

“USAID Support for Environmental Programs in Indonesia”

Open Forum with

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Dr Melnyk briefly outlined USAID’s programs in its Indonesian portfolio: Democratic Governance, Economic Growth, People’s Welfare and the Environment, Education, Humanitarian Assistance. Specific programs within the Environmental Portfolio (2003-2008) include: Environmental Services (clean water), Orangutan Conservation, Reduction of Illegal Logging, and a Special Timber Program for Aceh. USAID’s approach to these challenges involves building alliances among the Civil Society, the Public Sector and the Private Sector.

The Environmental Services Program has several priority areas, which are Aceh, North Sumatra, Jakarta and Java. The aim of the program is improved health conditions through watershed management and better sanitation. Since the program was initiated over 61,000 people have gained access to clean water, 12 watershed plans have been developed, and 13,000 hectares of degraded land have been rehabilitated.

The Orangutan Conservation Program responds to a dramatic decline in the species during 1999-2004 to near extinction. This decline is related to an equally drastic decrease in orangutan habitat. The aim is to preserve viable populations in the wild on Borneo and Sumatra through the development of a strategy that involves the relevant stakeholders. The main components of the program are conversation management; law enforcement; and media outreach. The Indonesian Government’s support of the effort was outlined in a National Action Plan unveiled by President SBY at the Bali summit. The expected impact of the program is the preservation of the last remaining wild orangutan reservations

Combating illegal logging involves an alliance of stakeholders which include both conservation NGOs and commercial entities (the Nature Conservancy, Ikea, Caterpillar) An important element in the program has been the development of legal standards covering the timber industry. These

include the establishment of land tenure and use rights; timber harvesting laws; community relations and worker rights; forest taxes; and identification of illegally harvested logs. Through consultations among the stakeholders, monitoring and regulatory principles have been developed that impact the processing and marketing of timber products. This effort has resulted in 1.2 million hectares being brought under improved forest management.

Timber for Aceh (TFA) was an urgent initiative to address both the human and ecological needs in the aftermath of December, 2004 devastating tsunami in Southeast Asia. The TFA's unprecedented alliance between the not-for-profit community and the private sector seeks to supply Indonesia's Aceh province with responsibly-sourced wood products for reconstruction. In the United States; the World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and the American Forest & Paper Association joined forces to support the larger, international TFA effort that is based in Indonesia.

Q: What is the impact of deforestation?

A: The effects are wide ranging. Not only is there an increase in green house gases, but species are threatened and conflicts develop among the communities on the edges of the deforested areas.

Q: What would it take to stop illegal logging?

A: There would have to be a carrot and stick approach. Incentives must be developed to compensate landowners to preserve the forests and increased enforcement of prohibitions by security forces must be obtained. Attitudes must change. Corruption must be controlled.

Q: Is USAID looking at market demand for timber, particularly in places like China?

A: Before 2006, USAID was not authorized to examine the importation of timber into China. It will do so beginning this year. It is a complicated problem. China takes the position that if timber is exported it is legal.

Q: Is there any feedback on the effectiveness of the International Crime Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) in support of law enforcement programs?

A: It clearly is helping the police. However, in the area of preventing illegal logging, there are conflicts between the police's enforcement responsibilities and the Forestry Ministry's management programs.

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