



Mr. H. MS Kaban, SE, MSi  
The Minister of Forestry,  
Republic of Indonesia  
Mangala Wanabhakti Building  
Jakarta Indonesia

and

Mr. Teguh Ganda Wijaya  
Chief Executive Officer  
Asia Pulp & Paper,  
BII Plaza, 2nd Tower, 15th & 18th Fl,  
Jl. MH. Thamrin No. 51  
Jakarta 10350, Indonesia

June 16<sup>th</sup> 2009

Dear Mr. Kaban and Mr. Wijaya,

We are writing on behalf of the IUCN/Species Survival Commission's Primate Specialist Group to express our opposition to the clearing of a forest concession critical to the survival of Sumatran orangutans (*Pongo abelii*) in Jambi Province.

We understand that a joint venture company involving Asia Pulp and Paper/Sinar Mas Group (APP) plans to clear the largest portion of natural forest remaining in Jambi outside the Bukit Tigapuluh National Park, known as the former PT Dalek Hutani Esa concession. The joint venture company would then replace this High Conservation Value forest with *Acacia* pulpwood plantations.

The Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme (SOCP), operating under a 1999 memorandum of understanding with the Indonesian government, has been successfully releasing orangutans in Bukit Tigapuluh since 2002. SOCP is a collaboration between the Ministry of Forestry's Department of Forest Protection (PHKA), the PanEco Foundation, Yayasan Ekosistem Lestari and the Frankfurt Zoological Society.

The practice of reintroducing formerly captive orangutans into the Bukit Tigapuluh forest followed IUCN guidelines as decreed by Ministry of Forestry Regulation Number 280/KPTS-II/95. Many of the more than 100 orangutans released by the programme are now well established in the concession.

Allowing these orangutans' new refuge to be converted to pulpwood plantations would jeopardize the only programme in existence that is establishing a new population of Sumatran orangutans in the wild. Ensuring the viability of this population is imperative; the Sumatran orangutan population is dwindling at an alarming rate and is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN Red List. The wild population is now fewer than 6,500 individuals. In addition, allowing this forest conversion undermines the 2007-2017 Strategy and Action Plan for Orangutan Conservation endorsed by the Republic of Indonesia, Forestry Ministry Regulation Number: P.53 / Menhut-IV/2007. This Action Plan states that in support of the return of orangutans to their natural habitats, Indonesia agrees to:

- Compile guidelines for the reintroduction and release of orangutans into their natural habitats, including accurate assessments of the viability of the original habitat.

- Find and determine compact and secure locations for releasing orangutans into the wild in both Sumatran and Kalimantan habitats, so that orangutan rehabilitation centres would no longer be needed by 2015, whether in Sumatra or in Kalimantan.

If the government of Indonesia approves the clearing of a forest that less than 10 years ago it endorsed as a release site for orangutans, this is a clear violation of the above Strategy and Action Plan. We respectfully urge the Ministry of Forestry to take all necessary steps to place this concession under permanent protection within the extended boundary of Bukit Tigapuluh National Park for the sake of the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Programme.

Respectfully,



On behalf of the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group

Dr. Russ Mittermeier, (Chair) President Conservation International  
Dr. Anthony Rylands, (Deputy Chair) Conservation International  
Dr. Andrew Plumptre, Wildlife Conservation Society  
Dr. Barbara Fruth, Max Planck Institute  
Dr. Ben Beck, Great Apes Trust of Iowa  
Dr. Liz Williamson, (Great Ape Coordinator) University of Stirling  
Dr. Marc Ancrenaz, KOCP  
Dr. Tara Stoinski, Zoo Atlanta  
Dr. Tatyana Humle, Kyoto University  
Professor Christophe Boesch, Max Planck Institute  
Professor John Oates, Hunter College  
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