth (FOCONE) — Nigeria           |
| 11 | Biofuelwatch — Europe/United States of America                                      | 26 | Friends of the Earth (England, Wales & Northern Ireland) — United Kingdom |
| 12 | Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO) — Uganda             | 27 | Friends of the Earth Malta — Malta                                        |
| 13 | Committee for Peace and Development Advocacy (COPDA) — Liberia                      | 28 | Friends of the Earth Sierra Leone — Sierra Leone                          |
| 14 | Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ) — Nepal                   | 29 | Friends of the Earth Sweden — Sweden                                      |
| 15 | Community Empowerment for Change (CEC) — Liberia                                    | 30 | Friends of the Earth US — United States of America                        |
|    |                                                                                     | 31 | Global Rights — Nigeria                                                   |

- 32 GRAIN — Spain
- 33 Green Advocates International — Liberia
- 34 Green Development Advocates — Cameroon
- 35 Inclusive Development International (IDI) — United States of America
- 36 Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) — Philippines
- 37 Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa — Gambia
- 38 Institute for Indigenous Affairs and Development — Nepal
- 39 Jamaa Resource Initiatives — Kenya
- 40 KTNC Watch — South Korea
- 41 Lembaga Bentang Alam Hijau (LemBAH) — Indonesia
- 42 LBH ANGSA — Indonesia
- 43 Les Amis de la Terre Belgique — Belgium
- 44 Liberian Artisanal Fishers Association — Liberia
- 45 Ligue des Volontaires pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme et d'Environnement (LISVDHE) — Democratic Republic of Congo
- 46 Living Laws — Ireland
- 47 MARBE SA — Costa Rica
- 48 Milieudefensie/Friends of the Earth Netherlands — Netherlands
- 49 Mouvement Ecologique/Friends of the Earth Luxembourg — Luxembourg
- 50 Nature Talk Africa (NaTA) — Uganda
- 51 Oil Workers' Rights Protection Organization Public Union — Azerbaijan
- 52 Oyu Tolgoi Watch — Mongolia
- 53 Pastoralists Alliance for Resilience and Adaptation Across Nations (PARAAN) — Kenya
- 54 Peru Equidad — Peru
- 55 Pro REGENWALD — Germany
- 56 Rainforest Action Network — United States of America
- 57 Re-entramados para la vida, defendiendo territorios — Mexico
- 58 Rettet den Regenwald / Rainforest Rescue — Germany
- 59 Riverains Ensemble AFRIQUE — France
- 60 Sawit Watch — Indonesia
- 61 Social Entrepreneurs for Sustainable Development (SESDev) — Liberia
- 62 STAR Kampuchea (SK) — Cambodia
- 63 Sustainable Community Foundation (SCF) — Thailand
- 64 Sustainable Development Institute/Friends of the Earth Liberia — Liberia
- 65 Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER) — Switzerland
- 66 Synergie Nationale des Paysans et Riverains du Cameroun (SYNAPARCAM) — Cameroon
- 67 Tensift Regional Center for Development — Morocco
- 68 The Jus Semper Global Alliance — United States of America
- 69 Transnational Palm Oil Labour Solidarity (TPOLS) Network — Indonesia
- 70 WALHI/Friends of the Earth Indonesia — Indonesia
- 71 Women's Voice in Distress/Voix d'une Femme en Detresse (VFD) — Democratic Republic of Congo