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APRIL GROUP BUILDS ON SUCCESSFUL FIRE FREE VILLAGE PROGRAMME

Company expands Riau-based programme to include new community awareness initiative

Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau 01 February 2016 – Pangkalan Kerinci – Global pulp and paper producer Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Ltd. (APRIL Group) has expanded the scope of its successful Fire Free Village Programme, building on the positive results achieved in 2015.

Working in partnership with village leaders, community stakeholders, non-governmental organisations and enforcement agencies, the programme reduced the area burnt by fire among nine participating villages by 90 per cent from 2014 to 2015, reinforcing the effectiveness of community level collaboration and partnership to address the root causes of uncontrolled fire in Riau Province. In 2015 the programme resulted in a significant reduction in fires surrounding the Kampar Peninsula due to a combination of early detection, active suppression and the implementation of the Fire Free Village Programme.

At a launch event held at Pangkalan Kerinci, APRIL Group Managing Director Indonesia Operations, Tony Wenas, announced that this year's programme will expand to include a further 20 villages, with another 55 villages participating in the community fire awareness phase called Fire Aware Community. APRIL Group will contribute a further US\$1 million to support the expansion, investing approximately US\$30,000 per Fire Free Village participant and US\$5,000 per Fire Aware Community village participant.

"These programmes are the cornerstone of our efforts to prevent fire in the community," said Mr Wenas. "The success of the programme is based on village-level partnership and collaboration, backed by education and incentives that support the social and economic development of the community. This approach is proving to be effective in addressing the root causes of fire and haze in our communities and has attracted the interest of other organisations in Indonesia to adopt the programme," he said.

Riau interim Governor Arsyadjuliandi "Andi" Rachman commented that the reinforced programme aligns with government efforts to improve social and environmental development in villages. "This initiative deserves appreciation, not merely for the effort to prevent land and

forest fire, but also in preventing encroachment and developing positive awareness among villagers.”

Kualapanduk Village Head Tomjon, one of the 2015 Fire Free Village Programme award recipients, noted that his village is using its no-fire reward to construct a new public facility for community use. “This shows that there is real benefit in being fire-free, but the education aspect is important too. There is greater appreciation of alternatives to generating livelihood, such as rubber and fig farming.”

The Fire Free Village Programme includes five elements designed to achieve a long-term solution to fire and haze. Villages that remain fire free receive infrastructure grants, supported by community fire crew leadership training, assistance in sustainable agricultural alternatives, community awareness and education, and air quality monitoring.

This year, the Fire Free Village programme is complemented by Fire Aware Community, a new component designed to introduce communities to the concepts of fire management and fire prevention.

Fire Aware Community works with school children, women’s groups and social networks at village level to provide information about the health implications of smoke haze, the concept of sustainable agriculture alternatives, and to introduce a small incentive around improved fire management. The 55 participating villages will provide the next cohort of Fire Free Villages for the planned 2017 program.

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About APRIL Group

APRIL Group is a leading producer of fibre, pulp and paper with manufacturing operations in Pangkalan Kerinci, Riau Province, Indonesia. APRIL is a pioneer in the implementation of sustainability best practices in Indonesia’s pulp and paper industry, including the elimination of deforestation from its supply chain. APRIL Group is working towards conserving, protecting and restoring one hectare of high value conservation forest for every hectare of renewable plantation concession. Today, APRIL Group conserves more than 250,000 hectares with a further 150,000 hectares undergoing ecosystem restoration. For more information, visit www.aprilasia.com and follow Twitter [@aprilpulp](https://twitter.com/aprilpulp).