

REMARKS BY
MINISTER OF FORESTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDONESIA
AT THE INTERIM-CGI MEETING
Jakarta. 23-24 April 2001

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to the CGI forum for giving me the opportunity to report on the progress in the implementation of the commitments in the forestry sector.

Sustainability of the Indonesian Tropical Rain Forests is considered being our ultimate goal ensuring life supporting system, social and economic functions. It is our conviction that **no forest means no future**. To overcome the problems encountered in forest sector development we have to improve the policy framework.

The forest sector problems are of inter-sector nature and should be on the agenda of various Ministries. For that reason, an Interdepartmental Committee on Forestry (IDCF) was established as a Governmental coordinating mechanism. To create a more dynamic IDCF, the active support of private sector and NGOs is necessary. A multi-stakeholder forum in cooperation with IDCF should, therefore, be established taking into account the important role of the Provincial and District Governments and all concerned parties at these levels, in line with decentralization and regional autonomy. Over the past six months, efforts have been made to revitalize the IDCF. These include more regular meetings by IDCF government representatives as well as broader involvement of NGOs and civil society in IDCF activities.

A new forestry policy is needed to strengthen the role of forest resources in supporting sustainable development. This policy should, therefore, be developed and shared by stakeholders in Indonesia. Such policy should be established in a participatory and transparent way which follow the internationally agreed concepts of the national forest program (NFP).

As we understand, there are several issues, which have to meet the requirements of our national forest program. Particular issues like forest fires and illegal logging are already part of the integrated action plans as we stated in the CGI X. However, judged by various criteria, I should admit that until recently progress has fallen far short of the objectives set by us. Although the outcome of these past six months has been disappointing, we believe that we have now initiated a process in partnership with major national and international stakeholders in Indonesian forests that translate our objectives into sustained and lasting action in a more systematic framework.

Allow me now to brief you on the progress as follows:

Concerning **illegal logging**, I would like to point out that the Ministry of Forestry has taken serious action by submitting some cases against illegal loggers to the police for further judicial process. The illegal logging is committed to satisfy the overcapacity of wood processing industries. The measures taken by the Government include operations in conservation areas, such as Leuser and Tanjung Puting National Park. Several suspects have been identified and handed over to the police and some of them have been put on trial.

I would also like to draw your attention to our recent field inspections in Gunung Leuser National Park on 20th April 2001 and in Tanjung Puting National Park on 21st April 2001. I personally carried out the inspections with my senior staff in order to prepare for further action to be taken against those who perpetrate illegal logging in those reserves, in the near future.

To combat illegal logging, Indonesia is also seeking political support from importing countries which should find ways to discourage the import of illegal wood. This also counts for typical producer countries through which illegally logged wood from Indonesia is traded. A closer cooperation of producer and consumer countries would be more effective to stop illegal logging. This cooperation should include the international wood industries primarily in East Asia. These industries have already organized buyers group, which are committed to support Sustainable forest management reflected by their purchasing policies.

However, personally I would like to see a more severe pronouncement of sentences. I am convinced that illegal logging is a serious crime that has negative impacts on our ecosystem and economy. We realize that the prosecution of illegal loggers is beyond the responsibility of the Ministry of Forestry and largely depends on the existing judicial system. In this regards, the President Republic of Indonesia has ordered the Minister of Justice and Human Rights, the Attorney General and the Chief of National Police to re-open the case of Tanjung Puting National Park. In a compliance with the action undertaken we proposed to list *Ramin (Gonystvlus spp.)* in CITES Appendix 3. To ensure further conservation efforts of the species, we issued a Ministerial Decree No. 127 concerning Moratorium on Ramin Trade. Export quota will be reserved for *Ramin* from legal harvesting operations that have been independently verified as sustainable distribution which instructs the Coordinating Minister of Politic, Social and Defense, the Chief of National Police, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, the Attorney General, the Chief of Army, Minister of Forestry, Minister of Industrial and Trade, and Minister of Transportation and Telecommunication to take any necessary actions to stop illegal logging, particularly in the Leuser and Tanjung Putting National Parks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Touching upon **forest fires**, we are aware that fire is a great destroyer of forests resulting in environmental disturbances, degradation of biological diversity, and social welfare. Forest fires create a catastrophe in Indonesia, which last occurred in 1997/1998, led to serious economic and environmental problems in our country, and in our neighboring countries, due to the

creation of transboundary pollution. Hence, to combat forest fires, some measures have already been taken, among others apprehending those illegally set fires in the context of land clearing.

To anticipate a El-Nino, which may result in further large forest fires, we intend to strive towards *zero-burning* policy as far as possible. However, we must be realistic in considering the variety of ecosystems as well as the socio-economic conditions relevant to implement this policy. Our current focus, therefore, is zero bad-burning.

Last month, we invited concessionaires and plantation companies to our ministry to sign an agreement not to use fire to clear land. We have also developed a promising fire response procedure in West Kalimantan and in South Sumatra, we now have a specialized forest fire brigade. We now hope to replicate these promising pilots in other fire-prone areas.

We also consider that *fire prevention* is better than suppression. As an effort, we will strengthen the early warning system and encourage more community involvement. Currently we are discussing these issues with the local governments and communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me now, to embark on the forest industry. There is a significant gap between forest based industries capacity and potential sustainable supply of raw material from natural forest, which will in turn harm both industries and forest resources. To solve this problem, the government started a process of restructuring, downsizing and possibly closing down some industries.

As the first step, the Government has undertaken an inventory of all registered forest industries at both provincial and district levels in 2000. In the year 2001, a wider forest industry inventory covering both registered and unregistered wood mills has been initiated involving the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the National Statistics Agency (BPS). The results of inventory will determine further actions in restructuring forest industries.

The Government of Indonesia has identified 128 companies as heavily indebted forest industries. Some of those companies having expired industrial permits, damaged or under stocked forest resources are to be closed down.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On forest inventory, the government is re-assessing forest resources using satellite imageries. The results are accessible to the public. The government is also assessing forest land to be reforested and rehabilitated. These areas cover approximately 24 million hectares, consists of 15.5 million hectares of production forest and 8.5 million hectares of protection and conservation forests. We carry out regular updating of forest resource information. With regard to the need of increasing transparency on forest resource information, the Ministry of Forestry has established a website (<http://mofrinet.cbn.net.id>). We have revised past estimates of forest inventory to more reliably reflect actual forest cover and deforestation.

Ladies and Gentlemen.,

With respect to forest conversion, I would like to emphasize that it is limited to designated areas. However, many forest land which has been assigned to be converted to estate crops and other purposes have been left and become unproductive secondary forests or worse bare lands. The Ministry of Forestry is taking back these areas to be reforested.

To avoid further improper land conversion the Minister of Forestry has instructed the Governors and Regents to implement the moratorium on natural forest conversion for estate crops development under the Ministerial Decree No. 603/2000. In addition, the government is undertaking the evaluation of on-going forest conversion.

To ensure the implementation of the moratorium on conversion of natural forests, the Central Government is promoting a mutual understanding among Central, Provincial and District Governments taking into account the decentralization processes. At this point, I would like to stress our concern to ensure that decentralization enhances rather than threatens the goal of sustainable forest management, ranging from poverty alleviation and ecosystem integrity to economic efficiency.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me elaborate on land tenure as one of the most important issues concerning sustainable forest management. It is an institutional arrangement,, which secures the relations between individuals or groups on forest resources over the long-term. This arrangement might have a significant role in ensuring the achievement of sustainability of forests. In fact. "no forest, no future". We recognize the importance of two inter-related dimensions to forest and tenure tenurial security and tenurial equity.

We have identified some actions that need to be undertaken in relation to land tenure including: community participation in forest tenure policy development as well as meaningful access to forest resources in their village areas, identification of adat lands, regulations, public consultations,, and joint developed of logical frameworks for setting up programs and actions to be implemented. The low-cost community forest (Hutan Kemasyarakatan) program has provided heartening evidence of poverty alleviation, conflict resolution.' reforestation and bottom-up collaboration among local people and government forestry agencies, notably in Sesaut in Lombok and Gunung Betung in Lampung.

To reduce conflict over forest resource allocation rights, one of our priorities is to push for greater transparency in the licensing process for forest utilization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude my remarks, allow me to highlight an outstanding practice of sustainable forest management in Indonesia. I refer to Wanagama Research And Education Forest in Gunung Kidul, Yogyakarta, which in the past was barren and in a critical condition. With diligent efforts of Professor Oemi Hani'in for about 35 years, the area has turned into healthy forest with no trace of the previous condition. Currently, many species from all over Indonesia are found in the area of 600 hectares.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my appreciation for all continuous supports that have been rendered to us by the international communities especially donor countries. Those assistances will certainly contribute to the achievement of sustainable forest management in Indonesia.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

MINISTER OF FORESTRY

Marzuki Usman