Realities of Implementation:  
A Preliminary Consideration on Workers and Communities
Oil Palm Workers
Malaysian context

- Dependence on migrant workers
Oil Palm Workers

At issue

- Discrimination
- Freedom of Association
- Bondedness
- Legal status
- Contracts
- Decent wage?
- Passports withheld
- Children
- Women
- Contract workers

- Differences due to location (urban, rural), demography, management approach
• Legal “grey” areas
  – “What is the higher law?”
  – “What are our international obligations?”
  – “How do we get there?”
• Power / equity
  – Focus on the technical, rather than on social capital
  – Whither voice of workers?
• Reminder: “Sustainable development”
  – Strengthening role of workers and labour unions
  – Participate effectively in decision-making
Oil Palm Workers
What next?

Start a conversation with workers’ groups
Understand needs and concerns – migrant & local
Oil Palm Workers
What next?

Support & encourage research
“Another way of seeing”
Oil Palm Smallholders
Malaysian context

- Vibrant and diverse situations
  Location, ethnicity, access to land/capital/assistance etc
Oil Palm Smallholders
At issue

Native land, customs, culture
Incentive to change?
Impacts of shift to OP?
Cost of certification?
Expansion
Who manages?
Loyalty to certified mill
Premium?
Benefits of BMP
Support?
Oil Palm Smallholders
Review

- Small-scale have positive development outcomes
  - Supported by various studies
- OP the “runaway” crop
  - Who’s regulating what? (from Adat to the State)
- Adaptive capacity
  - “Sustainable”?
Thank you