

DEWAN ADAT PAPUA
PAPUA CUSTOMARY COUNCIL

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Seventh session

New York, 21 April - 2 May 2008

Item ~~4 Environment~~ Pacific #19

Dear Madam Chair,

West Papua is home to the world's second largest rainforest. The massive illegal logging of Papuan merbau timber is being fueled by five giant international flooring companies, which are neglecting to acknowledge that they are selling illegal timber.

The investigative study by the Bogor-based Telapak and London-based Environment Investigation Agency reveals, that five companies, which dominate global sales of wood floor products are heavy consumers of illegally sourced timber, mostly from West Papua.

It is necessary to establish a Save Papua's Forests campaign to protect the World Heritage and Worldwide Ozone supply.

For Indonesian military and police, controlling West Papua's natural resources is a priority. They are deeply involved in, and profiting from, illegal mining, illegal logging and the conversion of forests into huge palm oil plantations. West Papua has one of the highest rates of deforestation in the world, and mining has brought hunger, pollution and sickness to indigenous Papuan communities.

Environmental group Greenpeace recently called on the government to protect one of the world's remaining large intact forests in Papua by issuing a logging moratorium. The Jakarta Post's Tubagus Arie Rukmantara talked with Greenpeace Southeast Asia executive director Emmy Hafild about the importance of protecting West Papua's forests.

Papuan forests are one of seven of the largest remaining intact forests in the world besides those in Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America and Northern Asia. In terms of tropical forests, it is one of the few tropical forest areas left on the planet along with the Amazon in Brazil and the Congo in Africa.

Since the earth currently has very few intact forests -- only 10 percent of previously existing forest area remains -- the forests of Papua are becoming very important to the life of the planet.

Papuan forests possess enormous biodiversity. The forests are blessed with highly diverse and very unique flora and fauna, distinct from Asia and Australia. And the most important thing is, that the forests in Papua have supported the lives of the Papuan people for a long time. Before modern development came to Papua, the people had relied on the forests for hundreds of years. We badly need to protect the forests for the sake of the Papuan people.

First, the government will make the Papuan people happier. They are unhappy with logging concessions because they are not benefiting from them. They bear the brunt of logging activities, such as environment degradation which has resulted in floods and water shortages and also depleted sources of food.

If we can protect their forests and provide sustainable community-based logging activities there, the welfare of the local people will improve. That will surely make them happier. Once that happens, they will be happy to be part of Indonesia.

Recommendation:

1. We ask the Forum to call on the government of Indonesia to immediately implement a moratorium on logging in West Papua
2. We ask the Forum to call for the government of Indonesia, World Bank and Multinational companies to respect our rights to free, prior and informed consent.
3. We call on the international community to ensure that the West Papuan people are incorporated in all decision processes that involve the lands and peoples of West Papua.
4. It is necessary for the international community to take action to preserve the last remaining rainforests around the world.

Thank you Madam Chair

Mr.Yoab Syatfle

E-mail:yoabs@hotmail.com