

Zero Deforestation: A Key towards Net-Zero Emissions Indonesia

[Jakarta, 26 March 2021] Indonesia has the opportunity to achieve its Long-Term Vision in the country's fight against climate change in line with the Paris Agreement by reducing Indonesia's quota on deforestation to only 10.7 thousand hectares per year, even zero, under the Updated NDC for the year 2020-2030. To achieve the said target, Yosi Amelia, Project Officer for Forest and Climate from Yayasan Madani Berkelanjutan stated that various policies to protect Indonesia's remaining forests must be strengthened, such as expanding the policy to halt new licenses to forests that are not yet under any protection schemes, continuing palm oil moratorium, and reconsidering any national strategic programs or national economic recovery programs that threaten Indonesia's forests.

Yosi also added, "In accordance with the Low Carbon Compatible with the Paris Agreement scenario, the rate of Indonesia's natural forest loss for the period of 2020-2030 cannot exceed 241 thousand hectares per year. Therefore, Indonesia's natural forest deforestation quota in that period is only 4.82 million hectares. According to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry data, Indonesia has lost more or less 4.71 million hectares of natural forests from the period of 2011-2012 to 2019-2020. Consequently, the remaining quota for deforestation for the period of 2020-2030 is only 107 thousand hectares or 10.7 thousand hectares per year. However, if we include natural forest loss data in 2010-2011 by taking the annual average of deforestation in 2009-2011 which is 196,750 hectares, Indonesia's quota on deforestation subsequently becomes minus. That is to say, Indonesia no longer has any quota left for deforestation of natural forests until 2030."

The Indonesian government has introduced three scenarios on the Long-Term Strategy on Low Carbon and Climate Resilience in 2050 to achieve a net-zero emissions target by 2070, 20 years slower than what the UN has targeted. In the most ambitious scenario, known as Low Carbon Compatible with Paris Agreement – LCCP, Indonesia has targeted an emission peak for every sector with forestry and land sector becoming a net carbon sink by 2030.

Thus, Indonesia's forests and land would be the most dependable sector for Indonesia in its fight against climate change, not only to reduce emissions from its own sector, but also to absorb carbon emissions from other sectors, such as energy, waste, industrial processes and product usage, and also agriculture.

"According to Madani's initial research, there are around 9.4 million hectares of natural forests or 16 times the island of Bali that have not been licensed out and are located outside the protection of PIPPIB (Indicative Map of Termination of New Permits) and social forestry indicative area – PIAPS. They are not under the protection of any policy to halt new licenses and therefore susceptible to deforestation." Fadli Ahmad Naufal, GIS Specialist from Yayasan Madani Berkelanjutan said. He also added that those 9.4 million hectares of natural forests must be protected to achieve Indonesia's long-term strategy on low carbon compatible with the Paris Agreement.

Besides, it is also crucial for the government of Indonesia to review various development policies, from the National Economic Recovery Program (“PEN”), National Strategic Program (“PSN”), to food estate as to not further damage Indonesia’s natural forests. “Madani’s initial research also found around 1.5 million hectares of Indonesia’s natural forests included in the Area of Interest (AOI) of Food Estate in 4 provinces, namely Papua, Central Kalimantan, North Sumatra, and South Sumatra with a huge potential economic value of timber in those areas - reaching IDR 209 trillion,” Fadli added.

The government must also pay a keen attention on protecting Indonesia’s natural forests that have already been licensed out, including timber plantation concessions and Palm Oil Plantations. One of the ways to protect forests already under the license/concessions of Palm Oil Plantation is through Palm Oil Moratorium which unfortunately will end in September 2021. Trias Fetra, Program Officer for Palm Oil Governance of Yayasan Madani Berkelanjutan suggested that it is in the government’s utmost necessity to continue its Palm Oil Moratorium which includes elements on protecting Indonesia’s forest and increasing the productivity of palm oil plantations. And thus, critical to achieving Indonesia’s long-term strategy on low carbon development.

To accomplish Indonesia’s long-term strategy on low carbon compatible with Paris Agreement, Indonesia has to transform its strategy on land use by making use of the unproductive lands – both inside or outside the area of forest to achieve food and energy security, and also strengthen the protection of Indonesia’s remaining natural forest and peatland ecosystem.

Lastly, Yosi added, “Our future and the future of the forthcoming generations depends on the transformation of Indonesia’s economic development towards a no longer destructive development for our forest and environment. This transformation must start right now as the worsen impact of the climate crisis no longer gives us the luxury of time.”

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