



2010

Nestlé stops purchasing rainforest-destroying palm oil

Following a short but highly effective global Greenpeace campaign targeting the Kit Kat brand, the food giant Nestlé agrees to stop purchasing palm oil from sources that destroy Indonesian rainforests.

THE THREAT

The food company Nestlé was purchasing palm oil from Sinar Mas, an Indonesian company that has been found, again and again, to be destroying carbon-rich peatlands and rainforests in Indonesia. These practices – documented by Greenpeace in satellite images and photographs – keep pushing the orang-utan closer to extinction and accelerate climate change.

THE GREENPEACE WAY

Nestlé's commitment followed eight weeks of intense campaigning that combined massive consumer pressure via social media using a carefully chosen target – the Kit Kat brand – with non-violent direct action and the on-going disclosure of evidence. Hundreds of thousands of supporters supported the campaign by emailing Nestlé, calling them or spreading the campaign message via Facebook, Twitter and other social media profiles. A Greenpeace spoof video ('Have a break?') was removed from YouTube, sparking online calls of censorship and driving hundreds of thousands of views of the video within hours of it being re-uploaded to Vimeo. In total (over all versions of the video), there have been over 1.5 million views.

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN

In preparation for these very public activities, Greenpeace used its international structure to establish that palm oil produced by Sinar Mas was indeed being used in the Kit Kat chocolate bar. Before and throughout the campaign, Greenpeace monitored the Indonesian company's practices, with teams providing satellite and photographic evidence from Indonesia. This company-specific campaign, which also saw activists drop down over shareholders' heads at Nestlé's AGM, built on the Greenpeace Forest team's ongoing lobby work to get political power holders to take the coordinated international and local political action that is needed to protect the world's forests, the rights of the people who depend on them, biodiversity and the climate.

THE POWER OF CONSUMERS

The Nestlé campaign proved, once again, that if consumers hold rainforest-destroying products to account – en masse – they have a phenomenal power. Multinational corporations such as Nestlé are in a perfect position to pressure their suppliers and competitors to follow their example, driving change through the system. Following the company's commitment, Greenpeace announced that it would be watching the company closely to make sure it sticks to its word. In 2011 Greenpeace continues to investigate and expose unscrupulous palm oil and paper companies that destroy rainforests, and to pressure the Indonesian government to act, in order to move closer to the organisation's ultimate aim: zero deforestation, globally, by 2020.

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