

Hutan Harapan has Inspired Global Forest Restoration Program

Hutan Harapan becomes a priority program that has inspired Global Forest Restoration Program. President of NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Union) from Germany, Olaf Tschimpke, said that Hutan Harapan is an initiative ecosystem restoration program and a world class standard for its innovation in preservation of biodiversity, because it is one of the strategic areas and emissions reduction. The statement supported by Richard Grimmet, Global conservation Director of Birdlife International Hutan Harapan inspires “Global Forest of Hope program”. This was conveyed during the opening of Hutan Harapan funding program from the BMU (The Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety) phase II-KFW Development in Berlin on July 19, 2019. “Currently Hutan Harapan inspires 14 countries in the world to develop similar program,” Richard explained at the end of the opening.

Meanwhile, Indonesian Ambassador to Germany, Arif Havas Oegrosono, who also attended the event said that Indonesian government is committed into saving forests and the environment by issuing a moratorium on natural forests, peatland restoration with ambition to restore 2 million ha. Ecosystem restoration is part of the government’s commitment to complying global environmental commitments. “Hopefully Hutan Harapan could become a Center of Excellence that can integrate forest management, preservation of biodiversity. Furthermore, it is important to improve the communities, especially indigenous people in Hutan Harapan,” he concluded.

Hutan Harapan has received funding support from the first phase of BMU since 2008 to 2013. And on July 19, 2019 there was a signing of the commitment from German Government for the next 7 years (phase II, 2019-2025). “We are very proud that this project can continue to last because Hutan Harapan is a hotspot for biodiversity, an example of sustainable forest management through ecosystem restoration, and the most effective way to reduce emissions,” said Berit Von Kurnatowski, a representative of the German government, BMU in her speech. This event was also attended by several German companies, NGOs in Germany and the United Kingdom along with Burung Indonesia and Hutan Harapan Management.

In the final event, Dian Agista-Executive Director Burung Indonesia explained that the reason of Indonesia initiated ecosystem restoration concession (ERC) and chose Hutan Harapan as a pilot is concerning about high rate of deforestation and poor management of natural production forest. The World Bank (2000) publicized that the low land forest in Sumatra will be gone in 2005 due to high deforestation rate in Indonesia. In 1990, the low land forest in Sumatra was still 16 millions ha, it was fall in to 2.2 millions ha in 2000 and in 2002 it has only 650,000 ha remained. “We would break the World Bank’ prediction with an ERC program in Hutan Harapan”, he said. If we can preserve Hutan Harapan with an area of nearly 100,000 ha, we have been able to save 20 % of remaining low land forest in Sumatra. We can prove it until now he added.

Hutan Harapan, even though it is formerly logged but it is still rich in biodiversity. Until now Hutan Harapan is still inhabited by 64 mammal species including iconic animal such as tiger Sumatra and elephant Sumatra. Besides it is found that 307 bird species including 9 species threatened globally, 728 species of flora including 4 critical endangered, and other important species. In conclusion, Hutan Harapan can be a hope for biodiversity and represents biodiversity in Sumatra (**Mangarah Silalahi-CEO Hutan Harapan**).



Fire Status Alert 1 Anticipating El Nino

In 2015, El Nino brought drought and fire to Sumatra and Kalimantan and nearly 10,000 of Hutan Harapan were affected by fire. Since July 2019 Hutan Harapan has been on Fire Status Alert 1 in anticipation of similar conditions. Indonesia’s Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) warned that this year’s dry season coincides with the El Nino phenomenon which started in July and it is expected to last until October.

As Adam Aziz, the General Manager of Hutan Harapan, noted, “In anticipation of a long drought, nearly half of the Hutan Harapan’s staff have been mobilized, and divided into teams. There are two main teams, each consisting of 15 personnel who are monitoring fire-prone points on a 24 hour basis. These teams are supported by four reserve teams (60 personnel) and two community based teams (30 personnel) consisting of Batin Sembilan indigenous communities and employees from nearby plantation companies who do not want forest fires to spread to their land.

The Hutan Harapan firefighter teams have learned from the El Nino phenomenon in 2015 to anticipate forest and land fires by putting into place preventative and counter measure strategies. Prevention strategies are performed by mapping fire prone areas, preparing teams to standby 24 hours, socializing, and educating communities around Hutan Harapan about the dangers and the impacts of fires. Whereas, countermeasures strategies are carried out by monitoring rainfall and hotspots by satellite, monitoring using drones in inaccessible areas and patrolling with the firefighters from the military. “We use GIS (Geographic Information System) with the support of data and information from NASA satellites. Whenever satellite imagery identifies the hotspots in Hutan Harapan, NASA will send an early alert immediately, which is processed and analyzed by the GIS team and then sent to the firefighter teams. With this data, the firefighter teams can respond quickly to find the hotspots and extinguish the fires,” stated Adam.

In nearly all cases, the forest fires during the last two months have been caused by the illegal opening of land within Hutan Harapan. To date nearly 250 ha have been affected by fire. “The encroachers use fire as a means to clear the land to plant oil palm. With the heavy field presence of Hutan Harapan staff it is more difficult to set fires, but it often becomes a cat and mouse game, where fires are stopped in one area, but the encroachers set them in another area. Thus far, 28 people have been arrested by the police for setting fires.

With the rainy season at least two months away, and perhaps longer, there will be little rest for the firefighting teams. “These are going to be difficult days,” explained the Manager of Forest Protection Tobat P. Damanik. “The encroachers will continue to take advantage of the El Nino phenomenon to clear the land by burning the forests.” (**Ardiansyah and Purnama Dwi Nugraha**)



Prof. Dr. Kiyhosi Morita

Improving Health Care for the Batin Sembilan Indigenous Peoples

Bi Erna's appeared unimpressed with her six visitors from Japan who had just got out of the car. She did not move from her seat in her hut in the Simpang Macan Dalam area close to Hutan Harapan. "Bi Erna, these are guests from Japan. They are doctors," said Susan, in a loud voice. Susan is a paramedic from Hutan Harapan's Besamo Health Clinic. Susan explained that her guests wanted to cure her itchiness. Bi Erna's mood changed. She has been treated by Susan at the Besamo clinic for itchiness on both of her hands, but it has persisted. "I would like to get a treatment. I feel my itchiness hasn't been cured yet," she told one of the doctors from Japan, Kiyhosi Morita, while showing her hands to be checked.

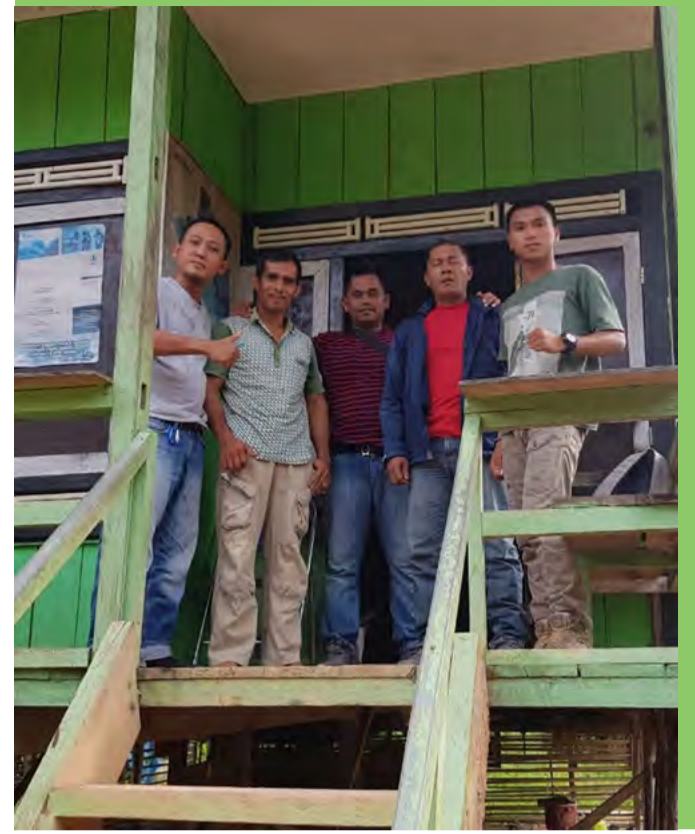
Doctor Kiyhosi Morita is Professor Emeritus from Okayama University Japan. He is not understand what Bi Erna said, but he nodded and immediately checked the red spots on Bi Erna's hands. After discussing with Dr. Momoka Tonan, Dr. Morita explained to Bi Erna, as translated by Fauzan Syamsuri from Burung Indonesia, "Itchiness is common, rub them with ointment and it will go away."

On May 15 2019 six guests from Japan along with representative of Birdlife International Tokyo made a three day visit to Hutan Harapan. Keiko Suzue, Ph.D, the Director of Birdlife International Tokyo along with Mika

Yasuda, a Birdlife Tokyo staff person accompanied four doctors; Kiyhosi Morita, Motomu Kobayashi, Kentaro Sugitomo, and Momoka Tonan. Their interest in Hutan Harapan started with a meeting in early 2019 between Kiyhosi Morita and Princess Takamado, who is the Honorary President of Birdlife International in Tokyo. Princess Takamado, a longtime supporter of Hutan Harapan, and suggested that Dr. Morita visit Hutan Harapan.

This was their first visit to Hutan Harapan and for the doctors who have spent most of their careers in advanced health care institutions or universities, dealing with primary health care issues in the middle of the forest was a rare opportunity. "Many people suffer itchiness, coughs and stomach aches," said Sulis, a paramedic at Besamo Health Clinic, while discussing with the doctors. Even when they are treated, they often suffer a relapse. Once they feel better, they do not finish the medicine, so they become susceptible to the same illness," Sulis added.

This visit is the first of what is expected to be a number of visits over the next few years. In collaboration with Birdlife International Tokyo, the four doctors will visit 2-3 times a year to work with staff on improving health care provision in Hutan Harapan. (ET)



Agung and Harapan Staffs

Celebrating Idul Fitri in Hutan Harapan

Idul Fitri (also known as Lebaran) is a popular religious holiday in the Islamic calendar as it marks the end of fasting in the holy month of Ramadan for Muslims across the world. It is a time gathering with family and friends. For those who far from home, every effort is made to go home for Idul Fitri.

This year Idul Fitri fell on June 5-6 and for staff that are on duty at that time in Hutan Harapan, it means being away from family and friends and away from the many dishes that are associated with this holiday. One such dish is ketupat—diamond shaped packages of rice made from palm leaves and is eaten with meat or vegetable dishes. Coconut milk gives the rice a special flavour.

For Agung Purbasongko the Head of Finance, Administration and Support Services at Hutan Harapan, this year was the first time he was away from his family for the holiday. Idul Fitri is a time for visiting family and friends so Agung was at a loss of what to do in Hutan Harapan. Fortunately he was not alone. Agung decided to visit staff that were on duty in three guard posts and bring along some Idul Fitri snacks, though he did not have any ketupat. Although Agung was far from home, he found new meaning to the Idul Fitri holiday by spending the day with his colleagues in Hutan Harapan. (Agung Purbasongko)

