



DANISH MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION VISITS 'FOREST OF HOPE' IN SUMATRA & LAUNCHES 'TUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE' MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE



Jakarta, April 28, 2017 – Indonesia and Denmark's innovative partnership will be further strengthened between April 30 & May 3 2017, when the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Ulla Tørnæs, will visit Indonesia. The 4-day visit will focus on all parts of the broad partnership.

On April 30 – 1 May, the Minister will visit the Danish supported Hutan Harapan rainforest in Jambi / South Sumatra – 'the Forest of Hope'. Hutan Harapan is an emblematic and iconic rainforest, which constitutes 25 percent of all the remaining Sumatran Lowland Rainforest. The forest has a unique biodiversity. Hutan Harapan is Indonesia's first Ecosystem Restoration Concession (ERC) aimed at restoring and protecting formerly logged and encroached forest thereby also reducing CO₂ emissions as part of Indonesia's international commitments.

Minister Ulla Tørnæs says:

'Hutan Harapan is a unique Indonesian rainforest that Denmark has supported for almost 6 years. The forest constitutes 25 percent of all the remaining Sumatran Lowland Rainforest. However, encroachment threatens the protection of the rainforest and its biodiversity as well as the livelihood of the local communities inhabiting the area. There are no quick-fixes to this complicated challenge. But by supporting Indonesia's development of so-called Ecosystem Restoration Concessions (ERC), our hope is that Hutan Harapan can become a shining example to be replicated in other parts of the country of how to best protect the exceptional forests.'

During the visit, the Minister will launch a public mountain bike race 'Tumble in the Jungle' organized by the Danish Embassy and Burung Indonesia. The aim of the race is to develop eco-tourism and raise awareness about the importance of preserving the forest. Participation fee will be donated to local indigenous groups living sustainably in and of the forest. The Minister will also witness a signing ceremony for the next phase of Danish support to the conservation of the forest and visit local communities dependent on the preservation of the forest.

Minister Ulla Tørnæs continues:

'As a cycle enthusiast, I am thrilled to launch and witness the first ever mountain bike race here in Harapan rainforest. It is an innovative attempt to show how this pristine piece of nature can be used for healthy and recreational activities as part of the critical work of raising awareness about the need to preserve the forest, its endangered species and ultimately its indigenous people. The introduction of sustainable eco-tourism holds great potential here in Harapan rainforest as well as across all parts of Indonesia.'

Background

Hutan Harapan is a 100.000 hectares lowland rainforest cutting across the provinces of South Sumatra and Jambi. The forest is home to animals threatened by extinction like the Sumatran tiger, the Sumatran elephant and rare species of birds. It stores 10 million tons of carbon and has the ability to sequester additional five million tons before 2030 as it is allowed to grow back.

In 2008, Hutan Harapan became Indonesia's first Ecosystem Restoration Concession (ERC) when Burung Indonesia and sister organizations (from within Birdlife International) joined hands to preserve the area. From 2011 to 2016 the Danish government has supported Hutan Harapan with DKK 59 million (IDR 120 billion) to assist Burung Indonesia and the government in improving legislation to

better accommodate the ERC as an alternative to converting forest to plantations or wasteland. After Burung Indonesia achieved a list of preconditions for further Danish support, the Danish Ambassador and Burung Indonesia in September 2016 signed a 20 mio. DKK support agreement for the period 2016-2018.

Since Harapan became an ERC, illegal in-migration has been a major problem and 20.000 hectares of the concession has been encroached by small-scale oil palm and rubber farmers. By establishing a task force to prevent further encroachment and establish cooperation agreements with communities in and around the forest the Indonesian government has taken an important step to make ERCs viable. The Indonesian government has in total set aside 2.6 mio. hectares for ERC development and if successful, the Hutan Harapan is expected to make ERCs attractive to investors for the benefit of local communities, ecosystems, climate and green growth.

For further information on the visit and interview opportunities, please contact:

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