



MEDIA STATEMENT

APRIL Denounces Court Case on Fire & Haze

'We put fires out, we don't start them'

(12th September 2005, Riau) – APRIL denounced a court case launched against the company over the Haze problem, declaring all accusations as untrue and unfounded.

“To claim that our company intentionally starts fires and causes the haze is outright fallacious,” said Mr. Canesio Munoz, General Manager of Environment and Community Affairs at APRIL. “We don’t start fires. We put them out and spend millions of dollars in fire prevention and fire fighting, and never use fire to clear land. Our accusers should have verified first on the ground where the fires are so they could have avoided this serious mistake of making erroneous allegations.”

Mr Munoz said there had been incidents of fire in APRIL concessions caused either by:

- Arson attacks by illegal loggers and squatters
- Fires that had started outside APRIL-controlled areas which spread into the concession
- Escaped cooking fires
- Dropped cigarettes

“In each case we had acted quickly, sending in our own professional firefighters to attack the fire and limit this to the smallest possible size.”

The company explains that every country that has large forest areas and seasonal dry periods experiences fires. Recently there have been major forest fires in Portugal. There are fires every year in Australia, USA, and Canada.

“In our plantations we work hard to prevent this from happening and have in place a large fire fighting capability, covering air, water and land-based response:

- Helicopter with 470-liter water bucket
- Airboat
- Full-time fire manager with international experience
- 50 professionally trained firefighters equipped with lightweight, high-pressure, water pumps and a full array of water-handling accessories.
- Supported by another 250 trained personnel

“In the last two years we have spent more than US\$1 million on firefighting equipment. Every day we undertake air and ground patrols to spot fires. When a fire is detected we immediately send in a firefighting crew to put it out.”

Mr Munoz said APRIL’s “No Burn” practice has been in place since 1994 and the company was a founding member of the Haze Prevention Group.

Furthermore, the company organizes meetings with local communities to teach them about fires, haze and land clearing. It also implements an Integrated Farming System which teaches sustainable agriculture instead of slash and burn. To date 73 villages have been involved in this program which has trained more than 2000 people.

“This clearly shows that we don’t cause the haze but actively implement a solution to it,” said My Munoz.

Company Summary

APRIL, with offices in Singapore and operations in Indonesia and China, is a leading producer of fibre, pulp and paper. APRIL operates one of the world’s largest pulp mills with an annual production capacity of 2,000,000 tonnes in Indonesia. The company is committed to protecting the natural resources in its care through sustainable management of its mills and forestry operations to benefit our stakeholders, both now and in the future.

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