

From:
Sent: 21 April 2010 00:22
To:
Subject: Reply to Global Witness on Letters

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Dear Global Witness,

I refer to your email of 23 March 2010, and your letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister's Office, Building and Construction Authority (BCA) and Jurong Town Corporation (JTC).

Singapore is committed to the protection of the global environment. As you have correctly noted, Singapore plays an active role on sustainable development issues such as international co-operation in the protection of urban biodiversity, and tackling transboundary haze in ASEAN and other regional fora.

The import of sand to Singapore is done on a commercial basis. The Singapore Government is not a party to any agreement or contract for the import of sand. JTC, a statutory board under the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Singapore Government, engages sand suppliers, which are private entities, on a commercial basis to supply sand for reclamation and other development works. These sand suppliers purchase sand from local sand concession holders in various source countries. These concession holders determine the source locations and undertake the extraction.

We have always insisted that the import of sand must be carried out in accordance with the law and relevant regulations and requirements, including environmental regulations, of the source countries. JTC requires all its sand suppliers to comply with local legal procedures to extract or transport sand from the sources without causing adverse impact to the environment and in compliance with the environmental impact regulation. JTC also regularly reminds its sand suppliers about the severe contractual implications if they do not comply with regulations and environmental concerns in the source countries.

In addition, our Customs has put in place procedures to check and investigate the import of goods at the checkpoints. We also require suppliers of sand to reclamation projects to show various documents and licences from the source countries, and they shall be dealt with if there are discrepancies or irregularities.

The BCA is a statutory board under the Ministry of National Development, Singapore. As a regulatory authority on building and construction, BCA does not import sand.

You have enquired about the role of First Secretary (Administration & Consular) in the Singapore Embassy in Phnom Penh. The duties of the person holding this position include rendering notarial services, such as certifying true copies of documents.

I hope we have addressed your queries. We do not think another meeting is needed, but you can always send us any queries by email.

Regards,