

KERUAN
LOT 4072, Lorong 24, Jalan Kuching,
Timur 3, Taman Tunku Miri,
Sarawak
Email: selungo@gmail.com



Chief Forester
David John Marsden
Wisma Samling,
Lot 296, Jalan Temenggong Datuk Oyong Lawai Jau,
98000, Miri Sarawak,
Malaysia

Miri, June 23 2020

Re: Concerns with MTCS certification process for Suling-Sela'an FMU

Dear Mr. Marsden

I am the head of KERUAN, an organisation supporting Penan communities in Sarawak. We have learnt that Samling is in the process of obtaining the certification for sustainable forest management according to the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) for the Suling-Sela'an Forest Management Unit. I am writing this letter to express the communities concerns and request information.

We at KERUAN are in close contact with the Penan communities within the Suling-Sela'an FMU. The communities are worried about the upcoming certification. These communities have repeatedly expressed their will to protect their forest and land from logging. During my last visit to the area in early March this year, the communities confirmed their position again: They demand that their area is excluded from any logging activities.

These communities within the Suling-Sela'an FMU and the government are currently implementing a community-based development and forest conservation project, the Upper Baram Forest Area. Malaysia has proposed the project to the ITTO, who is currently evaluating the project idea. The protection of the forest within the Suling-Sela'an FMU is pivotal for the success of the Upper Baram Forest Area. Without these intact forests, it will not be possible to secure international funding for the project.

As the consultations in the process of certification of the Suling-Sela'an FMU for MTCS are coming closer, the communities asked me to express their rejection of logging in their area.

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Furthermore, KERUAN requests more information on the MTCS certification. Specifically, we would like to raise the following question:

- What is the status of the certification process for the Suling-Sela'an FMU? What is the timeline for the MTCS certification process?
- The MTCS requires the free, prior and informed consent of the affected communities and the respect for customary rights. Will the consultation be in good faith, so that communities actually will have a chance to protect their forests from being logged? How does Samling guarantee the free, prior and informed consent of the communities?
- How is Samling intending to respect indigenous customary rights to land in the management of the FMU under MTCS?
- Is Samling aware of the Upper Baram Forest Area of the government and ready to protect it?

Finally, we request to receive copies of any completed Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) as well as Social Impact Assessments (SIA) for the Suling-Sela'an FMU in order to discuss the findings with the affected communities.

I am looking forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Komeok Joe
CEO of KERUAN

Copies to:

- Khairul Najwan bin Ahmad Jahari, auditor SIRIM