



**DEPARTEMEN KEHUTANAN
DIREKTORAT JENDERAL**

PERLINDUNGAN HUTAN DAN KONSERVASI ALAM

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**STATEMENT
BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA**

**ON THE FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON GREAT APES AND THE FIRST MEETING
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GREAT APES SURVIVAL PROJECT (GRASP)**

**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Firstly, on behalf of the Government of Indonesia, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its hospitality and its excellent preparation of the hosting this important meeting. We would like also to thank UNEP and UNESCO for making this meeting possible and enabling us to attend this very important meeting. Indonesia would like to reiterate its commitment to actively take roles in the conservation of great apes and take part in this meeting. The Government of Indonesia agrees to work in this meeting as a partner besides United Nations agencies and bodies, non-governmental organizations, scientists, representatives of private sectors and local communities to exchange information, consider and adopt key documents and decisions and present action oriented commitments to ensure the long-term survival of the great apes and their habitat

Mr. Chairman,

As we are all aware, Indonesia is the major range State of the orangutan which is now considered to be two species, the Sumatran orangutan *Pongo abelii*, now occurring only in the northern part of Sumatra, and the Bornean orangutan *Pongo pygmaeus*, that still occurs in many scattered parts of Borneo. They are regarded as 'flagship' species that provide a symbol to raise awareness about conservation, and to stimulate funding and action for conservation. Like other great apes, orangutans play a key role in maintaining the health and diversity of tropical forests. We also realise that they are of great scientific interest, representing a branch of great ape evolution distinct from the African great apes, that they are relevant to forest management, and that they have potential as a tourism icon for the region.

Unfortunately, the number of wild orangutans has declined continuously over many years with the loss of lowland forests, but there has been a rapid increase in the rate of loss in recent years. The 2002 edition of the IUCN Red List species recognized Sumatran orangutan as Critically Endangered whereas the Bornean orangutan has been listed as Endangered. In comparison, the African great apes (chimpanzees and gorillas) all listed as Endangered. A number of taxonomic changes have become widely accepted in the last few years. These include recognizing the orangutan as two distinct species (namely Sumatran and Bornean) and also recognizing the gorilla as at least two separate species. Nevertheless from an Indonesian viewpoint it appears there are still large gaps in knowledge of the population status of some African ape species in

some areas and few estimates of total population numbers exist for them. Nevertheless, it seems that numbers of orangutans, especially the Sumatran species, remain far fewer than those of Gorillas and Chimpanzees generally and the threats they face are certainly no less urgent.

Key threats to the orangutan include habitat loss, disturbance and fragmentation, caused by conversion of natural forest lands as their prime habitat, forest fires, illegal logging, encroachment, peatland and/or swamp forest drainage, mining and poor silvicultural practices by logging concessions and trade.

Mr. Chairman,

Indonesia recently organized a Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) for its remaining orangutan populations in January 2004. The PHVA was carried out to ascertain current population and habitat status and to develop important conservation strategies for these threatened species and their habitat. Orangutan population and life history data were integrated with assessment and prediction of human-based threats, such as current and projected land-use patterns.

Currently in Sumatra it is estimated that there are about 7,300 Sumatran orangutans in at least 13 geographically separated sub-populations. Of these populations, only 7 are estimated at 250 or more individuals and only 4 at over 500 individuals. Modeling work carried during the PHVA workshop found that orangutan populations of 500 are demographically and genetically stable and may contribute to the long-term conservation of these species. Populations of 250 have a very high probability of survival in the absence of human-related mortality, habitat loss or unforeseen catastrophic events, but will be markedly reduced in size and lose substantial genetic diversity

Bornean orangutans were estimated at the PHVA to a number around 57,000 in numerous fragmented and scattered populations and also including some 13,000 in neighbouring Sabah (Malaysia) and up to 1,000 or so in Sarawak (also Malaysia). In addition, some recent scientific works suggested that there are three sub-species within Bornean orangutan. These three subspecies were subsequently adopted at the orang-utan PHVA and are now generally accepted worldwide. The estimates of total numbers of Bornean orangutans resulting from the PHVA workshop are noticeably higher than previous estimations of total numbers remaining. This does not, however, reflect an increasing population. It simply reflects considerably more survey effort, much improved remote sensing techniques and much greater accuracy in the methods currently being used for surveys.

The largest population (about 32,000) is found in central-southern Kalimantan where the majority habitat is peat-swamp forest. The least known populations are in north-western Kalimantan, north of the Kapuas river

Recognizing the importance of these species, many efforts and measures for the conservation of the species have been taken to save them. These include the

establishment of protected areas (e.g. national parks) covering their natural habitat; law enforcement to stop illegal logging, hunting/poaching, and illegal trade; and rehabilitation and reintroduction programs. These efforts, however, will come to no end if they are not part of a systematic and prioritized approach.

Mr. Chairman,

At this juncture, I would like to briefly report the current strategy for the conservation of orangutan. The orangutan conservation strategy is aimed at ensuring the long-term survival of both species by maximizing protection of sufficiently large populations, prioritized according to viability in the long term and their taxonomic and ecological uniqueness, through the establishment of new or extended protected areas. This strategy is partly in line with the implementation of the Decision taken by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its 7th meeting, on Protected Areas. An initiative is being developed to set up new rules and guidelines on the incorporation of "High Conservation Value Forests" (HCVF) into the protected areas network. These proposed rules and guidelines are specifically intended to improve protection of biodiversity, including orangutans and their habitats in the logging concessions and other production forests. Furthermore, population that resides at outside protected areas will be closely monitored and the protected area network will be expanded to include as many such populations that are considered potentially viable in the long term as is possible.

In addition, the Government of Indonesia encourages more research on genetic diversity and medical aspects of orangutans (especially wild orangutans) in order to ensure sufficient and appropriate subpopulations are adequately protected and to continually refine its policies on rehabilitation and reintroduction programs.

Logging concession certification, in line with the Sustainable Forest Management has been implemented voluntarily for logging companies. This policy is imposed in order to fulfill the growing market demands on the timber that is produced sustainably. This policy may not directly correlates with the orangutan conservation strategy, but it will strongly complement the conservation endeavors.

Policy on conservation concession, in which a private company or NGO is given a concession for restoring degraded logged over forests and managing it for conservation purposes, is being developed. Concession may also be given to such a company or NGO to manage for conservation purposes a forest area that has initially been allocated for timber production. This program will support the wildlife corridors development and will strongly benefit orangutan conservation.

To support this strategy, research on the genetic and diseases are equally important. This will be complemented by in situ habitat and population protection and monitoring. It is also important to mention that the Government of Indonesia has invested tremendous resources for Law enforcement to curb illegal logging and associated illegal trade in orangutan. Ex situ conservation, which consists of rehabilitation program and zoos management, in relation with reintroduction program, will also be part of this strategy.

Mr. Chairman,

Repatriation, which refers to the return of Indonesian orangutans from other countries on being proven to have been illegally imported from Indonesia is also among the issues being taken into consideration. At present we can give examples of about 140 individuals in Thailand (almost all of which are currently considered to be Bornean in origin) , at least 6 Sumatran orangutans and an unknown number of Bornean orangutans in Malaysia (currently at Malacca Zoo having been transferred there from A'Famosa resort and Kuala Lumpur Bird park). According to the CITES regulations, these orangutans should be repatriated to their sites of origin. One of the concerns for the "Return to the Wild" option in the IUCN Guidelines for the Placement of Confiscated Animals, is the source of the confiscated animals. If the precise provenance of the confiscated animals is not known (they may be from several different sites of origin), or if there is any question of the source of animals, supplementation (i.e. introduction into existing wild populations) may lead to inadvertent pollution of distinct genetic races or subspecies. However, orangutans only come from Sumatra or Kalimantan, and there is no difficulty to know the sites of origin by using DNA test (assuming we do the research and obtain reliable genetic profiles of orangutans from each of the different regions within Indonesia and within Borneo). If these animals are to be repatriated they should undergo thorough quarantine to prevent the import of disease.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like, in this precious opportunity, to draw your attention on our future plans, which covers also challenges we are now facing, the opportunities and the actions to fulfill the objectives of the conservation of orangutan.

The challenges facing the conservation include current transition on political shift from heavily centralized to decentralized government that put more authorities to the district level. During the transition process, there have been growing concerns over the sustainability of the natural resources utilization, including forest management of orangutan importance. Local governments take into account forest resources merely as an economic asset to support local development, with no or little consideration on the ecological and social impacts from the exploitation.

Another challenge is dealing with economic development to supply global market, e.g. from oil palm, mineral and timber. Indonesia and Malaysia currently account for 83% of global production and 89% of global exports of palm-oil and demand for the product is forecast to double by the year 2020. The development of palm-oil plantation involves the total clearance of all forests on estate lands and their replacement with a monoculture that supports very little biodiversity. This is a major issue challenge to conservation in the region but one that is gradually starting to be examined and addressed. Problems associated with timber production, such as illegal logging and deforestation and mining have also become major issues in forest conservation as the main orangutan habitat.

Mr. Chairman,

Funding for conservation remains scarce, insufficient and both time consuming and costly to even attempt to obtain. A few larger funding sources have appeared in recent years, one of note is the CEPF but since funding sources such as these are so few and far between, they fuel intense competition between agencies, who are encouraged to fight amongst themselves, in order to get access to them. This is not conducive to conservation. It wastes immeasurable precious resources in time, duplication of effort, secrecy and in some cases outright aggression and deceit. Some major donors also require much of the eventual donations to be repatriated to their country of origin, by purchasing goods or services from said country. Often, only a relatively small proportion ultimately benefits the destination country.

The total amount of funding available to conservation must be dramatically increased and more easily accessible. There should also be checks and monitoring systems introduced to ensure that they are distributed in the most efficient way possible, to those bodies likely to use them in the most effective way and to achieve optimal results, as opposed to those with the greatest overheads and most wastage to mere administration.

Mr. Chairman,

The human populations in all the Great Ape range states continue to grow exponentially and the encroachment into the forest estate happens at an alarming rate. The conservation concept must be integrated within all aspects of the general development process. The integration of conservation and development means that ecological principles and the existential rights of wild species are accepted as major guidelines, in all aspects of development planning and implementation. Successful integration requires that development must also serve the interests of wildlife conservation in order to keep the world habitable for humans too. The education of people in ethics and ecology may be most efficiently achieved through a participatory approach; people empowerment, economic alternatives for people who live near orangutan habitat, advocacy to avoid the potential dangers or health consequences of ape handling, consumption of their meat and the destruction of their habitat, and to encourage respect for law enforcement. These are just some examples to raise widespread public awareness of the need for protection of the apes.

Clearly then the question is not one of people versus wildlife. Both need sustainable access to a wide range of natural resources in order to survive and the only way to ensure this is to strictly protect those resources for the ultimate benefit of all.

Mr. Chairman,

Those are some of important challenges we are now facing and which need to be properly addressed. The following opportunities, however, provide some ways and facilitate the problem solving.

Decentralization, in the transition years, has created some concerns over the forest sustainability. However, we are all optimistic that greater accountability and transparency, combined with the freedoms granted and their subsequent responsibilities under regional autonomy legislation will produce a regional political environment that is far more conducive to conservation.

Greater international support is naturally welcome, and needed, if we are to stand any chance of conserving the Great Apes in the coming decades. It is well known that the vast majority of Great Ape range states remain so-called "developing" countries, and do not have large expendable resources that can be steered towards conservation. If GRASP and other international bodies are able to assist with generation of funds and resources, and identifying to where and how such resources should best be directed, then it should be a great help. What we must be very careful to avoid, however, and many in the audience would probably agree with this, is that international bodies such as these actually become a 'drain' on these already limited conservation resources.

Mr. Chairman,

Management, including responsibility in the management, of protected areas and wildlife is now more opened and distributed to many stakeholders through the enactment of Ministerial Decree, called "Collaborative Management". A number of collaborative programs in several National Parks have been initiated. These developments are seen as potentially extremely positive, opening the door to new ideas and new ways of funding and managing protected areas. It is clear that Indonesian government funding and management of protected areas, if carried out alone, has so far failed to meet expectations. The Government of Indonesia is therefore far more open to non-governmental bodies to take far more active and influential role in conservation management than has been previously possible. Collaboratively managed, designed and funded projects however, seem to have considerable potential and should be fully explored and tested....and if necessary refined further to improve their effectiveness.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the funding issues, trust fund development has been one of the opportunities to address conservation problems. Simply providing funding for conservation is not the answer in itself. It is relatively easy to make even very large sums of money disappear in the name of conservation whilst still seeing few or no results on the ground. Sadly, there is also sometimes intense competition for limited financial resources causing friction and conflict both between and within conservation organizations. This is an unavoidable by product of the way that funds are disseminated, as requests for proposals for limited funds necessarily result in secrecy and competition among those that hope to win those funds. It is difficult to see a way of satisfactorily solving this problem, unless the amount of funding can be increased and more people or organizations could be considered eligible. A trust fund would be one way of attempting to alleviate this problem. By accumulating funding into a single pot, which is potentially available to anyone and everyone who has a good initiative for conserving the Great Apes, it might be hoped that:

- 1) competition can be reduced, and hence collaboration and cooperation improved, and
- 2) the funds can be used more efficiently as they can be steered towards successful or complementary projects.

Mr. Chairman,

Greater accountability within government, both national and local, improves prospects for better law enforcement and reduced levels of corruption if, and only if, both issues are tackled seriously. Already within Indonesia, since the election of the present President, a number of high profile corruption cases have been prosecuted and the perpetrators imprisoned and there are signs that this has led to remaining suspects being much more careful than in the past. There are indeed reasons to be optimistic that things are beginning to improve in this direction.

Mr. Chairman,

Indonesia is as we speak preparing to two Orangutan Action Plan workshops, in both Sumatra and Borneo, to examine in detail the threats to orangutans and their habitat with a view to producing a comprehensive and achievable strategy to offset or eliminate these threats. A key to the successful implementation of these action plans will be agreement and support from multiple stakeholders, including business interests and local, regional, and national governments and international bodies such as IUCN and GRASP.

With regard to the habitat protection, the area under protection will be expanded to include all viable but previously unprotected populations of orangutans. This is in line with CBD's Decision and Program of Works on Protected Areas. Much stricter law enforcement governing habitat protection is also required. Many of the problems concerning orangutan conservation could be solved simply by more effective law enforcement. Awareness promotion to local politicians, local government and judiciaries is very important. In addition, the law enforcement officers and civil investigators need to be well trained to deal with the illegal trade in orangutan.

Monitoring and surveillance of habitat and population of orangutan need also particular attention. We all know that foot patrols are extremely difficult and inadequate in many Indonesian protected areas and that staffing levels are very low. Greater access to high resolution satellite imagery and regular flyovers would be a significant improvement. A central database of remote sensing imagery with free and easy access to it for conservation managers, would go a long way to reducing duplication of efforts and improving efficiency and information sharing.

Capacity building is required for law enforcement officers and rescue centers in handling the confiscated animals. Research and monitoring skills for park managers and rangers will also be essential to increase capability in the management of protected areas.

Mr. Chairman, networking, especially with regard to the resource availability and allocation, is also of important concerns. GRASP and other networking devices (e.g. SEAPA) have considerable potential for improving allocation of limited funds and reducing competition between NGOs and other agencies for these funds. By improving networking and ensuring greater and more streamlined science-based advice reaches both governments and donors alike will solve some problems on the confusion for resource allocation.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that GRASP, which was launched in May 2001 and became a World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Type II Partnership in September 2002, will become a very effective tool to ensure the long-term survival of the great apes through conserving their critical habitats, exchanging scientific data, increasing public awareness, promoting regional and international cooperation, and seeking resources for the implementation of great ape conservation action plans. Indonesia, as a range State of a taxon of great apes calls on other range states, donor governments, UN agencies, NGOs, scientists, and private sector interests, to work together and to support our efforts in the management and conservation of orangutans and their habitat. We also seek through this GRASP Partnership - guidance - for better and more effective conservation and management of orangutans and their habitat, especially since the stage of the development of Action Plan.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, the Government of Indonesian strongly supports the draft declaration on great apes for adoption. It is also ready to discuss further the other drafts for eventually adopted at this meeting.

Thank you.

Director General,

Koes Saparjadi

