

A monthly digital magazine

#8, August 2018, [www.hutanharapan.id](http://www.hutanharapan.id)

# HUTAN HARAPAN

NEWSLETTER

## PT REKI CALLS ON THE SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL COMMISSION TO INTERVENE

Like many other forested areas in Indonesia, Hutan Harapan is threatened by what seems to be the inexorable expansion of palm oil plantations. Within Hutan Harapan's boundaries there are nearly 10,000 ha of palm oil. Hutan Harapan is an ideal location since it is flat and there are a number of palm oil mills in the immediate area, thus making it easy to process the oil palm fresh fruit bunches (FFB) within 24 hours of harvesting. This, however, is a serious violation of the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) and Roundtable Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) provisions which declare that palm oil can only be sourced from certified plantations. Currently only 12 percent of Indonesia's the 11.9 million hectares of oil palm plantations are ISPO certified.

Based on an investigation by PT Reki, the company managing Hutan Harapan, there are at least seven palm oil processing mills that buy the FFB harvested in the Hutan Harapan area. Among them: the PTPN VI factories in Tanjunglebar and Pinangtinggi, and PT Berkat Sawit Utama (PT BSU, formerly PT Asiatik Persada) on the Kandang River, Bungku. Every day an estimated 50 tons of oil palm FFB from Hutan Harapan in the Kunungan Jaya area are sold to PT BSU.

As a follow-up to the investigation, PT Reki filed a complaint with the ISPO Commission. "We have authentic evidence that PT Asiatik Persada (now named PT BSU) bought oil palm FFB from illegal sources," said PT Reki Director Lisman Sumardjani, in a complaint letter to the ISPO Commission in January 2018.

This complaint has been followed up with a special audit of PT BSU which is registered as an ISPO certificate holder. An audit team from the ISPO Commission visited Hutan Harapan in April 2018 to conduct their own review. Hopefully, with the findings and audit results, PT BSU and other mills will no longer buy oil palm FFB from Hutan Harapan. \*\*\*



## ADDING VALUE TO NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS: DAMAR

Damar is a non-timber forest product (NTFP) found in Hutan Harapan that is prized for its resin. It is used in Asia for incense burning and is also used in plasters, varnishes, and lacquers. Generally, resin is produced by Damar tree (*Agathis dammara*). But the Batin Sembilan Indigenous Peoples in Hutan Harapan take resin from the secretions of Meranti trees of the *Dipterocarpaceae* family, such as Merawan (*Hopea mengarawan*) and Meranti bunga (*Shorea leprosula*). They call it damar mata kucing (cat's eye) and damar batu (stone).



Currently, resin prices are low with Damar stone valued at only USD 0.16/kg, while damar cat's eye is USD 0.40/kg. The low price of this resin is partly due to its poor quality. "The Batin Sembilan pick it up from the ground, not tapped from trees," according to a buyer at the Sungai Bahar market, the nearest market from Hutan Harapan.

With the assistance of consultants, Hutan Harapan is working with the Batin Sembilan to improve harvesting and processing techniques in order to improve the added value. Thus far they have processed small quantities of resin into oil paint, watercolors, varnish and lubricants. Once they have perfected harvesting and processing techniques it is expected that they can obtain better prices in the market place.\*\*\*





## MAKING HEALTH CARE SERVICES MORE ACCESSIBLE

Access to healthcare services is critical to good health, yet the Batin Sembilan Indigenous Peoples face a variety of access barriers. The Bajubang Subdistrict Health Center (Puskesmas) is located about 55 km from Hutan Harapan, thus making it difficult to travel there in an emergency. High travel costs are also a barrier to having routine check ups and screenings. Because they have difficulty accessing health care, their health issues may be more serious by the time they are diagnosed.

In order to improve accessibility to health care, PT Indonesia Ecosystem Restoration (PT Reki) established the Besamo Health Clinic near basecamp. Two nurses provide daily care and doctors are available from the Bajubang Subdistrict Health Center; there is doctor on call and another one who comes once a month to do routine check ups.

When the Besamo Clinic first opened, the Batin Sembilan were initially reluctant to use the clinic, preferring to rely on traditional medicines. Usually they came to the clinic when they were already sick for treatment of common ailments such as, asthma, malaria, diabetes, low blood pressure and respiratory difficulties. But this has begun to change as the benefits of preventive health care are now better understood.

The clinic has an outreach program where the doctors and nurses visit the Batin Sembilan communities to identify trends in common health issues and provide counseling on healthy lifestyles.



Alongside providing improved health care, PT Reki is also working with the Batin Sembilan to identify the many medicinal plants in Hutan Harapan in order to integrate them into health care strategies.\*\*\*

## PROVIDING A SAFE HABITAT FOR PANGOLINS IN HUTAN HARAPAN

Pangolins, often known as “scaly anteaters,” are covered in tough, overlapping scales. They use those scales to protect themselves from predators in the wild. Pangolins will quickly roll themselves up into a tight ball when threatened and will use their sharp-scaled tails to defend themselves. These solitary mammals are nocturnal and forage on eat ants and termites using a long, sticky tongue.

There is no exact data on pangolin populations, including in Indonesia. However, it is certain, from year to year the population of these hard scaly animals is in decline and continues to be under threat due to illegal wildlife crime. The IUCN estimates that since 2000, more than 1 million pangolins have been traded illegally at the international level. Their meat and scales are in high demand, especially in China. The pangolin is now classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

In Indonesia, the hunting and trade of pangolin (*Manis*



*javanica*) is fairly widespread, especially in Java, Sumatra and Kalimantan. In Jambi alone, in October 2016, the police found 2 tons of pangolin meat in a refrigerator in Kilangan village, Batanghari district. In December of the same year, 35 live pangolins were recovered in the city of Jambi.

Given their shrinking habitat, Hutan Harapan has become an important refuge for the pangolin. In 2010, 47 Pangolin, that had been illegally trafficked, were released by the Jambi Province Conservation office (BKSDA) in Hutan Harapan. Then again in 2016 another 15 Pangolin were returned to the wild in Hutan Harapan.

As a home for several important and endangered animals, safeguarding Hutan Harapan is an ongoing challenge. “Camera traps and patrols by the anti-poaching team are critical to protecting the Pangolin and other wildlife in the Hutan Harapan,” according to Elva Gemita, the Manager of Environment and Forest Development Research.\*\*\*

Hutan Harapan is the first ecosystem restoration concession in Indonesia managed by PT Reki as a result of joint initiative of Burung Indonesia, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and BirdLife International. Of total 98,000 ha, 52,000 ha lies in South Sumatera and 46,000 ha in Jambi. Hutan Harapan is aimed to conserve natural habitat of globally threatened species, the critically endangered lowland rainforest, and collaborate with local communities in managing Hutan Harapan as a productive landscape. [www.hutanharapan.id](http://www.hutanharapan.id)



Hutan Harapan newsletter/monthly digital magazine is published by:

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