



Press Release

Call for Consumer Action to fight haze in Southeast Asia

20 October 2015

Consumers International (CI) expresses its deep concern about the havoc created in the region by the irresponsible burning of forests. Every year people in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are suffering under a thick haze of smog which is caused by the burning of forests for production of pulp, paper and palm oil primarily on the island of Sumatra, in western Indonesia and Borneo.

The haze is leaving millions of people at risk of respiratory and other disorders. In addition countries in the region are also suffering economic losses and environmental damage including acid rain formation and other effects.

CI along with its member organisations in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand calls for greater consumer action to address this disaster. Through this statement, CI is calling on all consumers to stop buying products produced by companies involved in the purchase or sourcing of wood, paper and/or pulp products that cause the haze.

The global body is concerned that unlike Singapore, companies in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are not declaring their source of procurement of sustainable wood, paper and/or pulp. With lack of information about which companies' activities are contributing to the haze, CI urges consumers to patronise products that carries internationally recognised green label such as Forest Stewardship Certification (FSC) or other independently verified labels that support sustainable production that does not cause harm to the wellbeing of consumers. CI believes that consumers should send a strong signal to the errant companies through their purchasing power and refuse to support companies which are contributing to this environmental disaster by their irresponsible practices.

CI also requests all governments in the region to take a tough stance against errant companies responsible for haze. Specifically, CI appeals to the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia to adopt a similar approach to that of the government of Singapore and initiate legal proceedings against companies which are among those responsible for the fires in the Indonesian island of Sumatra and Kalimantan.

Finally, CI insists that ASEAN as the responsible regional body that has set-up the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution works towards solving transboundary air pollution issues through positive actions for the betterment of consumers' health and environment.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Consumers International Kuala Lumpur Office

Ms Indrani Thuraisingam

Head of Office

indrani@ciroap.org

+603 77261599

Notes to Editors

- Consumers International (CI) is the world federation of consumer groups that, working together with its Members, serves as the only independent and authoritative global voice for consumers.
- With over 240 Member organisations in 120 countries, we are building a powerful international movement to help protect and empower consumers everywhere.
- Founded in 1960 Consumers International fights for a fair, safe and sustainable future for all consumers in a global marketplace. Effective consumer empowerment is good for consumers and good for society. Our aim is to make major positive impact in advancing consumer rights and empowerment across the world – in the global marketplace and through international policy-making forums.
- **CI Members in the region that are joining this call include:**
 - Yayasan Lembaga Konsumen Indonesia (YLKI) www.ylki.or.id
 - Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations www.fomca.org.my
 - Consumers Association of Singapore www.case.org.sg
 - Foundation for Consumers – Thailand www.consumerthai.org