



Forest Peoples Programme

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February 14 2012

Dear Ambassador,

Forest Peoples Programme, Down to Earth, TAPOL and Survival International thank you for inviting us to participate in the Indonesia and East Timor Civil Society Human Rights Roundtable, held at Carlton Gardens on February 7 2012. The wide-ranging discussion held that morning provided a unique opportunity to share with you issues of ongoing concern, identify areas of progress, and be informed on UK policy and the Embassy's work pertinent to these matters.

In the light of your genuine concern for the human rights situation in Indonesia, we are pleased to send you a dossier of additional materials related to two issues discussed during the Roundtable.

The first concerns the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate ('MIFEE') project in West Papua, a State-initiated, agro-industrial mega-project implemented by a variety of corporate entities that, to-date, encompasses around 2 million hectares of traditional indigenous lands. The Malind peoples and others are presently experiencing and are threatened with additional and imminent irreparable harm due to the massive and non-consensual alienation and conversion of their ancestral lands and forests. Many local community groups are calling for our support to ensure the suspension of the MIFEE project until such a time as indigenous peoples' rights have been demonstrably secured in law and practice – in particular their right to give or withhold their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) to any further development thereon.

Forest Peoples Programme and twelve other signatories made a Request for Consideration of the Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Merauke on July 21 2011 under the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's Urgent Action and Early Warning

Procedures. UNCERD issued a formal communication to the Permanent Mission of Indonesia on September 2 2011. Indonesia failed to respond to the communication, prompting the signatories to send a Request for Further Consideration under UN CERD's Urgent Action and Early Warning Procedures on February 6 2012.

The second set of documentation concerns regional approaches to human rights in Southeast Asia. This is an issue which was highlighted during the meeting as of critical importance to a wider, collaborative and mutually strengthening dialogue between Southeast Asian countries currently experiencing significant transitions and transformations in relation to the recognition and protection of human rights.

In December 2011, Forest Peoples Programme, Indonesian NGO SawitWatch and the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission held a workshop on "Human Rights and Business: Plural Legal Approaches to Conflict Resolution, Institutional Strengthening and Legal Reform" in Bali, Indonesia. This event was attended by the National Human Rights Commissioners of Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia, elected Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNFPII) Devasish Roy, indigenous peoples' representatives, members of supportive national and international NGOs, with the special participation of UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter.

A significant outcome was the development of the "Bali Declaration", a regional human rights standard for agricultural expansion in Southeast Asia which reminds companies of their legal obligation to fulfil their responsibilities to respect human rights, even where human rights are not fully respected by States in which they operate and where the legislative framework is weak and loosely enforced. The Declaration also calls on States to fulfil their legal obligations to protect the rights of their citizens, including indigenous peoples, in the face of unprecedented pressure by agribusinesses.

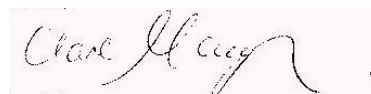
We sincerely hope that you will take the above two issues into consideration and find the opportunity to raise them during your time in Jakarta as Ambassador to Her Majesty. We would also welcome the opportunity of a further meeting with you and the Foreign Commonwealth Office to discuss the two points above in greater detail.

We remain at your disposal, should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



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Clare McVeigh, Down to Earth



Paul Barber, TAPOL



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