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MISGUIDED PALM OIL CAMPAIGNS WON'T HELP ORANG-UTANS, BUT WILL HARM ASIA'S POOR

"Misguided campaigns by the Melbourne Zoo, celebrities and activists lack understanding of why forest and orang-utans are being lost. It isn't palm oil it's poverty", said Tim Wilson, Director of the Intellectual Property and Free Trade Unit at the Institute of Public Affairs today.

Mr Wilson's comments follow the release of *Palming off livelihoods?*, that analyses anti-palm oil campaigns and finds that poverty is the root cause of deforestation and orang-utan population loss.

"The evidence is clear that if you want to reduce environmental degradation the best option is poverty reduction by giving allowing people, especially in poor rural communities, a sustainable livelihood".

"Sustainable development is delivered through environmental, social and economically sustainable policy solutions, not cutting off people's livelihoods".

"Millions of people are trapped in poverty in Asia, and they're trying to improve their economic wellbeing , especially in rural communities through farming. Palm oil is grown because it is an efficient, high-yield, in-demand agriculture commodity that poor farmers can grow to lift themselves out of poverty".

"Palm oil is in high demand around the world, including in other poor countries. Reduced consumption in developed countries will only lead to increased availability and consumption in the developing world, but poor farmers will simply get a smaller return".

"If palm oil is blocked other lower yield seeds will simply be produced, and they'll take up more land to produce less".

"If developed world activists want to attack the cause of deforestation and the loss of orang-utan populations they should attack poverty, not its solution – sustainable development", Mr Wilson said.

Palming off livelihoods?: The misguided campaign against palm oil can be found at www.sustainabledev.org.

For more information and media comment

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