



Hon. Regina Lopez  
DENR Secretary

Palawan 28 July, 2016

**RE: REQUESTING TO INVESTIGATE AND POSSIBLY HALT THE EXPANSION OIL PALM PLANTATIONS IN PALAWAN AND NATION-WIDE**

Dear Mam Gina,

...We still like to call you this way, as we have done during all these years and since the no-to mining campaign in Palawan was first launched. So, in spite of your high position in Government, we still consider you as a member of the large NGOs/POs Philippine family and, indeed, you continue to be a source of inspiration for all of us. Since you became DENR Secretary we have regained hopes that a change is still possible and that finally, after so many years of environmental plundering and socio-economic abuses in our country, a 'new era' is starting and, perhaps, if we all continue to work together, we'll be able to save the remaining Philippine forest and biodiversity hotspots.

In this respect, I would like to bring to your attention a petition being signed by more than 4,200 members of indigenous and farmers communities which have been adversely impacted by oil palm plantations in our province of Palawan. They are calling for a moratorium on any further expansion of oil palm plantations and this call is justified by well-circumstantiated reasons that are listed in the attached petition. In addition to this, we have included sufficient evidences on the impact of oil palm plantations in the accompanied DVD, which contains photos, reports, videos and previous moves that we have taken to counter oil palm expansion. Unfortunately, in spite of all documentary evidences showing the violations and illegalities committed by oil palm corporations, the previous National administration, concerned government departments such as DENR, DA, PCA and NCIP, as well as the current provincial administration, have taken no action to respond to the outcry of hundreds of affected communities, neither they have made any attempt to mitigate the adverse socio-environmental impact of oil palm plantations.

We are disconcerted and extremely preoccupied by the fact that conversion of one the last remaining lowland forest of the Philippines is being allowed in Palawan (a UNESCO Declared Man & Biosphere Reserve) in blatant violation with the national ban on the cutting of trees in timberlands and residual forest. In spite of all this, recently, a new oil palm company, know has 'Alif' has been allowed to operate in our Province.

So, by approaching You, Mam Gina, we feel confident that your administration will be able to mark the difference and finally bring to an end the blatant environmental violations committed by oil palm companies and to stop them from further expanding in Palawan, and in the Philippines as a whole.

**Here are some facts and figures:**

- There are undisputable photographic evidences showing forest clearing and tree felling by Agumil, Cavdeal, San Andres in various Municipalities: Brookes' Point, Bataraza, Quezon and Rizal (these can be emailed to you upon request).
- From what we have know, Cavdeal and San Andres has no ECC, while Agumil has received from DENR

without following due process.

- It would appear that Agumil, Cavdeal and San Andress have received no “special use permits” from FMB.
- From what we have been able to establish, CavDeal and San Andres have no ECCs, while Agumil has received from DENR the following ECCs:
  1. ECC R4B 1006 0102 covering the palm oil mill of Agumil Phils. Inc. (AGPI), issued on July 1, 2010;
  2. ECC R4B 0901 025 3909 covering oil palm plantation in: (a) Bgys. Mabini, Sagpangan and Iraan in Aborlan; and (b) So. Mariwara, Bgy. Princess Urduja in Narra;
  3. ECC R4B 0807 0178 3909 covering oil palm plantation in Bgys. Isugod, Panitian, Aramaywan and Tagusao in Quezon;
  4. ECC R4B 0807 0177 3909 covering oil palm plantation in So. Salungsong, Bgy. Iraan in Rizal;
  5. ECC R4B 0807 0170 3909 covering oil palm plantation in Bgys. Pulot Interior, Punang, Labog and Iraray in Espanola;
  6. ECC R4B 0811 327 3909 covering oil palm plantation in Bgys. Calasaguen, Maasin, Pangobilian and Samarinana in Brooke’s Pt.; and 7. ECC R4B 0901 024 3909 covering oil palm plantation in Bgys. Sandoval, Tarusan and Igang-Igang in Bataraza.
- Strangely, in a letter we received on 22 August 2013, Ricardo Calderon CESO 111 – former FMB Director stated than no palm oil applications have ever been received by his office and they have no evidence of its planting.
- A CENRO report has established the illegal encroached of oil palm plantations on Alienable and Disposable Land and on Timberland in the Municipalities of Quezon and Rizal;
- Another CENRO report establishes the illegal encroached of oil palm plantations on Alienable and Disposable Land and on Timberland in the Municipality of Bataraza;
- A criminal case was filed against Agumil Philippines by CENRO, but there has been no much follow up of this case
- A Multipartite Monitoring Team (MMT) report and independent report prepared by Charlito Nilasa of ALDAW refers to massive forest clearing and removal of riparian vegetation along the edges of Lyabongan river in Bgy. Berong (Municipality of Quezon) allegedly being carried out by Agumil Philippines Inc. The MMT also documented the illegal opening of a road along the side of the same river allegedly constructed by the same company, causing severe soil erosion and collapsing of river edges. Such findings indicate that Agumil Philippines Inc and PPVOMI oil palm companies have violated DENR EO 23 in both barangay Tagusao and Berong. The mission also found evidence of Agumil oil palm plantations expanding in the Tagbanua CADT area in Berong with no formal evidence of free-prior informed consent (FPIC) being obtained by such communities, and with no Certificate of Precondition (CP) released by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to Agumil Philippines, Inc.
- A copy of the only SEP (Strategic Environmental Plan) clearance was issued to PPVOMI (Palawan Palm and Vegetable Oil Mills Inc) oil palm company by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) for its nursery and oil mill area (about 13 hectares). No SEP clearances have been issued, instead, for the remaining thousands of hectares being converted into oil palm plantations (around 7,000 ha until present time). The development and expansion of oil palm plantations without SEP clearance is in clear violation with the key provisions of the Strategic Environmental Plan (R.A. 7611);

You can personally have a look at these evidences, which are contained in the attached DVD.

So, by approaching You, Mam Gina, we feel confident that DENR will be able to carefully look into this problem and finally bring to an end the blatant violations committed by oil palm companies and to stop them from further expanding in Palawan, and in the Philippines as a whole.

We are willing to come to Manila to discuss this matter further with your Good Office, or to meet you here in Palawan. We look forwards to hearing from you soon,

Very truly yours



**MOTALIB KEMIL**  
President

**Coalition against Land Grabbing (CALG) - Philippines**

**Our Contact Details:** please reply to John Mart Salunday (CALG General Project Coordinator): **09295723138** and Ms. Gondin Monio (CALG Secretary): **09065834194**. Our email: [calgpalawan@gmail.com](mailto:calgpalawan@gmail.com). and postal address: C/o NATRIPAL, Macawili road, Bancao-Bancao, Puerto Princesa City 5300, Palawan

## **Copy Furnished**

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