

'Jakarta Declaration' Aimed at Helping Indonesia Save Its Peatlands

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Friday, November 3, 2017

Published by: Jakarta Globe

Jakarta. A coalition of peatland protection institutions, along with researchers from several countries, issued a declaration in Jakarta on Thursday (02/11) aimed at encouraging the responsible management of these ecosystems, in addition to a plan to establish an international committee this year.

"We have issued the Jakarta Declaration as a milestone for promoting action on the responsible management of tropical peatland, which is a basis for bridging Indonesian stakeholders and the international community," said Gerald Schmilewski, president director of the International Peatland Society (IPS).

Schmilewski explained that the declaration was a move to restore degraded peatlands in Indonesia, as it requires the substantial development of an integrated peatland management system based on scientific and technical knowledge.

He added that the coalition agreed to establish an international committee before the end of this year to provide technical consultation and to facilitate Indonesia's tropical peatland restoration actions.

The declaration follows a two-day "Framework on Tropical Peatland Restoration" panel discussion in Jakarta on Wednesday and Thursday. It was organized by the Indonesian Peatland Restoration Agency (BRG), IPS and the Japan Peatland Society (JPS).

Participants included 69 researchers and practitioners from various countries, including Indonesia, Germany, Japan, Finland, Mexico, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Netherlands. They will undertake a field trip to study degraded peatlands in Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, on Friday and Saturday to provide the BRG with technical advice on the restoration of Indonesia's degraded tropical peatlands.

Besides the plan to establish an international committee, the BRG, IPS and JPS have also set a target to establish a tropical peatland center in Indonesia this year, with the purpose of assisting the local body with technical and scientific support and help it achieve its mandate to restore 2.4 million hectares of degraded peatlands in the provinces of Riau, Jambi, South Sumatra, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan and Papua by 2020.

BRG head Nazir Foad, who is a former conservationist from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), said participants in the roundtable would seek to launch model pilot projects for responsible management of peatland restoration in the country.

"We have cooperated with the JPS in dealing with a degraded peatland area near Tohor River in Meranti district, Central Kalimantan. We would like to work with other partners in other peatland areas. We want to ask their technical expertise to cooperate with our team," Nazir said on Wednesday.



He urged panel participants establish a capacity-building system to help the BRG achieve its peatland restoration target by 2020.

The main sponsors of the event are the United Nations Development Program, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Norwegian Embassy and the BRG.

The Indonesian government has started to place greater emphasis on the protection and management of peatlands after heavy international criticism over forest fires in Sumatra and Kalimantan, which resulted in haze choking several Southeast Asian countries in 2015.

Link: <http://jakartaglobe.id>

