Introduction

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Forests Indonesia: Alternative futures to meet demands for food, fibre, fuel and REDD+
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Your Excellency President Yudhoyono, Ministers, Ambassadors, leaders of business and civil society, distinguished guests, bapak-bapak dan ibu-ibu sekalian. It is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you to *Forests Indonesia: Alternative futures to meet demands for food, fibre, fuel and REDD+*. When my colleagues and I at CIFOR first began planning this event, we never imagined we would receive so much support from across Indonesia and from around the world.

Today we have gathered an amazing group of the nation's leaders and experts, policymakers and heads of business, civil society advocates and partners from other countries to discuss the future of Indonesia's forests. We hoped to attract an audience of up to 800 participants. As of this morning, we have 900 registered, with many participants downstairs where this morning's speeches are being carried live. This incredible show of interest and support reinforces my belief that Indonesia is at a crossroads in the management of one of its greatest natural resources – forests.

I have been following forestry issues in Indonesia for more than 25 years, and they have never before been the subject of such high-level political attention here or internationally. Substantial financial resources have been committed to forests from government budgets, multilateral agencies, and philanthropic organizations. The private sector is investing as never before in sustainable forest management practices, in response to new market opportunities for sustainably produced products, and for new products such as forest carbon.

President Yudhoyono. Your bold pledge in 2009 to cut Indonesia's greenhouse gas emissions showed that Indonesia is willing not only to contribute to the global struggle against climate change, but to lead that struggle. And your presence here today shows that even though commitments to address climate change from some governments are being eclipsed by the economic crisis, your commitment remains firm.

I know that all of us applaud your government's many actions toward better forest management to achieve your emissions reduction goal – such as the efforts underway to implement the commitments articulated in the Letter of Intent with the Government of Norway. We all want to support your objectives of reducing rapid deforestation while meeting domestic imperatives to expand the economy, to create jobs and to guarantee food security.

Yes, there are some "win-win" opportunities. But I think we all understand that meeting those commitments will require some hard choices. There will be trade-offs and compromises, and leadership from government, business, and civil society will be required to determine a way forward for Indonesia in a manner that is transparent and fair. And that is why we are here today.

The primary purpose of today's conference is to create a space for honest and open discussion among key stakeholders, who together have the power to shape the future of Indonesia's forests. The conference is timely from a domestic perspective, as controversies regarding the moratorium and other policy choices continue to be debated. Government officials, business leaders, and civil society representatives need an opportunity to understand each others' perspectives, and expand the areas of consensus on what needs to be done, and by whom.

Another purpose of today's conference is to reach a better understanding of how the international community can help. In Oslo last June, I heard Minister Solheim explain how Norwegian citizens would be outraged if a delegation from Indonesia arrived to tell them how to manage their oil industry, so he and others from abroad are not here to tell Indonesians what to do with their forestry sector.
But the global community *is* a stakeholder in what Indonesians decide. And it would be unfair to ask Indonesia to take on this agenda alone, given that many of the pressures on Indonesia's forests are driven by international trade and investment. Thus, President Yudhoyono's pledge in 2009 to cut emissions appropriately had one target if the country acted alone, and another, more ambitious target if it received international assistance. We at CIFOR are trying to do our part by providing the information and analysis needed to make informed decisions about the options and implications of alternative pathways to reconciling forest conservation and development.

We believe this conference is also timely from an international perspective. As many of you know, the United Nations has designated 2011 as International Year of Forests. And today we mourn the loss and celebrate the life of Wangari Maathai, leader of the Green Belt Movement, and winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize. Although she lost her batter with cancer two days ago, she had won the battle to place forests and the people who depend on the firmly on the global agenda.

And we are only two months away from the U.N.'s annual climate change negotiations, which will take place in Durban, South Africa. We'll make sure that the key messages emerging from today's event will inform the world in Durban what it needs to do to assist Indonesia as it makes them tough choices to safeguard its forests.

As we have read the newspapers in recent weeks, whether regarding the budget crisis in the United States, the Euro crisis in Europe, or the Middle East crisis at the United Nations, we have been reminded that political leaders are seldom rewarded for thinking long term, or for asking their constituencies for compromise or short-term pain. As a result, we are dependent on the few visionary leaders with the courage of their convictions to lead us to a better future.

Indonesia is fortunate to have such a leader, as President Yudhoyono proved with his 2009 commitment to reduce Indonesia's emissions, and subsequent actions to do so by protecting Indonesia's forests. Bapak-bapak dan ibu-ibu sekalian, it is my greatest privilege to introduce President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to give the keynote address. Mr. President.