



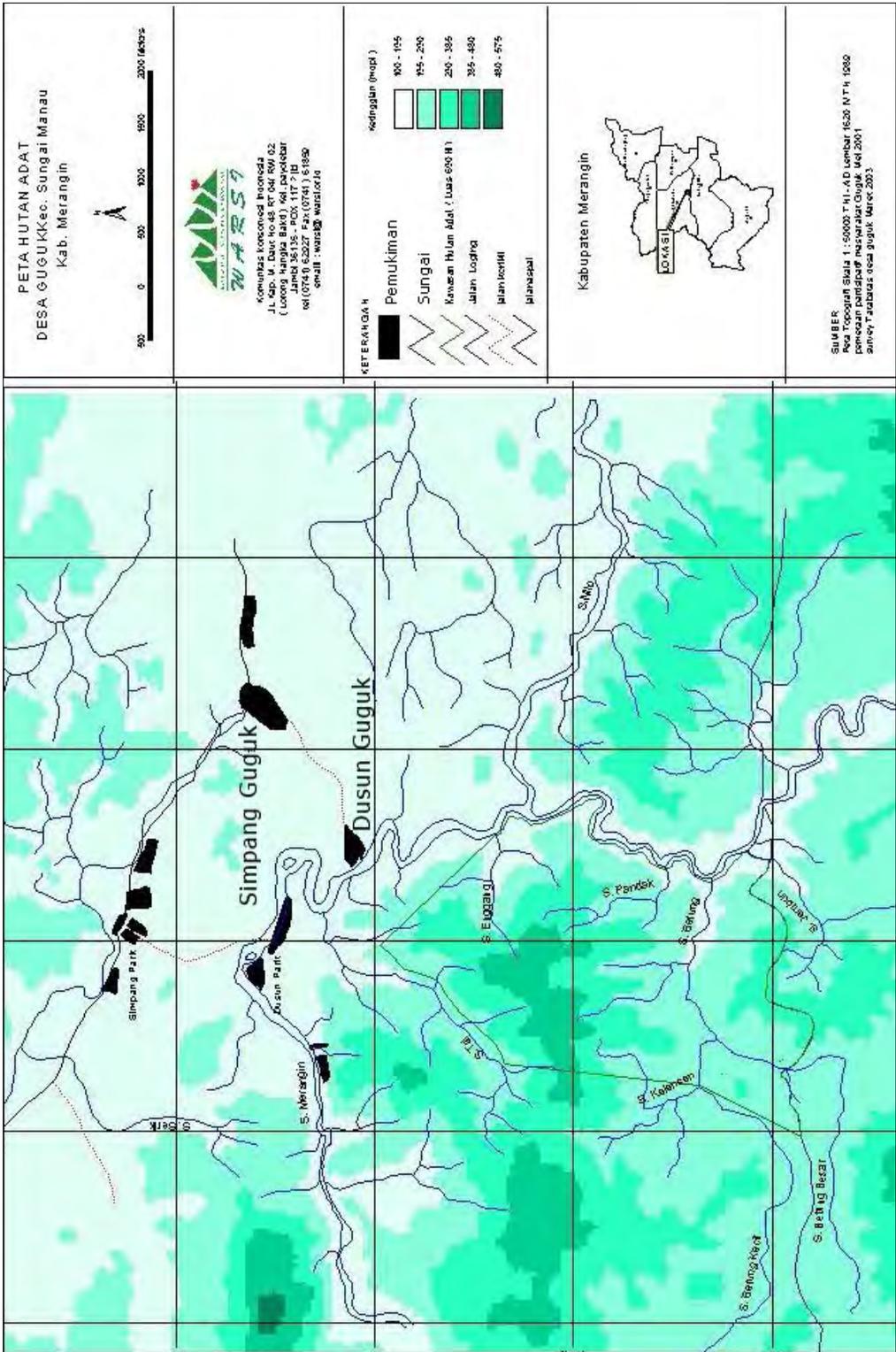
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THE GUGUK INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY JAMBI

Protecting customary forests with local regulations

Datuk H. Abubakar¹

¹ The author is customary leader (*Pasirah*) of the Guguk community. He used to be customary leader of the whole Marga Pembarap community and holds the traditional title of *Depati Mangkuyudo* (see later). He has now retired as village head, but is still considered Guguk's community leader. He is also an adviser to the government-backed indigenous association for the area - *Lembaga Adat Merangin*. As Datuk Abubakar is over 80 years old, this chapter was partly dictated by him and partly compiled from material he wrote for the first AMAN Congress in March 1999. This was done at his behest. The former and current village heads, Yari Suni and Mahmud Rasali, and the head of the forest management groups, Abusama, also provided information for this chapter. Supplementary material was gathered during field visits to Guguk by DTE and the Jambi-based forest conservation NGO, Warsi.



I. INTRODUCTION

The community of Guguk is determined to protect forests as a resource for future generations. It has set aside part of its land as *hutan adat* (customary forest) to provide an example of good practice for other communities. The people have used a combination of customary law and official regulations² to protect this forest from logging companies and illegal loggers. The local administrator (*bupati*) has issued a letter which formally recognises the status and boundaries of nearly 700 hectares of forest as *hutan adat*, a policy that has been further strengthened by a



Outskirts of Dusun Guguk with Bukit Tapanggang beyond

² Legislation passed by the state, whether at the national or local level, is often called *hukum positif* by indigenous communities to distinguish it from customary law (*hukum adat*). Unusually, Guguk's customary law is written down in a document nearly 300 years old.

village regulation³. These decisions are the direct result of a grassroots initiative on forest conservation. Few villages in Indonesia have tried to protect their forests through the formal legal system. Indigenous communities can now take inspiration from Guguk and other villages in Jambi who have followed this route.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Location

Guguk is located in the Sungai Manau subdistrict of Merangin in Jambi province. It lies along the main route between the major towns of Bangko (district capital of Sarolangun-Bangko) and Sungai Penuh (district capital of Kerinci)⁴ and has boundaries with the villages of Muara Bantan to the north, Marek to the east and Parit to the west. The southern boundary adjoins Lubuk Beringin village and the logging concession of PT Injapsin. This hilly area near the River Merangin forms part of the watershed of the Batanghari, Sumatra's longest river.

The indigenous community of Guguk is part of a broader community called the Marga Pembarap or Batin which first controlled the local area when Jambi was a sultanate or kingdom, many centuries before Indonesian independence. Since the village governance acts in the 1970s, the Marga Pembarap's customary lands have been split into Guguk and three other villages: Parit Ujung Tanjung, Air Batu and Merkeh.

What is officially called 'Guguk village' (Desa Guguk) now consists of four separate settlements or hamlets between one and three kilometres apart covering a total area of 83,000 ha. Over a period of time, the community has gradually shifted away from the banks of the Merangin towards the main road. The administrative centre, Simpang Guguks is 1.5 km from the river and has a few shops, a small mosque and a

³ *Peraturan Desa (Perdes)* or local by-law

⁴ Guguk is around 35km from Bangko and 290km west of Jambi's provincial capital, also called Jambi.



Guguk village map

junior high school as well as a primary school. Simpang Guguk⁵ and the newer hamlets of Marus and Padang Kulim are easily accessible by motorbikes, cars and trucks⁶. The older Dusun Guguk now lies on the north bank of the River Merangin. The original settlement was to the south of the river at a location called Pelegai Panjang, but moved to the opposite bank in the 1950s in order to have better access. The site of Pelegai Panjang, marked only by graves and fruit trees such as durian and *langsat* (*Lansium domesticum*), has become part of the forest again.

⁵ Lit. Guguk crossroads

⁶ Marus and Padang Kulim also used to be located on the banks of the Durian Daun, a tributary of the River Merangin. All of the forest there has been converted to agroforestry, plantations or fields.

2. Population and livelihoods

According to official village data, the population of Guguk village is 1,417⁷. The majority is indigenous⁸, although some inhabitants - mainly in Marus and Padang Kulim - are of Javanese, Minangkabau or Batak ethnic origin⁹. The people are predominantly Muslim with a small minority of Christians and other religions.

Dusun Guguk has a more traditional appearance, consisting of two rows of wooden houses. The two storey buildings, made from local timber, are raised up on platforms to reduce flood damage. The upper floor is the living area while the space underneath is used for storage and livestock. Some houses in the rest of Guguk village are brick or concrete, but many people still prefer traditional houses which are cooler and less dusty. No single building is outwardly special: the customary leader lives in a modest bungalow and there is no village hall. Wherever the community's historic documents are currently stored is considered to be the *rumah adat* (customary house).

The majority of Guguk's population now makes a living from cultivating and selling rubber. This is considered to be the most suitable crop for local soil conditions and the most profitable. The whole community now depends heavily on this single commodity. Plantations and fields are individually owned and most people have some land. Landless families pay to plant crops on other villagers' land by profit sharing.

Rubber plantations have been set up throughout the village by clearing scrub, secondary forest¹⁰ or plantations of other tree crops which are no longer productive or profitable. Mostly hybrid varieties of rubber and modern planting patterns are used. Historically, upland rice (*padi gogo*) and other crops were planted on cleared land at the same time as

⁷ *Monografi Desa Guguk*, November 2005. There were 707 men and 710 women, making up 367 households.

⁸ In some accounts, the indigenous people of Guguk and neighbouring communities are called Sei Manau or Melayu Jambi (lit. Jambi Malays) but, according to Datuk Abubakar, they are Marga Pembarap or Masyarakat Adat Guguk.

⁹ The Minangkabau are the dominant ethnic group in West Sumatra and the Batak are the indigenous peoples of North Sumatra.

¹⁰ Locally known as *sesap*.

rubber seedlings and fruit. Men tap the trees every morning throughout the year. The rubber sap is collected and formed into large blocks which are taken to market by truck. Around two *kwintal* (200 kg) of rubber is produced each day from one hectare of plantation¹¹.

The gradual rise in rubber prices in recent years has made Guguk more prosperous than indigenous communities in many other areas of Indonesia¹². This relative wealth has reinforced some aspects of *adat* law because people can make a living without overexploiting the remaining forest. There have been strict limits on the permitted harvests of timber and NTFP throughout the community's history. In contrast with the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, even today no-one from Guguk works as a logger or in a sawmill.



Liz Chidley [DTE]

Rubber plantations are individually owned

¹¹ Production is lower in the rainy season (October-February in Jambi).

¹² The local price of rubber was Rp5,000/kg in late 2005 and is still high, mainly because the price of synthetic rubber increased with the rise in world oil prices. Raw rubber can be stored for several months, so farmers can sell their produce when prices are most favourable. A 10 ha plantation can produce 1 tonne of raw rubber slabs per month (one truckload) worth approx US\$500 at local prices. Most people's land holdings are under 1 ha. Even so, this illustrates why the people of Guguk are comparatively well-off, given that the GDP per capita in Indonesia was US\$1,280 in 2005 (<http://kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0504/28/sumbagsel/1715866.htm>; <http://devdata.worldbank.org/wdi2006/contents/income.htm>).

On the other hand, income from rubber has significantly affected traditional livelihoods and occupations. For example, levels of formal education in Guguk are high. More people can now afford to send their children - boys and girls - to high school, instead of just to Islamic education classes. Some are civil servants (school teachers and administrators) in the village or the nearest town (Bangko) and several of Guguk's indigenous community have university degrees.

Another result is the reduction in cultivation and collection of other products. A range of other tree crops used to be important to Guguk's local economy, including coconuts, coffee, candlenut, cinnamon and – for a time – cloves¹³. Some cinnamon trees are still grown along the River Merangin. However, prices of cloves and coffee gradually have fallen so these plantations have largely been replaced by rubber.

Forest commodities in Guguk include firewood, rattan, medicinal plants, honey and the fragrant resin *kemenyan* (see note 29 in Chapter 3). Some forest plants are also collected as vegetables. Many people still grow some vegetables, keep a few goats and chickens and also fish for their own consumption, but traditional activities such as gathering forest products and even rice farming are diminishing as it is more profitable to grow rubber and buy in other necessities. Consequently, trading foodstuffs and other basic commodities has become another important occupation in Guguk.

Fruits remain an important additional source of income in Guguk at certain times of the year. Most homes are surrounded by several different kinds of fruit trees which generate seasonal earnings and create a green, pleasant environment in the village.

Overseas employment provides yet another source of revenue for Guguk. Between 30 and 100 members of the community are currently working in Malaysia, mainly as workers on oil palm and rubber

¹³ Datuk Abubakar instructed the community to plant these trees during the 1950s and 60s. He also encouraged people to plant fruit trees such as *jambu air* (*Syzygium samarangense*), *duku* (var. *Lansium domesticum*), *kelengkeng* (*Litchi chinensis*), *rambutan* (*Nephelium lappaceum*), *duren* (*Durio* spp), *ambacang* (k.o. mango) and *manggis* (mangosteen).

plantations¹⁴. Another ten are employed in the Middle East as drivers (men) or domestic staff (women).

3. The history of the Guguk community

The customary land rights of the indigenous community of Guguk (or, as it used to be called, Pelegai Panjang) go back long before the colonial era. Customary leaders and local legends trace the community's ancestry back to the three women from the aristocracy of Central Java and three Minangkabau noblemen who founded the Batin people¹⁵. The Batin and other ethnic groups, including the Orang Rimbo¹⁶ and Melayu Jambi, gradually dispersed through central Sumatra looking for suitable land.

The Batin people moved up from Sarolangun through the highlands towards Kerinci during the Majapahit period and one community eventually settled at Pelegai Panjang¹⁷. This became the centre of the Marga Pembarap's lands. As that community grew, more and more homes were built and the settlement's name changed to Guguk¹⁸. These customary lands were formally recognised by the Sultan of Jambi in the 18th century in the form of decrees (*piagam*) written on leaves of the lontar palm¹⁹. The decree for the Marga Pembarap community is

¹⁴ Employment in Malaysia is not stable as the authorities have periodic clampdowns on foreign workers.

¹⁵ The name of the Batin people may be derived from the local word *batino* which means female or woman. The female ancestors from the 'Mataram kingdom' were Panatih Lelo Majnun, Panatih Lelo Baruji and Panatih Lelo Majanin. The Minang founders were Syech Rajo, Syech Beti and Syech Saidi Malin Samad (Warsi/KpSHK, 2000, *Ketika Rakyat Megelola Hutan – Pengalaman dari Jambi*).

¹⁶ The Orang Rimbo, also known as the Kubu or Suku Anak Dalam, are indigenous people who follow traditional lifestyles in and around the forests of mid-Sumatra.

¹⁷ The Hindu Majapahit kingdom existed from around the 13th to the 16th century AD. Originally based in East Java, its control extended up through Sumatra by the late 14th century. Later Islamic sultanates, including that based in Mataram (on Lombok island), claimed connections with the Majapahit rulers. Datuk Abubakar uses the terms 'Mojopahit', 'from Java' and 'Mataram' interchangeably in his account of Guguk's origins.

¹⁸ The name Guguk is believed to be a corruption of *gubuk* - the Indonesian word for a simple house.

¹⁹ The decree, called the *Piagam Lantak Sepadan*, was issued by Sultan Anom Seri Mogor to indigenous communities (*Kedapatian* or *Batin*) in 1170 *Hijriah* (1749 AD). This historic document, which proves Guguk's land rights, is considered sacred and is stored under the roof in the *rumah adat*.



Grave at site of Pelegai Panjang

still preserved in Guguk and forms the basis of the community's *adat* rights.

These lands became known as Luak 16 because the Marga Pembarap formed a loose association with fifteen other communities²⁰. These later coalesced into eight villages in the traditional sense. Pembarap was the most important of these communities and where the customary leader (*Depati*) with the highest authority lived. All major decisions involving customary law within the broader area were made in Pelegai Panjang.

²⁰ The six main communities were Pembarap; Tiang Pumpung; Sanggerahan; Peratin Tuo; Serampas and Sungai Tenang. There were also ten smaller communities, hence the name Luak 16.

III. CUSTOMARY LAW, LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Governance

The Marga Pembarap indigenous community was traditionally controlled by a system of dual governance called *Nan Duo Silo* whereby leaders were selected alternately from the two ancestral lines²¹. The village leader was also the customary guardian and governed the community according to customary law. This system continued largely unchanged throughout the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods and into the 1970s²².

The 1979 law on village governance significantly changed life for indigenous communities, including Guguk²³. As communities were split to form new administrative ‘villages’, some cultural practices and *adat* laws were lost. Marga Pembarap was divided into four villages, each run by government-approved officials rather than *adat* leaders. Also *adat* links with neighbouring communities were broken. For example, Lubuk Beringin which lies to the south of Guguk became part of a different subdistrict (Muara Siau). As a result, many people outside Guguk have forgotten their traditional heritage and their everyday lives appear superficially similar to those of the Jambi Melayu and other ethnic groups in Jambi.

Only in Guguk, the centre of the Marga Pembarap’s traditional governance, have there been active efforts to retain *adat*-based practices. The indigenous community in Guguk is comprised of extended families

²¹ The traditional term for the system of governance refers to the two (*duo*) leaders or *Depati*, linking back to the dual origins of the indigenous community. There are two types of *Depati*: historically, the *Depati Mangkurajo* dealt with civil affairs while the *Depati Mangkuyudo* was responsible for military issues. Customary leaders were chosen alternately from the two hereditary lines. In the local language this is expressed as *Sandan bagilir pusako baganti*. Highly esteemed people may also be given the honorific title of *Depati*.

²² The Dutch authorities changed the term for the community leaders to *Pasirah*, but the term *Depati* is still commonly used. After Independence, it was no longer essential that the *Pasirah* come from noble ancestry.

²³ Although UU No 5/1979 stripped indigenous communities of their political power, the Suharto regime wanted to use *adat* as a vehicle to promote development, so it later established government-approved *adat* organisations at provincial and district levels.

or sub-clans known as *kalbu*²⁴. *Kalbu* heads or their representatives make up the *Adat* Council which is headed by the customary leader²⁵. In general, the customary leader is responsible for *adat* issues as a whole and acts as co-ordinator of the *kalbu* heads. The *Adat* Council settles problems between individuals in the community; it also selects the customary leader.

Nowadays, most aspects of social, political and economic life are officially under the control of the village head, village council and other institutions such as the village co-operative and village security body imposed by national legislation²⁶. However, as the majority of the community is indigenous, inputs from *adat* figures - particularly community elders and the customary leader – are still considered important in Guguk.



Liz Chidley [DTE]

Datuk Abubakar was the Marga Pembarap's *adat* leader and later Guguk's village head

In effect, the *Adat* Council and religious council (*Lembaga Syara*) make decisions on land ownership, natural resource use, security and social issues, including deaths and marriages. This is exemplified by the *adat* rules (*Adat lamo pusako usang*) still in use in the community. Roughly paraphrased, these say, “Everything has its own rules.

²⁴ The four main *kalbu* in Guguk are Mengkai, Malindan, Senggerahan and Dagang.

²⁵ The *Adat* Council is also known as the *Ninik Mamak* or *Tuo-tuo Tenganai* (Council of Elders).

²⁶ *Kepala Desa* (*kades*); *BPD* (*Badan Perwakilan Desa*); *LMD* (*Lembaga Masyarakat Desa*); and *LKMD* (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa*). Community members now elect the village head and members of the village council.

The village boundaries must be marked and the area within them controlled in accordance with *adat*, even down to people's behaviour at home and in public bathing places"²⁷. Another example is that the consent of the community elders, not just the two families, is needed before a couple can get married.

Guguk's *Adat* Council helps to maintain an understanding of customary law within the indigenous community through communal meetings called *kanduri*. These are held at least once a year and more often if necessary. A big *adat* ceremony is held in Guguk every year at the end of the Muslim fasting month²⁸. The lontar palm leaves on which the community's *adat* rules are inscribed are removed from storage under the eaves of the *rumah adat*, cleaned and read in front of everyone. Then any outstanding problems are discussed publicly and settled according to customary law. A buffalo is sacrificed and its meat is shared out as a symbol of community solidarity²⁹.

Today, only a few community elders are able to read the historic documents. Nevertheless, the people of Guguk are proud of their traditions and do not want them to be lost as has happened in most of the surrounding areas. Hence *adat* training for the younger generation is now part of the current village head's programme of work.

2. Traditional patterns of land and natural resource ownership and management

Under *adat*, all of the forest in the customary domain belongs to the indigenous community as a whole and is controlled by *adat* institutions. According to Guguk's sacred charter, "Every drop of water, crumb of soil and single fish belongs to the community. The fish are for everyone

²⁷ In the original (Jambi) language: *Dusun nan bepagar adat, tapian nan bepagar baso, tebing nan bepagar undang, rumah nan berico, berpakaian berpantang berlarang.*

²⁸ Traditionally, this is held on the second day after *Lebaran* as people always return to their family homes to celebrate *Idul Fitri*.

²⁹ The ceremony is called *Makan Jantung* (lit. Eating the Heart). A buffalo is the price under *adat* law for taking the community's charter (*piagam*) outside its storage place. Similar ceremonies used to be held in many villages in this part of Jambi but, as Guguk is one of the very few to continue this practice, the event attracts visitors from many places including local dignitaries and some tourists.



The annual *Makan Jantung* ceremony outside the *rumah adat*

to share. The land is for everyone to farm”³⁰. As well as rights, there are responsibilities: taxes are payable to the *adat* institutions unless the land or resources are for personal use³¹. Other parties, including other communities may be permitted to use part of the forest, but only in accordance with customary law.

Traditionally, the nature of agreements over land use depended on exactly who was involved. For example, if the request for land came from another community within the Marga Pembarap area, it was sufficient for the leaders of both communities to reach an agreement after weighing up their interests; no payments were required. In the case of outsiders, the *Adat* Council decided an appropriate fee which was payable to the customary leader.

The people of Guguk distinguish between several types of land/forest use and, traditionally, there were different rules for each. Rotational

³⁰ The original, translated into a mixture of Indonesian and the local language states: *Satu tetes airnya, satu bingkah tanahnya, satu ekor ikannya adalah milik masyarakat adat daerah tsb....Ke air sama-sama diberikan ikan. Ke darat sama-sama dipaomo.*

³¹ *Ke air berbunga pasir, ke darat berbunga kayu, tambang pendulang berbunga daun, umo (sawah) ladang berbunga emping, terkecuali hasil-hasil tersebut untuk dipakai sendiri.*

land use/shifting cultivation was practised until the 1960s. Mature forest (*rimbo*) belonged to the whole community, but some areas could be cleared for cultivation as needed. Certain areas of forest, mainly on the steepest slopes, were protected (*rimbo larangan*). Under *adat* law, plots of land belonged to the first person that cleared the forest. Special marker posts (*lembeh*) showed the rightful owner and the potential land use. Usually, each family only cleared about two hectares as that was as much as they could cultivate. It was their responsibility to plant, manage and generally look after their plot. If an area of cleared forest was left untended for ten years, then it reverted to communal ownership and the community leader could determine who should take it over.

Cleared areas were usually planted with upland rice and a number of different kinds of tree crops. Relatively little land in Guguk has been used as paddy fields to grow irrigated rice – only along the River Merangin – because the hilly terrain is better suited to other land uses. After three years, the soil was no longer sufficiently fertile for farming and was left fallow. The fruit, timber and rubber trees originally planted along with the rice were allowed to grow, initially forming scrub (*sesap rendah/tanah belukar*) or an agroforestry area which eventually became secondary forest (*sesap parimboan*), depending on the type of planting and management³². If someone wanted to cultivate secondary forest which had not been actively managed for over three years, he first had to seek the consent of the original owner, a process locally called *tuek tanya*.

There were also *adat* rules about where plots of agricultural land could be located and the community's collective responsibilities. A widow's land had to be in the middle of other plots. Everyone had to work on the shaman's land once a year and on the land of the community leader and other *adat* leaders twice a year. People had to voluntarily help each other to clear land, cultivate it and harvest crops to make the work easier (even though fields were owned individually) and selected a leader to co-ordinate their efforts.

³² Although (to an outsider) *sesap* looks like forest, it is still called 'land' (*tanah*). The rubber trees in these agroforestry plots soon become unproductive, but the fruit trees are harvested regularly and the area is an important source of timber for local needs, such as building houses.

Livestock owners had to put their animals in pens overnight, while farmers had to protect their fields from damage by grazing livestock during the day³³.

3. Changes in land and natural resource management

Although the Indonesian Constitution says that the state controls all land and the resources on, under and above it³⁴, the people of Guguk have their own (customary) law which they have lived by for nearly three centuries. The fundamental principle was and remains that it should



Liz Chadler [DTE]

Secondary forest (*sesap*) is cleared for fields and agroforestry

³³ *Umo ladang janda harus diletakkan di tengah-tengah, Ladang/sawah bidan (dukun) digotong-royangkan 1 kali dalam setahun, dan ladang/sawah nini mamak digotong-royangkan 2 kali dalam setahun oleh anak dusun yang bersangkutan.... Mengerjakan sawah ladang dipakai sehari-harian/julo (bersama-sama)...Berhumo berladang harus berbanjar merencam bertanam harus serempak dan ditiap-tiap banjar harus ada yang dituakan.... Ternak berkandang malam, humo (ladang) berkandang siang.*

³⁴ Indonesian Constitution 1945, Clause 33, subclause 3

be Guguk's indigenous community who determines how land and resources are used and by whom. Like other indigenous groups, they want their *adat* laws to be recognised by the state. At the very least they expect to be consulted on developments which threaten their land use or their rights to natural resources, such as the allocation of land to logging companies, plantations or transmigration schemes. Consequently, the people of Guguk strongly resented the way that the Suharto government allocated forest within their customary lands as a logging concession. Even today, the status of the remaining forest in Guguk is – according to central government – Production Forest.

Changes were already taking place in the indigenous community of Guguk when Suharto came to power in 1965. Most of the mature forest nearest to the settlements had already been cleared. Gradually, people stopped the traditional form of rotational cultivation and adopted a more settled version whereby secondary forest (*sesap*) was cleared in order to establish plantations of tree crops – coffee, cloves, cinnamon, candlenut, rubber and various fruits. In time, rubber and fruits have become the dominant crops. They also moved their settlements away from the river towards the main road to increase accessibility to markets for their products.

However, national legislation which standardised the village governance in the 1970s further weakened *adat* control over land and natural resource use. The boundaries of villages were redrawn and the people of Guguk lost their collective control over the remaining areas of forest. No longer did everyone help to clear their neighbours' plots and gather the harvests by the traditional practice of *gotong royong*; families worked in their own fields and plantations uncoordinated by *adat*.

Most of Guguk's customary lands are now under individual ownership and are covered with fields, plantations and secondary forest, with the exception of the forest on Bukit Tapanggang which became a logging concession. The community's five-year struggle to gain government recognition of its right to control this area has pulled the community together and brought about a revival of *adat*.

Types of Land Use

Land use	Area (hectares) ¹
Desa Guguk (total)	83,000
Paddy fields (<i>sawah</i>)	140
Other (rain-fed) fields (<i>ladang</i>)	4,500
Tree plantations (now mostly rubber) (<i>kebun karet</i>)	1,200
Customary forest (<i>hutan adat</i>)	690
Other mature forest (<i>rimbo</i>)	700
Plantations/fallow land (<i>tanah perkebunan</i>)	14,500
Young secondary forest (<i>tanah belukar/sesap rendah</i>)	23,000
Mature secondary forest (<i>tanah sesap/sesap parimboan</i>)	37,000

¹ Official data (Nov 2005) from Guguk's Village Head. These categories of land use and the areas may not be strictly accurate. They are estimates, not the result of up-to-date participatory mapping. Also, some types of land use overlap. For example, fields are planted with rubber trees and eventually turn into plantations; fallow land may become secondary forest. Other cultivated areas may be planted with a mixture of tree species for timber and other products (e.g. fruits).

IV. THE STRUGGLE TO PROTECT GUGUK'S CUSTOMARY FOREST

1. Challenging the loggers

The extensive forests on the rugged hills across the River Merangin from the settlements of present day Guguk were zoned as 'Production Forest' by the Indonesian government's forestry department³⁵. Even though this area was part of the Marga Pembarap's customary lands, there was no consultation with the indigenous community. In 1984, it

³⁵ Community representatives are unclear whether this took place in the late 1960s or mid-1970s.

was granted as a 51,000 ha logging concession (*HPH*) to PT Injapsin, a joint company backed by investors from Indonesia, Singapore and Japan.

The people of Guguk were deeply opposed to this decision, but lacked the power to challenge it publicly during the Suharto years because the *HPH* system of forest exploitation formed part of central government policy and the regime was backed by the military. Another reason why there was no open conflict during this period was that, for over ten years, the logging company operated far away from Guguk village.

However, in early 1999, PT Injapsin logged 1,500 ha of forest close to Guguk and the neighbouring village of Parit. Although *HPH* concessionaires were required to carry out selective logging and replanting, PT Injapsin's activities were highly destructive. The people were furious, not least because the timber company had not contributed towards community development during its years of operations, despite the legal obligation to do so.

At this point Indonesia's government was in transition. Suharto had been forced to step down and President Habibie was promising political reform and free elections. His interim government was also drafting legislation on regional autonomy intended to give more political power and financial responsibility to local government³⁶. Indigenous communities throughout the archipelago seized this opportunity to start voicing demands for recognition of their customary rights over land and resources.

It was in the context of this 'era of reform' that the communities of Guguk and Parit dared to confront PT Injapsin and call for a stop to the over exploitation of their forests. Datuk Abubakar went to Jakarta to present a paper about the case at the inaugural conference of the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance, AMAN, in March 1999. The two communities also wrote letters to central and local governments complaining about the destruction of their customary forests and demanded that Merangin district government took steps to protect Bukit Tapanggang.

³⁶ These became the regional autonomy laws No 22/1999 and 25/1999 which came into effect in the year 2000.

The conflict took a turn for the worse when PT Injapsin staff seized three local men who were collecting timber along the banks of the Merangin. The company accused the villagers of illegal logging. A public meeting between the timber company and the community which was intended to settle the charges broke down completely when it became obvious that the concession boundaries had never been officially marked and that the company and authorities were working from different maps. The case went to the local government in Bangko where the forestry service finally established that PT Injapsin's maps were wrong.

The indigenous people of Guguk and Parit demanded that PT Injapsin pay a symbolic fine of one buffalo, 100 tins of rice³⁷, 100 coconuts and other foods including cooking spices, sugar and coffee in accordance with *adat* law. According to the customary chief of Guguk, the importance of this fine was not the monetary value but recognition of the principle that indigenous peoples have the right to control their natural resources. PT Injapsin were also required to pay Rp 42 million (approx US\$ 4,000) in village development funds (*Bina Desa*). It is very unusual for a community to challenge a large, powerful company so successfully.

2. Recognition of *adat* rights

The Marga Pembarap community then submitted its own proposals for management of the forest to the logging company and the local government. Although PT Injapsin's concession rights were only officially due to end in 2006, the company handed the Bukit Tapanggang area back to the community in late 1999³⁸.

Because there was nothing in statutory law that recognised the status of the reclaimed area as customary forest (*hutan adat*), the Guguk and Parit communities started to discuss how best to provide some form of legal protection. Initially, both villages agreed that the forest should be shared as *hutan adat* and called in the local NGO, Warsi, to help them carry out participatory mapping. This first mapping exercise estimated

³⁷ Around 320 kg

³⁸ PT Injapsin abandoned the concession in 2001 because there were so many illegal chainsaw operators that made its operations unprofitable.

Guguk's customary lands at 960 ha, but the result proved controversial. Representatives of Parit, influenced by the owner of a local sawmill, wanted to manage the forest for timber production and claimed a larger part of the area. Eventually, Parit withdrew support for the *hutan adat* proposal. So it was only Guguk that submitted a formal request to the Merangin district authorities in 2001 for recognition of its customary forest.



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The head of the local forestry service and Guguk's community leader agree on the management of Bukit Tapanggung as *hutan adat* (customary forest)

The local forestry service was reluctant to release control over so much land to local people, so the district administrator (*bupati*) set up another mapping team comprised of staff from the Merangin Land Agency office (*BPN*) and the local forestry service plus representatives of both communities to settle the boundary issues. That team decided the total area of the Bukit Tapanggung was only 800 ha and that Guguk's portion of the forest was 690 ha³⁹. Guguk's community leaders then wrote again to the local government requesting official recognition of their customary forest. In 2003, Rotani Yutaka SH, then Merangin's *bupati*,

³⁹ Warsi, press statement, 11/Oct/03

issued a formal statement confirming that this area of customary forest belonged to the people of Guguk⁴⁰.

A large traditional ceremony was held in Guguk in October 2003 to celebrate the *bupati*'s decision. This occasion was also used to make the whole community aware of how the customary forest was to be managed. Representatives of the community drew up a new charter (*piagam*) entitled An Agreement to Manage and Protect Guguk's Customary Forest. Among the rules were that it was forbidden to clear any of the *hutan adat* for agriculture; people who already owned land there could not extend their plots, but were allowed to make use of them by planting tree crops. The heads of hamlets, the village head, *adat* leaders, religious leaders, representatives for women and young people and the village council all signed this agreement.

3. A village regulation

The Guguk community still felt that it was essential to have a stronger form of protection for their forest than the *bupati*'s letter, their historic documents and the new management plans, and that this should be in place before there was any further utilisation of the area. The original charter was an official decree, but it was over 250 years old and written in quite general terms. For example, it is hard to use customary law to prevent outsiders from illegally clearing forest and establishing fields or plantations. Also, the lack of any clear procedure to decide how any forest exploitation should be approved or exactly how much timber could be extracted might lead to a free-for-all. On the other hand, the new charter derived from it was more detailed and adapted to current realities, but had no legal standing. So there was a real risk of overexploitation of resources.

It was agreed that a village by-law, based on the new customary forest management charter, would support *adat* regulations and enable the district authorities to pursue any offenders through the formal legal system. In April 2004, Guguk's village assembly held a public meeting to discuss and agree on the details⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Surat Keputusan Bupati Merangin No 287, 2/Jun/2003, *Penukuan Kawasan Bukit Tapanggang Sebagai Hutan Adat Masyarakat Hukum Adat Desa Guguk*

⁴¹ Warsi, press statement 28/Apr/04

This public meeting was formally opened by the head of the district forestry service and a number of provincial government officials also attended. However, the people of Guguk were still active in providing criticisms and comments on the draft version of the regulation, especially on crucial aspects relating to forest conservation. They raised issues about the need to prevent the sale of forest use rights; the annual quota of timber harvests; the maximum size of trees that may be felled; the amount of timber any individual may extract for personal needs; and the replacement of felled timber⁴². They also discussed the need for broader measures to protect the ecosystem, such as preventing all logging within 25 m of streams and 50 m from river banks.

Other invitees included representatives of neighbouring villages and members of the indigenous communities of Batu Kerbau⁴³ (Bungo



Liz Chidley [DTE]

The boundary of Guguk's customary forest

⁴² Traditionally, an *adat* fee called *bungo kayu* (lit. 'timber interest') is payable when any timber is extracted. This is used to fund replanting.

⁴³ The customary forest of the indigenous community of Batu Kerbau was formally recognised by the *bupati* of Bangko in August 2002 (see http://www.mfp.or.id/v3/h01-1n-cm.php?id=391_0_72_0_C).

district) and Batang Kibul in order to present opportunities to share knowledge and experiences. Staff from Warsi who had helped Guguk and many other indigenous communities to formulate and present their demands to the local authorities were also present.

V. CURRENT FOREST MANAGEMENT

1. Uses of the *hutan adat*

Guguk's customary forest is high in biodiversity. The calls of gibbons and siamangs can be heard at dawn and dusk. Several species of monkey and bears are found there. Pairs of hornbills fly between the trees while eagles circle above the forest. The tracks of deer, wild pigs and even tigers can be seen in muddy ground⁴⁴. Elephants sometimes come through the forest; a group of four came into the village four years ago. At least 84 tree species grow on Bukit Tapanggang, including commercially valuable timber species such as *meranti* and *balam* (*Shorea* spp), *mersawa* (*Anisoptera* sp) and *tembesi* (*Diospyros* sp)⁴⁵. Various kinds of forest fruits are also present, such as *tampoi* (*Baccaurea macrocarpa*), *bidaro* (*Eurycoma longifolia*), *ambacang* (a kind of mango) and *rambutan hutan* – the ancestor of modern varieties.

Nevertheless, the local community does not regard this *hutan adat* simply as a conservation area. The charter attached to the Guguk by-law is a forest management plan which allows for some exploitation and the eventual aim is to run a community-based sustainable logging operation. However, no-one is allowed to use the *hutan adat* for the first five years – this period is for rehabilitation, assessment and planning. The types of forest resources that may be extracted, the methods, amounts and financial arrangements are specified in the by-law along with the fines for any violations. These local regulations apply to all members of the community as well as outsiders.

The functions of the *hutan adat* specified in the village by-law are to provide the community with a source of timber for their homes and

⁴⁴ Local people believe that a tiger's roar is heard at night if *adat* rules have been broken or there is some other problem in the village.

⁴⁵ *Kompas*, 27/Oct/03 The people behind (the protection of) Bukit Tapanggang

village facilities; as a source of honey, fruits and medicinal plants⁴⁶; to protect wildlife; and as a location for ecotourism. Collecting fruits is allowed, as long as trees are not damaged. An *adat* fee is charged for any timber felled to meet domestic or community needs (see footnote 43). Otherwise, people can buy timber from elsewhere or fell trees along the river in areas outside the *hutan adat*. Everyone in Guguk is quite clear about where logging is and is not permitted.

Anyone breaking the local regulation on the use of the *hutan adat* is fined as follows: felling trees, cultivating land or selling timber illegally taken from the customary forest - Rp3 million⁴⁷ (US\$300); damaging forest trees while collecting fruits – a goat and twenty cans of rice or the cash equivalent (Rp500,000 or US\$50)⁴⁸. Any fines or fees collected are divided up between the village treasury (40%), the forest management group (30%), the clan funds (*kas kalbu*) (20%) and the village youth organisation (10%)⁴⁹. If the offender refuses to pay, s/he will be prosecuted through the formal legal channels.

The only exception is the Orang Rimbo who occasionally visit the *hutan adat* to collect non-timber forest products such as tree resins. These forest dwellers have their own customs and do not always respect those of other communities. Because they cause very little damage to the forest, their activities are overlooked.

2. Managing the *hutan adat*

Officially, Guguk's Forest Management Group (*Kelompok Pengelola Hutan Adat*) is responsible for managing the *hutan adat*. This group of 10-15 men, all respected members of the community, was selected by Guguk's community leader in 2003. They carry out regular patrols

⁴⁶ The people of Guguk still use some plants as traditional medicines, for example, the bark of certain trees is used during child birth or to treat fevers; certain leaves also reduce fevers; and the roots of the *pasak bumi* (*Eurycoma longifolia*) make a medicine to cure aches, pains and injuries. However, these species are readily available in secondary forests near people's homes, so the *hutan adat* is not an important everyday source.

⁴⁷ This amount is roughly equivalent to the *adat* fine of a buffalo, 100 tins of rice, 100 coconuts and various spices (see section IV, 1 above)

⁴⁸ Warsi, press release, 17/Jun/03

⁴⁹ *Kompas*, 28/Oct/03



Seedlings are planted to enrich the reclaimed *hutan adat* (customary forest)

of Bukit Tapanggang, including to the furthest boundaries – some two days walk away – then report back to the group’s fortnightly meetings. In practice, the whole community plays a role in protecting the forest as anyone who hears a chainsaw will go to find out what is going on. The group will also approve applications to extract timber from the *hutan adat*. So far, there have not been any such requests as there are sufficient supplies of timber from elsewhere.

The eventual aim of the Forest Management Group is also to actively restore and enrich areas of the *hutan adat* previously damaged by PT Injapsin’s activities, illegal logging or traditional cultivation. It has been helped in its efforts by the district government. In 2004, the Merangin forestry service provided Guguk with 50,000 tree seedlings, worth Rp300 million (US\$30,000) as part of its Watershed Rehabilitation project. These included hardwood timber species such as *meranti*

(*Shorea* spp), species that produce commercially important gums and resins like *mata kucing* (*Shorea javanica*) and *gaharu* (*Aquilaria* sp) and giant rattan (*Calamus manan*). The seedlings, grown in plastic containers, were brought by truck to a site on the bank opposite the *hutan adat*. Forestry service staff also provided some instruction on planting techniques to the Forest Management Group.

The whole community was involved in the forest restoration work on Bukit Tapanggang. The most distant parts of the *hutan adat* were replanted under a work creation scheme (*padat karya*) but the rest was done by villagers working together voluntarily in their spare time. Despite the steep terrain, whole families - including young children and the elderly - planted seedlings over a period of six months. The reforestation was completed by December 2004 and since then, people have returned to make sure the seedlings are weeded and supported. This community effort has been highly successful: some 90% of the seedlings have survived.

3. Conserving fish stocks

The Marga Pembarap indigenous peoples have always regarded the forest and rivers as parts of a single ecosystem. A traditional method of conserving fish stocks is to set up a protected zone or *lubuk larangan*, governed by *adat* rules. Fishing is then prohibited in this section of the river to allow fish to breed and grow. After fish populations have built up, a special ceremony is held and the fish can be harvested.

A *lubuk larangan* was established in the River Merangin close to Dusun Guguk in 2004. The 800m stretch of water is marked by a board strung across the river. The people of Guguk wanted to create this protected area because fish were becoming more scarce due to practices such as stunning catches with toxic plant extracts (*tuba*) or electric currents. They really wanted the village regulation to cover this part of the river as well as the adjacent forest, but this was not possible as different local authorities deal with fisheries and forests. Even so, the community penalises anyone who breaks the *adat* rules pertaining to the river with the same fines as for violating the *hutan adat* regulation. Over the last two years, two people have been fined for fishing in the *lubung larangan* – one from Guguk and an outsider.



Liz Chidley [DPE]

The Merangin river limits access to the customary forest

VI. SUCCESSES OF GUGUK'S ADAT FOREST

1. Positive indications

If the people of Guguk continue to manage their *hutan adat* as planned, this area and its resources have the potential to become an income-generating alternative for the community, for example, through ecotourism. Guguk's *hutan adat* has already received considerable attention from the press and national and international agencies. Around twenty journalists from Jambi and West Sumatra attended the *adat* ceremony held when Merangin's district administrator officially recognised Guguk's customary forest⁵⁰.

Since then, Guguk has become a sort of 'celebrity village' which has been visited by observers from elsewhere in Indonesia and overseas. The visitors book in the village head's house contains the names and positive comments of forestry experts from the Centre for International Forest Research (CIFOR); representatives from the European Union

⁵⁰ Warsi, press statement, 11/Oct/03

and Japanese government; development agencies such as the UK's Department for International Development (DFID); high-ranking officials from the Forestry Department in Jakarta; and many NGOs. There are also visitors from indigenous communities. Villagers from Logas Tanah Darat (Riau) came to Guguk on a study tour facilitated by WWF and DFID to see how communities can protect their forests⁵¹.

Guguk's successful struggle to protect an area of customary forest and manage it sustainably has also been recognised by the provincial government, who awarded the village with the Kalpataru, a prestigious environmental prize⁵². In October 2006, Datuk Abubakar as leader of the indigenous community and Abusama, head of the Forest Management Group, went to Jakarta to receive a CBFM award from the minister of forestry, Kaban.

It is interesting that the neighbouring community, Parit, has recently renewed interest in gaining formal recognition for its customary forest since two of the three sawmills there have closed down. However, it is doubtful whether a large enough area remains to make this process worthwhile.



Information about Guguk's *hutan adat* (customary forest) in the village centre

⁵¹ WWF, wwf.or.id/tessonilo, 1/Oct/04

⁵² *Buletin Alam Sumatera*, Vol I No 7, July 2004, (Warsi), *CBFM di Provinsi Jambi antara Peluang dan Ancaman* p21

Indigenous leaders in Jambi and the NGOs which support them want to encourage the local government to develop policies that support community-based forest management, such as Guguk's *adat* forest by-law. Merangin's *bupati* has provided some support for communities who are fighting to hold on to their customary rights, by officially recognising four *hutan adat* areas: in the village of Pangkalan Jambu, Sungai Manau sub-district (1996), Pulau Tengah, Jangkat sub-district (2002) and Batang Kibul (2006) in addition to Guguk⁵³.

The local forestry service has also been supportive, not only by providing thousands of tree seedlings to regenerate damaged areas of Guguk's *hutan adat*, but also by its action to prevent encroachment from the village of Air Batu. Shortly after PT Injapsin released control over Bukit Tapanggang, Air Batu's village head cleared 150 ha of Guguk's *hutan adat* in order to establish a coffee plantation, (backed by an entrepreneur from the provincial capital). *Adat* leaders and the village head of Guguk reported this to the Merangin *bupati* with the result that the local forestry service stopped the development of the plantation.

Even so, similar steps need to be taken in other districts. The watershed for the Batanghari River and its tributaries cuts across several districts including Batanghari and Sarolangun as well as Merangin, so an integrated forest conservation policy is required to safeguard the whole area. There have been some hopeful signs: Sarolangun's *bupati* closed down two sawmills owned by the police in that district. Also, the local authorities have designated three natural resource management zones in the district strategic plan, although this has yet to be implemented despite discussions between *adat* leaders, local officials and NGOs⁵⁴.

2. Reasons why Guguk has managed to protect its forest

There are a number of interacting factors which have contributed to Guguk's efforts to reclaim control over its natural resources.

⁵³ Some communities in other districts in Jambi have also gained legal recognition for their customary forest. Batu Kerbau received a formal letter from the district administrator of Bungo in 2002; Lubuk Bedorong (Sarolangun district) was waiting for formal at time of writing.

⁵⁴ Warsi, press statement, 15/July/05

a) **Location**

Bukit Tapanggang lies on the opposite side of the River Merangin from Guguk village and the main Bangko-Kerinci road. Logging trails have been closed and an old road built along the edge of the forest in the Dutch colonial era has fallen into disrepair. The only access now to the *hutan adat* is across the fast flowing river by canoe. This makes it difficult to take logging equipment in or logs out of the forest and means the villagers can control access from the more populated areas to the north and east.

b) **Strong *adat* leadership**

Datuk Abubakar has been a community leader since he was a young man and is well known even at the provincial level. He was the traditional leader of the Marga Pembarap community for 11 years until 1957 and Guguk's village head in the mid-1970s. Prior to that he was a member of Jambi's provincial assembly. He was therefore able to encourage people to respect *adat* rules and manage forest resources sustainably⁵⁵. He firmly believes that *adat* remains relevant in today's world and that it is important to protect resources for future generations.



The village charter (*piagam*) is read in public each year

⁵⁵ Customary law does not wilt in the heat or rot in the rain (*Adat itu tidak lekang oleh panas dan tak lapuk karena hujan*), Datuk Abubakar, quoted in *Kompas* 23/Oct/03

c) **Strong local economy**

The people of Guguk can make a reasonable living from rubber and fruit plantations, so they are not tempted to profit from logging or saw mills. They realise that it is only the owners of the wood processing industry and a small elite at village and district levels who get rich from illegal logging⁵⁶.

d) **Education**

Levels of education in Guguk are relatively high, as people can afford to send their children to school and even university. Those who now work as lawyers or in local government can explain the implications of legislation to other members of the community. For example, communities have had the right to participate in local planning since the 1992 Act on Spatial Planning and subsequent operating regulations.

e) **Political environment**

The end of the Suharto government made central government weaker and removed support for logging companies. The introduction of regional autonomy (*UU* No 22/1999 & 25/1999) empowered village assemblies to pass local regulations and created opportunities for greater community participation in democracy and the control of resources.

f) **Community involvement**

The people of Guguk are generally aware of the importance of the law and forest conservation. The whole community is committed to managing and protecting the *hutan adat* because they have been involved in drawing up the rules which were based on customary law.

g) **NGO support**

For several years Warsi has been trying to encourage the Merangin district administration and assembly to pass legislation which recognises areas of customary forest⁵⁷. The NGO believes that this would be more effective in promoting forest conservation than individual village regulations. Prior to that, Warsi ran a programme to promote community-based forest management in a number of villages in Jambi, including Guguk.

⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁷ Warsi, press statement, August 2002, *Bupati Bungo Kukuhkan Hutan Adat dan Lindung Desa*, http://www.warsi.or.id/News/2002/News_200207_CBFM.htm



Liz Chidley [DTE]

Guguk women support the *hutan adat* (customary forest) initiative

WARSI'S CBFM PROGRAMME¹

Elements of this Jambi-based conservation NGO's community-based forest management programme included:

- Documenting indigenous knowledge about natural resources;
- Initiating debate with communities about forest management as part of reciprocal learning;
- Reaching a consensus through discussion about different models of forest management, so that the final decision genuinely represented the communities' position and could be presented to the local authorities for official recognition;
- Helping communities to carry out participatory mapping of agreed areas of *hutan adat* and Protection Forest in their villages;
- Establishing representative bodies to discuss, draft and take forward agreements on forest management that are equitable and protect the environment as decided by the community;
- Drawing up village development plans which improve the local economy while taking natural resource protection into account;
- Developing enterprises to improve the local economy and livelihoods.

¹ Warsi, press statement, June 2002, *Warsi Dorong Pengelolaan Hutan Berbasis Masyarakat*, http://www.warsi.or.id/News/2002/News_200206_CBFM.htm



Warsi worked closely with the community and local authorities

3. New initiatives

Members of Guguk's indigenous community are continuing to investigate new crops that might further improve their livelihoods. Some farmers are experimenting by planting small areas with citrus fruits or oil palm. Oil palm is not yet popular because, unlike rubber, the product cannot be stored to take advantage of price fluctuations. Also, when it is time to replace trees, the soil is hard and dry. There is currently more interest in hybrid coconuts – both as a source of food and for timber, especially as timber prices are rising locally.

It may also be possible to revive production of *kepayang* oil. This non-timber forest product used to be produced locally in substantial quantities in the days before cooking oil made from oil palm was available in village shops. It tastes good but takes a lot of work to extract the oil. The red football-sized fruits of the forest tree (*Pangium edule*) need to be boiled then soaked in the river to remove a toxin. The fruit is then dried for a week before the seeds are extracted, pounded, boiled again and then pressed. Four large pans of *kepayang* fruit produce about a litre of oil. Two foreigners visited Simpang Parit in 2004 and made intensive enquiries about the location of *kepayang* trees, so this stimulated interest in the local community about its potential.

VII. FUTURE CHALLENGES

Although the people of Guguk have succeeded in getting some degree of recognition for their *hutan adat*, they are not complacent. A key issue for the community leaders is how traditional knowledge can be used to improve livelihoods in the community. They are concerned that if - for whatever reason - local incomes decrease, the future of the forest Guguk has tried so hard to protect could be at risk.

In the past, there were 40 sawmills in the vicinity of Guguk and many nearby villages have little or no remaining forest left. Although Merangin's *bupati* closed down several sawmills in Sungai Manau subdistrict, most have simply relocated to the neighbouring district of Bangko. Guguk community leaders strongly believe that the local authorities should close off the tracks used by illegal loggers and refuse to issue any further permits for large-scale plantations in that part of Jambi province.

So far, Guguk has rejected sawmills and oil palm plantations, but it remains to be seen what will happen when traditional community leaders like Datuk Abubakar have passed away. Will the well-educated younger generation continue to uphold *adat* regulations? Are the village regulations on *hutan adat*, *adat* institutions and the Forest Management Group sufficiently robust to maintain sustainable forest management practices? What would happen if the presence of mineral deposits triggered a gold rush⁵⁸?

Around 80% of Guguk's economy currently depends on rubber plantations. This makes the community highly vulnerable if prices of rubber fell or their plantations were damaged by forest fires or pests. The dependence on rubber is likely to increase further if an application by the village administration to Jambi's governor is successful for funding to replace 14,000 ha of agroforestry plots and scrub with more rubber plantations.

⁵⁸ Deposits of gold have been found in the Merangin district: see the local government website <http://www.merangin.go.id/mineral.htm>



Traditional houses in Dusun Guguk

One of the main factors which has protected the customary forest on Bukit Tapanggung to date has been its relative isolation. Now some villagers want to apply to the local government for a footbridge to be constructed across the River Merangin to make it easier for them to use the *hutan adat* for small-scale timber production. There has also been talk of reopening the old Dutch road along the river. But any improvement in transport infrastructure will facilitate access by outsiders, including illegal loggers.

At 690 ha, Guguk's customary forest may be rather small to be managed for community-based sustainable logging. Even though local awareness

is spreading about the fines imposed for violating *adat* regulations, not everyone shares the same values. The western part of Bukit Tapanggung is so far from Guguk that it is particularly hard to protect. If tensions with neighbouring communities over illegal logging are to be avoided, it is essential that they are involved in similar initiatives to protect and develop their forest resources.

The commitment of the local authorities in Jambi to sustainable forest management by communities and recognising indigenous peoples' resource rights is also not clear. Local forestry services have been supportive of initiatives to revitalise areas of customary forest primarily because such measures reduce illegal logging. As long as the requests for recognition of indigenous rights only involve forest areas which the government has zoned as 'Other Uses' (*Areal Penggunaan Lain, APL*) these are not contested. But, as the head of the Merangin forest office explains, "If they are asking for (areas zoned as) Production Forest we may need to be careful. Do these people want to protect the forest or exploit it?"⁵⁹

And, while the *bupati* of Merangin was awarded the honorary title of Depati Mangkuyudo by Guguk's *adat* leader for recognising the indigenous community's rights over Bukit Tapanggung, no similar official letters have been issued to other communities since. Furthermore, after the introduction of regional autonomy, the *bupati* of the neighbouring district Bungko issued large numbers of logging permits⁶⁰, some adjacent to forest areas which communities are trying to protect⁶¹. If local governments – at district or provincial levels – are serious about supporting community-based forest management by indigenous peoples, then government efforts to revitalise *adat* and the management of customary forests and to increase local capacity to do this must be genuinely directed towards improving people's livelihoods and not simply seeking political support.

⁵⁹ Takat Himawan, Kepala Dinas Kehutanan Merangin, quoted in *Buletin Alam Sumatera*, (Warsi) Vol I No7 July 2004, *Hutan Adat, Wujud Desentralisasi Kehutanan*

⁶⁰ *Ijin Usaha Pemanfaatan Hasil Hutan Kayu, IUPHHK*

⁶¹ *Buletin Alam Sumatera*, (Warsi) Vol I No7, July 2004, *Mempertegas Otonomi*