



# Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation

## THE BALI DECLARATION

### *Unequivocal Support for Recent Forest-Conservation Initiatives in Indonesia*

Whereas, the Republic of Indonesia sustains some of the richest biological and cultural diversity of any nation on Earth, distributed across an archipelago of over 17,000 islands that span both the Asian and Australasian biogeographic regions; and

Whereas, a great many Indonesian species are confined to just one or a few nearby islands, and therefore occur nowhere else on earth; and

Whereas, biologists are still encountering many species in Indonesia that are entirely new to science, indicating that much of the nation's biodiversity is yet to be discovered and that the conservation status and distribution of many other species are poorly known; and

Whereas, the high pace of forest destruction in Indonesia, averaging some 2-2.5 million hectares annually from 1996 to 2005, has led to the degradation, fragmentation, and loss of critical ecosystems and livelihoods, especially in species-rich lowland forests, as a result of unsustainable logging, land conversion, forest fires, overharvesting, and other environmental stresses; and

Whereas, forest loss and degradation has imperiled many Indonesian animal and plant species, including over 100 mammal species classified by the IUCN as being threatened or endangered, such as the Javan and Sumatran Rhinoceros, Asian Elephant, Tiger, and Orangutan; and

Whereas, the rapid destruction and degradation of forests, peat swamps, wetlands, and other habitats is also a major source of atmospheric carbon emissions, contributing significantly to global warming and climatic change.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC), the world's largest scientific organization devoted to the study and wise use of tropical ecosystems, on the occasion of its 2010 International Meeting in Bali, Indonesia:

- Heartily commends H. E. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono for his innovative and forward-thinking efforts to promote forest conservation, combat illegal logging, and

improve forest monitoring and governance in Indonesia, which have led to illegal logging reportedly declining by 50-75% since 2002; and

- Congratulates the Government of Indonesia on the agreement initiated by H. E. President Yudhoyono and the Government of Norway to reduce dangerous carbon emissions by funding up to \$1 billion in forest-conservation and monitoring initiatives, thereby complementing ongoing efforts to slow deforestation and strengthen protected areas in the country; and
- Gratefully acknowledges the inspiring address of H. E. Vice President Boediono to the ATBC in Bali, which highlighted the nation's efforts to promote sustainable development; and
- Respectfully urges the Indonesian government to implement and maintain the planned two-year moratorium on issuance of new permits for timber, oil palm, and other plantation concessions; to implement this planned moratorium immediately; and to ensure that any further expansion of plantations is restricted to lands without standing forests; and
- Respectfully requests that all concessions to clear natural forest issued prior to the moratorium be carefully re-evaluated for their biodiversity and carbon values; and
- Strongly recommends that the Indonesian government reinstate the 2007 ban on clearing of peat forests that was rescinded in 2009, because of the high carbon-storage value of these wetlands; and
- Respectfully urges the Indonesian government to renew and strengthen its efforts to combat destructive forest fires, which increased by 59% between 2008 and 2009; and
- Specifically recommends that efforts to reduce deforestation be immediately concentrated in existing and emerging 'hotspots' of forest conversion, such as central Sumatra, East and West Kalimantan, and West Papua; and
- Encourages the Government of Indonesia to effectively protect and manage sites of high biodiversity value, including existing protected areas and new conservation initiatives such as the transnational Heart of Borneo program and Ecosystem Restoration forest concessions; and
- Unequivocally applauds the Government's plan for an independent organization to be established in Indonesia to monitor forests, land use, and compliance with the nation's new and ongoing forest-conservation initiatives in a fully transparent manner; and
- Especially urges that free and prior informed consent be obtained from Indigenous Peoples for conservation actions and that benefits from the Indonesia-Norway initiative be equitably distributed to all stakeholders, including local communities and Indigenous Peoples, according to best international practice; and
- Fully congratulates the Indonesian Government in this International Year of Biodiversity for its inspiring commitments to markedly reduce forest loss and degradation, and to diminish its annual carbon emissions by at least 26% by the year 2020.