

**To:**

His Excellency Benigno Aquino III, President of the Philippines

Honorable Governor of Palawan,

Mr. Romeo B. Dorado, Executive Director of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

Chairperson - The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)

Hon. Ramon J. Paje, Secretary - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources

**Cc.**

Hon. Proceso J. Alcala, Secretary - The Department of Agriculture (DA)  
Chairperson – The Commission on Human Rights

**Stop indiscriminate oil palm expansion on indigenous peoples' land!**

Dear Excellency President Benigno Aquino III

Dear Honorable Governor of Palawan

Dear Executive PCSD Director

Dear NCIP Chairman

Dear DENR Secretary

(Few introductory words HERE about your organization)

I am deeply concerned about the escalation and highly adverse impact of oil palm development nationwide, with particular references to the indigenous communities of Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Agusan, Cotabato (Mindanao) and Palawan (a declared UNESCO Man & Biosphere Reserve). As I understand, oil palm expansion is also occupying the ancestral land of indigenous peoples without their free prior and informed consent (FPIC).

I have received disconcerting reports on the massive violation of labour standards and incidence of child labour in oil palm plantations. I understand that, according to the Philippine Oil Palm Development Plan, only 'idle' and 'underdeveloped' land should be converted into oil palm plantations. However, local indigenous people claim that oil palm expansion is bringing havoc to their lives by destroying their farmlands, hunting grounds and forest products, polluting their water sources and thus impoverishing them to an unprecedented level.

I understand that, in Palawan, oil palms are being planted on a large scale, not only in so-called "multiple/manipulative use areas", but also in "restricted", "controlled

use areas” and “traditional use areas”. This is in blatant contradiction with the rules and regulations contained in the Strategic Environmental Plan (Republic Act 7611).

I am also disturbed by the recent escalation of violence towards the opponents of oil palm plantations in Mindanao. This has led, on October 3, 2012, to the extra-judicial killing of Gilbert Paborada, an indigenous Higaonon who had led the local struggle against the A. Brown oil palm company in Misamis Oriental.

I then urge your office and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to investigate and bring to an end the ongoing human rights violations, land grabbing and harassment of indigenous Lumads by the American firm A. Brown Company, Inc.,

I also urge the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to revoke all Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECC) and SEP clearances released, so far, in connection with oil palm operations.

Finally, I urge both the National and Provincial Governments to impose a moratorium on biofuels programs and oil palm development until reliable environmental cost-benefit analysis can identify, quantify, and compare the alleged economic benefits of oil palm development with its current environmental and social costs.

Yours faithfully,