

Oil Palm Industry Contributes Least To Deforestation, Says MPOC

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 (Bernama) -- The oil palm industry contributes the least to deforestation, says the Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC).

Malaysian Palm Oil Council(MPOC) Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Yusof Basiron said as the industry progressed, the question of sustainability was receiving enormous attention.

"It is to be perceived as a challenge faced by the Malaysian oil palm industry today.

"But when it comes to sustainability, many of the definitions are flawed and overfocused on oil palm, through campaigns by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) around the world.

"In the case of deforestation, oil palm is the least they need to worry about.

"As a matter of fact, deforestation is occurring in the United States and other developed countries. But not in developing countries," he added.

He was speaking to reporters after making a presentation on the "Future Demand of Palm Oil" at the three-day Palm and Lauric Oils Conference and Exhibition 2014 which began here Tuesday.

Yusof said only 0.29 per cent of the world's agricultural land is used for oil palm and Malaysian oil palm accounts for 0.09 per cent.

He also highlighted the ulterior motive being the campaigns on sustainability, which is to keep "third world" countries economically backward, so that their markets can be manipulated and exploited by developed nations.

This happened in countries like Liberia, where the NGOs went on protesting over the development of the country's agriculture (oil palm).

"The country's unemployment rate is 80 per cent and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is US\$260.

"Why are they protesting? To get the GDP down to US\$100 a year?," he asked.

He said one can only logically conclude that the anti-oil palm lobby is a western tool for economic domination, when in fact, oil palm is the very tool for development to get communities out of poverty.

He also commented on recent moves to penalise Sarawak's oil palm farmers based on the "no deforestation policy", by denying them market access.

He termed the move as very unfair and unreasonable.

"This attempt to run down the palm oil industry will only strangle the livelihood of the rural native population.

"It is very unfair to criticise the oil palm industry without any scientific basis, and only worsens the community dependent on it for their bread and butter," he said.

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