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Palm oil and its importance from food safety and nutrition perspective

Palm oil is the world's most traded vegetable oil. 85% of the oil is used for food. It is therefore imperative that the highest standards of food safety and quality should be adopted. This high standard for food can only be achieved by an effective partnership between government regulators and producers. Oil palm plantations cover 16.4 million hectares worldwide which is only 0.3% of the world's agricultural land. Nevertheless, oil palm has adopted environmental sustainability standards as a key driver. In Malaysia, oil palm cultivation has long advocated sustainable farming practices. The research and development activities engrained within the industry also ensure the industry remains a leader in the production of edible oil. The global market today is facing a potential crisis in terms of ensuring food security. The challenge is to produce and supply safe and nutritious food in a sustainable way for a growing population, which is projected to reach 9 billion by 2050. While demand for food is rising, the amount of land suitable for food production is likely to be limited, mainly through pressures from other uses and climate change. This paper will address some of the steps being considered to overcome these challenges.

Biography

Kalanithi Nesaretnam completed her PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at University of Reading, UK in 1996. She is currently a Minister at Malaysian Embassy based in Brussels, Belgium. She started her career at Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) as a Scientist studying the effects of palm oil and its phytonutrients in nutrition and health. She has a number of patents and several publications to her credit and is best known for her contribution to the field of research in Tocotrienols and Breast Cancer. She was awarded Gold Medal for excellence in research by MPOB in 2001 and won prestigious World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Best Woman Inventor in 2006. She was a founding member of Society for Free Radical Research (SFRR) and is the Past-President for SFRR Asia.

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