



## Forestry Minister Speech On the Occasion of the Declaration of Orangutan Caring Week Jakarta, 16 November 2005

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Assalamualaikum Warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

Ladies, Gentlemen and all in attendance,

We praise and thank the Lord for the blessings that have been given to us, so that on this day, we could gather in this place for the Declaration of Orangutan Caring Week, as the orangutan is a protected animal. I would like to thank and extend my appreciation to Angelina Sondakh who has initiated this event. This event is an indication of our efforts and interest to work towards conserving our protected wild animals that are assets of the Indonesian nation.

As we already know, the orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*) is a protected wild animal. In Indonesia wild orangutans are only found in Sumatra and Kalimantan, and their continued existence is increasingly threatened. This has been the result of continued hunting or capture of the animal for the illegal pet trade. Besides, their habitat is also increasingly becoming reduced because of various factors, such as destruction of the forest resulting from illegal logging and forest fires.

Therefore, I am very supportive of Angelina Sondakh's efforts to hold this event. I hope this event provides the momentum for all of us to care more for the existence of protected wild animals, especially the ones that are nearly extinct.

In order for our actions to have meaning for the long term, I would suggest that our interest towards protected animals not only be for this week, but forever, and not only as a ceremonial event like today, but also implemented in the field.

Nowadays, there are protected wild animals that are owned by certain people as pets. I strongly say that this is prohibited, because it is violating regulation Law and Regulation No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Biological Nature Resources and their Ecosystem. For that reason, should there be anyone who is still keeping any protected animal, I encourage them to return the animal to the Department of Forestry, through the BKSDA (Conservation of Natural Resources Division), so that they can be released to their natural habitat. By understanding this, it would also reflect the community's interest in efforts to save protected wild animals.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

The diversity of flora and fauna which are abundant and numerous are the foundation of our development and whose existence and sustainability should be maintained. Indonesia's land area is around 1.3% of the world's total. Our lands are rich with various species of fauna and the flora within varied types of ecosystems, some of which cannot be found in any other part of the world.

Indonesia is home to no fewer than 27,500 species of flowering plants (10% of all the world species of flowering plants), 515 species the mammals (12% of all the world species of mammals), 511 species of reptiles and 270 species of amphibians. With particular regard to the diversity of bird species, Indonesia ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the world in types of birds. From a total of 9,052 species of known birds in the world, 1,539 are found in Indonesia; and 381 species of birds, or 4% of the world total, are found exclusively in Indonesia (endemic).

Indonesian's prosperity in biodiversity does not belong only to Indonesia, but to the entire world; and because of this, we all have the responsibility to protect the orangutan and other wild animals, making sure they don't go extinct from the ongoing effects of development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Government will continue to conserve the orangutan. One of the ways is through law enforcement in response to violations of law regarding the fauna that will be carried out preventively and persuasively in accordance to applied regulation, e.g., Law and Regulation No. 5 1990, PP No. 7 1999, and PP No. 8 1999. Other ways include building Animal Rescue Centers for the purpose of accommodating protected animals that have been confiscated under law and to care for the animals until "animal disposition" is determined by the management authority. At this time there are 10 Animal Rescue Centers in Indonesia.

As part of these efforts, there are four rehabilitation centers for orangutans in Indonesia. They are Wanariset Semboja in East Kalimantan; Nyaru Menteng in Central Kalimantan; Tebo Jambi (Sumatra); and Tanjung Puting National Park (Central Kalimantan). The population of orangutans throughout the rehabilitation centers is around 765, whereas, the number of orangutans that have been released back to the wild are approximately 488. With an increasing awareness by the people, we hope that the population of orangutans in their natural habitat will increase.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

The utilization of natural resources has to put aspects of the ecology, environment and economics into consideration. However, the impact of an increasing population, the fulfillment of the peoples' need and the increase in their quality of their life, also speed up the utilization of nature resources. As the result, Indonesia has the longest list of threatened species in the world that are nearly extinct; among them are primates, birds, other mammals, plants, etc. If we do not make any efforts to protect these plants and animals, they will eventually go extinct. I think all of us do not want this to happen. Therefore, it is our responsibility to conserve the flora and fauna that are threatened towards extinction. Conservation efforts with various programs like *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation must be increased.

Ladies and Gentleman,

The Forestry Department is committed to working as hard as possible to minimize the decreasing biodiversity of flora and fauna. Therefore, the development in the field of nature protection and conservation is part of the development of the forestry that means the development of natural resources and its ecosystems.

By celebrating Orangutan Caring Week, I hope that conservation efforts will be recognized symbolically and given the right momentum to start. Orangutan Caring Week will also function as a mediator to convey the message to the people to care more about protected wildlife and their conservation.

The successful indication of our efforts will be seen not by the increasing numbers of orangutans that are living as pets, but by the increasing population of orangutans living in their natural habitat.

Finally, by praising bismillahirrahmanirahim, I officially declare Orangutan Caring Week. I hope that Lord will always guide and protect our efforts. Wassalamualaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh.

MENTERI KEHUTANAN

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