

Tuesday, 6 February 2007 - UNEP Press Briefing during GC 24

Title: **The Last Stand of the Orangutan:
State of Emergency – illegal logging, fire and palm oil in
Indonesia’s National Parks**

Format: Media briefing and report launch

Panelists: H.E. Rachmat Witoelar, Indonesian Environment Minister (to be confirmed)
Achim Steiner/Shafqat Kakakhel
Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director General, UNESCO (tbc)
Christian Nellemann, UNEP- GRID Arendal (main author)
Melanie Virtue, UNEP – GRASP
Nick Nuttall, UNEP spokesman

Target audience: Press, Ministers, government officials of Asian, European and African countries.

Date: Tuesday, 6 February
Time: 13.15 – 14.00 (exact start time tbc)

Summary:

A UNEP Rapid Response Assessment will be launched. It has been conducted by GRID Arendal on behalf of GRASP, the UNEP and UNESCO lead Great Apes Survival Project. It uses the latest information from the Indonesian government and satellite imagery to show beyond any doubt that illegal logging, fires and plantations are now encroaching extensively into national parks - the last strongholds of the orangutan and other wildlife.

The driving force behind this destruction is not impoverished farmers, but what appears to be well-organized commercial operations with heavy machinery and strong international links to the global markets.