

## “Saving Indonesia’s Remaining Forests Can No Longer be Delayed”

-The Coalition for Saving Indonesian Forests and Global Climate-

28 January 2013. The Coalition for Saving Indonesian Forests and Global Climate questions the government’s pro-poor and pro-environment commitment. Implementation of measures to save Indonesia’s remaining forests contained in the REDD+ National Strategy is threatened as a REDD+ institution mandated therein has not been established while the operational term of the REDD+ Task Force has already expired.

Adding to this critical situation, unless the moratorium is extended, it could expire on 20 May 2013 before it has delivered on its objectives. Indonesia’s forest area is shrinking fast each year while local governments are undermining the moratorium by redefining large areas of forest to non-forest so that they are not protected by the moratorium, as well as planning or permitting huge food and agriculture developments. The Province of Papua is a good example of this tragedy. The most recent indicative map of moratorium (PIPIB 3rd Revision) analyzed by Greenpeace shows that there has been an alteration of forest function from that of protected forest to production the size of 339,791 Ha.

The moratorium so far has also not been able to fundamentally improve Indonesian forest governance because its lifespan is limited to only two years. In Indonesia, the size of forest area that enjoys legality of status and has been properly gazetted is only 14%. Besides, until 2012, only 14 provinces have already had a Regional Regulation on Provincial Spatial Planning (RTRWP), which serves an important role to control and secure forest area from ‘license sale’ conducted by regional governments. Such poor forest governance has led to proliferation of forestry conflicts. The National Forestry Council (DKN) records ongoing forest management conflicts in 19,420 villages in 33 provinces throughout Indonesia, as shown in cases like Mesuji, Senyerang and Pulau Padang. The total area in dispute is the highest compared to other agrarian sectors, covering more than 1.2 million hectares (HuMa, 2012).

On the other hand, we have been witnessing massive disasters due to the shrinking of forest that serves as water catchment area and supports other ecological functions. Floods in Jambi, Central Kalimantan and the massive one in Wasior, Papua, should have been considered a wake-up call for forest governance sector. Recent floods in Jakarta, partially caused by deforestation to the mountain sources and banks of the 13 rivers that flow into Jakarta, provide a further reminder to the government of the consequences of not following through on their commitment to save the remaining forests.

However, each measure to save forests continues being impeded. The existing moratorium was delayed and seriously weakened by heavy lobbying from industry and other government ministries. For example, the Presidential Instruction included exemptions for the exploitation of energy resources like coal. In addition to poor legal status and unclear task division, a mandate to review licenses is neither included nor regulated in the current Presidential Instruction. There is also no protection for the

millions of hectares of peatland – crucial ecosystems for endangered species like Sumatran tigers and orangutans, and Bornean orangutans, as well as thousands of communities who depend on the peatlands for their livelihood, .

Meanwhile, the REDD+ National Strategy was prepared with an aim to improve Indonesian forest governance fundamentally and comprehensively. The preparation process was relatively transparent and has involved relevant stakeholders. It acknowledges that currently Indonesian forest governance is facing acute problems, which require extraordinary solutions, aside from ‘business as usual’ measures. However, this strand of effort is also under attack. The REDD+ National Strategy, which was to be issued in the form of presidential regulation, is now only decided by a Decree of the Head of Task Force for the Preparation of REDD+ Institution (SK No.02/SATGAS REDD+/09/2012), clearly weakening its legal status.

In light of such situations, the Coalition urges the government to immediately undertake measures to fundamentally and comprehensively improve forestry governance by strengthening and extending the moratorium policy in accordance with pre-defined performance standards (performance-based moratorium). The Government should also implement the REDD+ National Strategy comprehensively to respect the rights of indigenous people and local communities that has led to massive land conflicts and brought Indonesia’s forests, and the peoples and species that depend on them, to the brink of destruction.

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