



Walhi Newsletter Sixth Edition
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Where Are We Heading To? Doomed Together or Survive Together

FOREWORD

In the face of this alarmingly escalating climate crisis, a real—not mere metaphor, action is required. The devastation of this vast archipelago, a beautiful and affluent country, is inextricably tied to the political decision to pursue an extractive economy controlled by a few people while forsaking the people's economy.

In the 42 years of Walhi, we have been warning the authorities about environmental destruction in Indonesia. However, at the risk of sounding like a broken record, year in, year out, we harvest calamities instead of distributing welfare to the people, because the state rulers do not listen to them.

There are three ways thieves can enter our homes: first, we are unaware, second, they're too strong, and third, because we are silent. We have already been robbed of our rights and access to natural resources of this vast archipelago due to a type of economic development that deprived us of our lives.

Indigenous people and local communities who have been consistently asserted as the best guardians of our planet continue to receive little recognition and protection. Their lands continue to be confiscated and their rights are not protected. And this because, for the last 20 years, we have been unable to distinguish our state administrators from the corporate owners.

How will justice be demonstrated, delivered, and safeguarded for the people when there is such collusion of economic and political power and when those in charge of the country are themselves usurpers of justice?

In the past, Indonesia only had two seasons, the rainy season and the dry season. Now, Indonesia has two different seasons, the flood season and the fire season. This indicates that the threat of extinction is imminent. We urgently need state rulers who develop more sustainable economic policies, integrate environmental protection in decision-making, and ensure that economic benefits are shared fairly by all levels of society. This requires cooperation between government, private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders to achieve balanced economic and environmental sustainability. The remaining options are whether we're doomed together or survive together.

We are thankful for your tireless support. Enjoy the read.

Zenzi Suhadi

Executive Director of Walhi National Executive

SPRING MEETING, DOOMED TOGETHER OR SURVIVE TOGETHER

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank (IMF-World Bank) Spring Meetings, including the G20 Ministers of Finance and Central Bank Governors, were held on April 10-11, 2023, in Washington. The Indonesian government was represented by Governor of Bank Indonesia, Perry Warjiyo, and the Indonesian Minister of Finance, Sri Mulyani Indrawati.

In a panel discussion entitled "What Do Middle Income Countries Want from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)?" Sri Mulyani reminded us that MDBs do not only act as lenders but also as platform providers for collaboration and cooperation between countries. She emphasized the importance of the energy transition and said that MDBs could play an important role in it. On different occasions Perry Warjiyo, emphasized the importance of implementing a policy mix. This includes various policy instruments that can be used by the central bank to maintain macroeconomic and financial system stability as well as support growth recovery.

What was conveyed by Sri Mulyani and Perry Wijayanto indicates that Indonesia's long history of economic dependence on extractive industries, such as mining, large-scale monoculture plantations, and the timber industry, will continue. The narrative of maintaining macroeconomic and financial system stability, as well as supporting a growth-oriented recovery clearly ignores the warnings about potential economic losses due to the climate crisis from the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas). Medrilzam, director for environmental affairs of Bappenas said that Indonesia's potential economic losses due to climate change could reach IDR 544 trillion from 2020 to 2024.

The National Executive Director of Walhi, Zenzi Suhadi, who was among the panelists at the Civil Society Forum Panel "Protecting Biodiversity in a Biodiversity Crisis" of the Spring Meetings, emphasized that, over the past 60 years, Indonesia has experienced environmental destruction caused by an extractive industry-based economic model. This model is damaging the environment and

sources of people's livelihoods, as well as destroying biodiversity. The destructive power of the extractive industry on the landscape and social life of the Indonesian people is inexorably tied from the support of international financial institutions (IFIs).

Furthermore, Zenzi added, the climate crisis, pollution, and threat of extinction of biodiversity are urgent problems that must be dealt with collectively. Too often, IFIs state that solving environmental problems requires urgent action, however, they have to act themselves and change the direction of their financial procedures. Adopting an economic model that respects people's sovereignty in managing natural resources in a sustainable manner is the key to environmental recovery in Indonesia. Recognition of communities' right over their territorial and resources is the most appropriate approach to respecting and protecting the existence of thousands of ethnic groups, indigenous peoples and local communities, who have developed their knowledge systems and traditions of sustainable natural resource management.

On this occasion, Zenzi recalled his childhood experience. "The first big palm oil plantation in Indonesia was funded by the World Bank which took place in my home area in Bengkulu in 1987. I recall when I was a kid, our jungle, lush green forest, turned into a big-scale plantation. I could see with my bare eyes the losses of our livelihoods."

In general, Zenzi presented five points highlighting the importance of saving biodiversity and recognizing the rights of IPLCs over their resources. Two things are intertwined as a way to protect the



Fig. 1: Zenzi Suhadi (left), Executive Director of WALHI, at the Civil Society Panel Forum of the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington DC, April 2023. Photo: WALHI

knowledge system and tradition of natural resource management of indigenous peoples and local communities.

1. Biodiversity Crisis

Indonesia has an enormous wealth of biodiversity but is currently facing significant threats. Unsustainable expansion of extractive industries such as mining and plantations has caused damage to ecosystems and the loss of habitat for various species. Extensive deforestation resulted in the loss of forests, which are home to many flora and fauna. Habitat destruction has also occurred due to land conversion for large-scale monoculture plantations and infrastructure development. Indonesia is facing a serious biodiversity crisis, on par with the climate crisis.

If there are no drastic changes in dealing with the causes of this biodiversity crisis, restoring ecosystems and saving biodiversity will be a very difficult task. It takes a collective effort from the government, society, scientific institutions, and other stakeholders to stop these destructive practices and immediately adopt actions that support the preservation of biodiversity. Biodiversity protection is the key to maintaining ecosystem balance and environmental sustainability. Ensuring the involvement of indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as strengthening international cooperation in conserving biodiversity, is urgently needed.

2. Ecosystem Protection and Recognition of People's Managed Areas

Under the current conditions, where 75% of the world's land area is experiencing significant changes, actions to protect ecosystems are very important. Ecosystem protection contributes to maintaining various essential ecosystem functions, such as providing clean water, carbon storage, soil fertility, and climate regulation. Healthy and intact ecosystems have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and sustain life on Earth.

In protecting ecosystems, it is necessary to make efforts to respect the rights of indigenous peoples, listen to their knowledge and views, and involve them in making decisions related to their territories. Recognition and protection of communities rights over their territories and resources are key to

maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability.

3. Protection of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

The Government of Indonesia is still prioritizing capital accumulation and has not paid sufficient attention to the protection of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC), as well as biodiversity. On the other hand, multilateral investors have yet to adopt significant policies to overcome global problems related to IPLC protection and biodiversity. Bigger efforts and concrete steps are needed from multilateral investors to strengthen the protection and recognition of IPLC and promote the preservation of biodiversity around the world.

The Indonesian government must adopt policies that protect IPLC rights, pay attention to their needs and aspirations, and involve them in making decisions that affect their territory. Multilateral investors must also commit to supporting IPLC and biodiversity protection efforts through sustainable investment policies and practices.

4. Responsible Financing

Responsible financing is crucial for IFIs, they must have a strong understanding of their role in protecting the environment and biodiversity. It is time to carry out a thorough review of the projects they are funding, both ongoing and planned projects. If a project is known to have the potential to damage the environment or threaten biodiversity, the financing must be stopped.

In the context of responsible financing, it is important to recognize and protect community management areas and IPLC knowledge systems for sustainable natural resource management. Recognition of the rights of IPs in managing their territories and maintaining their traditional knowledge is an important aspect in the development of an economic model that is oriented towards restoring ecosystems and biodiversity.

5. Switching from Geopolitical Economy to Archipelago Economy

The geopolitical economic approach tends to emphasize the influence of a country's economic power in international relations. This approach is oriented towards rapid economic growth,

international trade expansion, and a country's economic influence over other regions or countries.

To emerge from the crisis, Indonesia needs to leave the geopolitical economic trap and turn to a sustainable Archipelago economy. The Nusantara economy emphasizes the wise and sustainable use of natural resources and pays attention to the biodiversity in Indonesia. This approach respects cultural values and local wisdom and promotes balanced and inclusive economic development.

OCEAN GRABBING IN FISHERIES CONCESSION

Fisheries Concession (PIT) is a newly developed policy by the Government in order to accelerate non-tax revenue (PNBP) in the marine and fisheries sector, which has been considered too small in contribution. The danger of this policy is to encourage the liberalization of fishery resources while forcing small-scale fishermen in Indonesia to compete with large-scale fishing industries in the Indonesian oceans. The regulation was introduced on March 6, 2023, it is a derivative of the Job Creation Law which has been ruled Conditionally Unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court on November 25, 2021.

There are several questions that must be questioned regarding the urgency of Fisheries Concession Regulation:

1. In the Decree of the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries No.19/2022 concerning the State Fisheries Management it is mentioned that the status of fish resources in Indonesia is 'fully exploited to over exploited'.
2. Based on statistical data from Coastal and Marine Resources, the number of fisherfolk has decreased significantly in the last ten years, minus 460.000 in the period 2010-2019. The decline is due to massive large-scale fishing which decreases fish catches. It is also driven by the worsening impact of the climate crisis and the increasing damage to coastal and marine ecosystems due to exploitative development policies.
3. Law Number 7/2016 calls for the duty of the government to formulate fishermen protection schemes, providing fishery business

infrastructure, and risk guarantees in the form of fishermen insurance, eliminating high cost economic practices, controlling imports of fishery commodities and ensuring security and safety.

However, seven years later, the government has not carried out the main mandate in the Law but instead the government has taken dangerous steps such as the Fisheries Concession Regulation.

The PIT policy also encourages ocean grabbing or the appropriation of marine space. The Transnational Institute (TNI), a research institute based in the Netherlands, mentions 'ocean grabbing' as a term used to highlight processes and dynamics that negatively impact the sustainability of marine resources and the sustainability of people's lives, cultures and livelihood.

The PIT policy can be seen as a red carpet for large-scale industries by establishing 11 Fisheries Management Area (WPP). Nine WPPs are allocated to foreign investors, and the remaining 2 to domestic investors. In this situation traditional small fishermen have to compete with large boats for fishing. If the PIT Policy is not stopped, traditional fishermen or small fishermen will only become spectators in their own seas.

FISHERFOLKS ARE TAKING UP THE FIGHT AGAINST SEA SAND MINING

Despite the threat of 115 small islands sinking due to increasing sea levels caused by the climate crisis, Indonesian President Joko Widodo issued Government Regulation (PP) No. 26/2023 concerning Management of Sedimentation Products in the Sea in May 2023. This regulation reopens the door to sea sand export, which was prohibited for the past two decades. It reflects the true face of the government, which prefers to pursue short-term economic advantages at the expense of destroying the shores, seas, and small islands. This regulation also demonstrates that the president's commitment to international forums to ensure the safety of Indonesia's seas is a hollow promise.

This regulation will further worsen the precarious situation of Indonesian fisherfolks who bear the threat of the climate catastrophe. The global trend of

rising sea levels of 0.8 to 1 meter will slowly but surely submerge coastal villages and small islands.

Walhi has documented the disastrous impact of sea sand mining. In Kepulauan Seribu, northern Jakarta, six small islands have disappeared as a result of sand mining for the Jakarta Bay reclamation purposes. More Sea sand mining will certainly escalate the sinking of other small islands in the area.

Sand mining nearby Kodingareng island, South Sulawesi, resulted in the sea water to become murky and in higher waves, a rise from 1m to 3m high. Furthermore, irregular waves make it difficult and dangerous for fisherfolk to ride their boats to capture fish. Several fisherfolks, together with their spouses and children, had to flee their island in order to make a living elsewhere.

In Riau's Rupert island, sea sand mining has accelerated abrasion and made it more difficult for fisherfolk to catch fish. In East Lombok, fisherfolks affected by sea sand mining for the reclamation of Benoa Bay, Bali, have to go further to Sumba waters to catch fish.

In the midst of the suffering faced by fisherfolks and communities in coastal areas and small islands, this regulation can accelerate the destruction of the coastlines and small islands.

Highly Biased in Business Interests

It is hard not to see that this regulation serves business interests. Article 9 paragraph 2, states that "Utilization of sedimentation results in the form of sea sand is used for: a) domestic reclamation; b) government infrastructure development; c) infrastructure development by business actors; and/or d) exports as long as domestic needs are met and in accordance with statutory provisions.

Article 10 states that "Business actors who will carry out cleaning and utilization of sedimentation products in the sea must have a permit. In article 20 it is stated that it is intended to obtain Non-Tax State Revenue (PNBP) in the marine and fisheries sector.

These articles explain that the regulation was issued to serve the interests of developing reclamation projects throughout Indonesia. Based on calculations by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and



Fig. 2: Dozens of fisherfolks in Rupert Island stand in opposition against sea sand mining in their area, calling for the preservation of Rupert Island and its ecosystem. Photo: WALHI

Fisheries in 2021, 1.870.831,201 cubic meters are needed for reclamation projects in nine areas, including reclamation in Tuban, East Java and reclamation in Batubara Regency, North Sumatra. Until 2040, the government is planning reclamation projects covering an area of 3.5-4 million hectares.

Red Carpet for Other Countries

Singapore is the country that will benefit most from the reopening of the export, as it also plans to expand their land area. According to a UN report by Reuters, Singapore imported 517 million tons of sand from neighboring countries Indonesia and Malaysia in 2019. This volume represents the accumulation of sea sand imports over a two-decade period.

Between 1997 and 2002, Indonesia was the main supplier with an average shipment of more than 53 million tons per year. Currently, the Government of Singapore is planning and designing the third phase of the Tuas Port mega project, which should be completed in the mid-2030s.

Also China can benefit from the export of sand as it is building artificial islands in the South China Sea for military purposes and according to some international reports, China is planning to build a super large sand dredger. These ships can suck up sand and rocks from the ocean floor, and pump them to other locations through long pipes.

Walhi's calls to the Indonesian Government:

1. Revoke Government Regulation No. 26/2023 because it will worsen the lives of coastal communities who live in nearly 13.000 coastal villages in Indonesia.
2. Stop all sand mining and reclamation projects in Indonesia.
3. Evaluate and stop extractive industries in coastal, sea and small islands.
4. Immediately set up a rescue scheme for coastal villages and small islands that are sinking, or will sink in the near future. Immediately declare a climate emergency and issue a climate justice law to protect coastal communities from the threat of the climate crisis.

The call and declaration of demands was followed by consolidation and actions at the regional level, especially in areas where sand mining is currently

taking place.

DON'T GAS ASIA: CIVIL SOCIETY DEMANDS REAL DECARBONIZATION ACTION NOT FAKE SOLUTIONS

On May 4, Walhi and other CSOs joined a demonstration in Jakarta to remind the government to speed up the transition to clean, renewable, and equitable energy. The rally coincided with the 56th annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The demonstration was a protest against the Japanese government having the ADB presidency and South Korea being the host of this year's ADB meeting. Both are the biggest gas and LNG investors in the world. ADB stated its commitment to support the low-carbon transition in Asia-Pacific, but in reality, ADB is continuing to finance gas and LNG projects. Similar "Don't Gas Asia" actions took place in Tokyo, Incheon, Dhaka, Delhi, Kolkata, Myanmar, Chiang Mai, Kathmandu, Lahore, Karachi, Manila and Hanoi. <https://dontgas.asia/>

On May 29, 2006, a gas operation carried out by PT Lapindo Brantas in Sidoarjo, East Java, triggered a massive tragedy called "Lumpur Lapindo," which submerged an area of 900 hectares and left more than 100.000 people homeless. Support from developed countries such as Japan and South Korea and IFIs such as the ADB for LNG expansion poses a considerable risk to the Paris declaration, energy security, and environmental protection.



Fig. 3: Civil society demonstration in front of the Japan Embassy in Jakarta which as Japan is among the biggest shareholders of ADB. The protest coincided with the ADB 56th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors. Photo: WALHI

The expansion of the LNG market is promoted through energy research and roadmaps in, and exploring new LNG projects, worth tens of billions of dollars for LNG projects.

According to the data of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, national oil and gas production is declining in recent years. Plans to make Indonesia become more dependent on gas will trap Indonesia in a vulnerable situation and move further away from energy independence.

An energy sector that moves to gas, LNG, co-firing hydrogen, gasification of coal and ammonia is not preparing an energy transition but is accommodating corporate interests in continuing to use fossil fuels. Indonesia should stop using fossil energy and false solutions and should move to power generated in a clean, renewable, local and fair way.

Methane is the second strongest greenhouse gas after carbon dioxide. A study found that any expansion of LNG would raise hazardous levels of emissions. In addition, the use of fossil gasses will contribute to premature deaths in 96 cities around the world by 2020.

As much as 90 percent of global decarbonization efforts require a switch to renewable energy through cheap power supplies, increasing efficiency, implementing electrification, and by using sustainable energy sources. Success in achieving the goal of a healthy climate by 2050 will depend heavily on the right steps being taken now.

ABSOLUTION OF 3.3 MILLION HECTARES OF OIL PALM IN FOREST AREAS

On June 23, 2023, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment and Chair of the Task Force for Improving Governance of the Palm Oil Industry and Optimizing State Revenue, stated that the government would whitewash or legalize 3.3 million palm oil plantations in forest areas. This 'whitewash' aims to improve the governance of palm oil in forest areas on the condition that palm oil companies will start to pay taxes. Absolution given by state administrators for forest crimes to palm oil corporations that carried out illegal activities in

forest areas is proof that those administrators failed to enforce the law. This whitewash operation is a result of the Job Creation Law, and the amnesty deadline of November 2, 2023 is very prone to become a transactional space in an election campaign period.

Such amnesty regulations are not new, and have been issued in 2010, 2012 and 2015. The government gave corporations operating in forest areas a six-month grace period to complete administrative procedures.

According to Walhi's data analysis, the majority of the companies belong to major Indonesian palm oil groups. In fact, the majority of these companies have committed other violations, such as forest and land fires and land grabs, which have resulted in disputes with the community. PT Bumitama Gunajaya Agro (PT BGA), for example, who challenged their listing as a violator of government regulations is currently in conflict with the community in Kinjil, Central Kalimantan, and has even criminalized three farmers.

Walhi also calculated that the economic losses such as floods, landslides, droughts, fires, which are borne by the people and the state are far greater than the fines that these companies have to pay.

For instance, the case of Surya Darmadi, which was found guilty of corruption in licensing and money laundering, has caused a loss of Rp2.2 trillion in state finances and Rp39.7 trillion in losses to the country's economy. Several Surya Darmadi companies have also applied for amnesty. Losses from forest and land fires are also very large. Losses from forest fires in 2015 amounted to IDR 220 trillion and in 2019 amounted to IDR 75 trillion.

Walhi urges the government to carry out law enforcement against corporations that have been



Fig. 4: Deforestation in the concession of PT Sawit Mandiri Lestari Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan. Photo: Betahita/Ario Tanoto

involved in criminal operations and made huge profits. Moreover, we are demanding heavier fines, such as revoking of licenses and blacklisting.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY, INDONESIA NEEDS A CLIMATE JUSTICE LAW, NOW!

In the last 10 years, the National Disaster Management Agency recorded 28.471 weather and climate related disasters. This figure resulted in 38.5 million people suffering, 3.5 million people being displaced, and more than 12.000 people being injured, missing or dead. This phenomenon indicates a significant escalation of the climate emergency in Indonesia.

In the midst of massive climate disasters, the Indonesian government is still easing the expansion of extractive industries and the development agenda which exacerbates the impact of the climate crisis. This resulted in a number of lawsuits from CSOs demanding the government to be serious in dealing with the impacts of climate change. There are at least seven lawsuits related to climate change, including the issue of coal-fired power plants which contribute to emissions, spatial

violations that increase community vulnerability to disasters, and policies that weaken community resilience. These lawsuits show that access to justice is still limited, as well as weaknesses in regulatory provisions that do not provide adequate protection for the public from the impacts of climate change.

Facing these various problems, a climate justice law is needed as the main legal umbrella to regulate efforts to prevent and control climate change in the long term. The law must include the principles and values of climate justice as the main reference. Until now, even though Indonesia has ratified the Paris Agreement, there is no legislation that specifically adopts provisions related to climate change mitigation and adaptation in accordance with the agreement.

A climate justice laws an instrument that encourages policy harmonization and collaboration across sectors. As the highest legal instrument, this law has the legitimacy to regulate and coordinate the branches of power and direct resources towards effective and just climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. In addition, this law can also build an inclusive and participatory system, as well as establish governance related to climate change to respond to the challenges.



Fig. 5: The operation of PT Yatai Nickel Alloy Indonesia which is only distanced about 20-100 meters from the community's settlement in Mawang Village, Bantaeng Regency, South Sulawesi. Photo: Walhi Sulawesi Selatan

Even though there are regulations related to climate change spread across several levels of regulation, implementation still faces problems, both related to consistency and weak law enforcement. Most of these regulations are very sectoral in nature, so they are not effective in resolving problems and are not in line with the spirit of climate justice. The concept of Framework Law, legal codification, or Basic Law can be an option to regulate this law.

For example, several sectoral laws such as the Mineral and Coal Mining Law are aimed at expanding the extractive industries and coal utilization which are increasing emissions. Regulations related to the Management of Natural Resources and the Environment can also undermine efforts to mitigate climate change through the ease of licensing. In addition, there are also many development projects that are still focused on exploiting and expanding the use of fossil energy, such as oil refineries, industrial areas, and the 35 GW electricity project which is dominated by coal power plants (PLTU).

The Climate Justice Law must pay attention to five crucial issues. First, climate change mitigation which aims to reduce global emissions without compromising people's welfare and the capacity of ecoregions to capture GHGs. Second, adaptation to climate change that increases the adaptability of society, reduces socio-economic inequality, and strengthens the capacity of ecoregions. Third, rehabilitation and restoration of the welfare of the people affected by loss and damage due to climate change. Fourth, active and fair international cooperation in the framework of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Finally, capacity building and the monitoring of the implementation of the climate justice law.

In order to maintain continuity, public participation, information disclosure and access to justice are the main principles in the process of making this law. The participation of various parties, including civil society, the private sector, academics and vulnerable groups must be encouraged so that various interests can be accommodated in the preparation and implementation of this law.

A strong climate justice law must allow Indonesia to comprehensively increase climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, reduce disaster risks, protect human rights, and promote

sustainability and justice in national development. This law will provide a clear framework, empower various stakeholders, and ensure policies and actions are sustainable and in accordance with the spirit of international agreements that have been agreed upon by Indonesia.

On June 3, 2023, the Climate Justice Coalition launched a position paper. Walhi was one of the driving forces of that coalition, the paper emphasizes the idea that climate justice must be a guiding principle for state administrators to deal with climate change issues. The Bill must be based on clear principles and measurable goals such as keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees, push enhancement of public resilience, open access to recovery funds to address loss and damage.

WE DON'T NEED HEROES

Professor Emil Salim rejected the Climate Hero Award from the Foreign Policy Community Indonesia (FPCI) because he felt he failed to implement the 1992 Rio convention. He was assigned by the 2nd President of Indonesia to sign the two Rio 1992 conventions at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Emil Salim said that when he read the report on the implementation of the convention in 2022, he found that all governments in the world, including Indonesia, failed to implement the Rio convention. The report criticized Indonesia's implementation of the convention as poor, low and unsatisfactory.

One of the clear indicators is the fact that Indonesia's ranking as the second largest forest country in the world was downgraded to the third largest. This shows that efforts to save nature,



Fig. 6: Prof. Emil Salim (center) rejects the Climate Hero Award as Indonesia's First Minister of the Environment, at the 2023 Indonesia Net-Zero Summit in Jakarta. Photo: Barisan.co

forests and biodiversity in Indonesia are not achieving the expected results.

The consequences of this downgrade are rising sea levels, land subsidence, weather changes, decreased rainfall, and so on. As a result, human life has to face the crisis of drinking water, food, and various other problems.

Emil Salim's statement illustrates his disappointment with the failure to protect the environment and its implications for human life. He highlighted the need to address the ecological challenges faced as a result of non-compliance with the 1992 Rio convention.

Zenzi Suhadi, Executive Director of Walhi, an organization co-founded by Emil Salim, expressed the importance of the attitude shown by Emil. For Zenzi, it was not just a rejection of an award, it was an expression of a deep conscience. As a representative of Indonesia at the Earth Conference 1992, Emil Salim had witnessed the agreement of all participating countries to save the earth and its biodiversity.

It proves that he had reflected deeply on the points of agreement and examined the commitments and actions that participating countries have taken since then. Zenzi argues that there are two aspects that need more examination.

First, there is a clear contradiction between the policies adopted by countries, including Indonesia, and the commitments pledged in Rio. The question that arises is to what extent current policies are in line with commitments made in the past. This involves an evaluation of programs such as FOLU Net Sink and Net Zero.

Second, there is a need to compare current commitments (such as the Paris Agreement) and those made in Rio de Janeiro. This can provide an in-depth understanding to what the extent current policy makers are willing to address the ecological crisis.

Zenzi Suhadi also highlighted policies that are counterproductive, such as the Omnibus Law, legalization of sea sand exports, amnesty for palm oil corporations that destroyed 3.3 million hectares of forest, and a number of other policies. He urged the policy makers to dismantle these policies. In this context, Emil Salim's refusal to accept the award is a call for more coherence and honest commitments. A

call to act more seriously in realizing the harmony between words and actions, between commitment and implementation, in order to protect the earth and maintain its biodiversity.

In the midst of the irresponsible attitude of our authorities in issuing destructive regulations on natural resource management, Emil Salim's example is a moral guide to determine what kind of character is needed to bring this great nation to salvation. We don't need heroes, we need a clean and responsible government.

2023 WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY: CONSOLIDATES IDEAS FOR AN ECOLOGICALLY JUST INDONESIA

In commemoration of World Environment Day, Walhi's annual event 'Environmental People's Week 2023' ran from June 04-05. This year's celebration was divided into two main events, a long Climate Justice March from the Hotel Indonesia round about to the YLBHI Office and a series of parallel discussions on June 05.

After a week-long round of discussions on various themes on various campuses in the country the celebration of Environment Day was opened with a carnival that marched from Bundaran HI to the YLBHI building, where a cultural stage was held.

The voices and demands of the people for a more equitable change in Indonesia were conveyed through the environmental carnival. The participants consisted of civil society organizations, youth movements, grassroots communities and various other elements of society. They all expressed their



Fig. 7: WALHI's annual event 2023 Environmental People's Week kicks off with a carnival commemorating World Environment Day, which is organized in collaboration with civil society organizations and communities. Photo: WALHI

voices by using distinctive attributes that represented their issues of concern.

At the YLBHI building, the carnival was greeted by symbolic drum beats, performed by the National Executive Director and National Board of Walhi. The event then continued with speeches, including various figures from various circles, such as Muhidin M. Dahlan, KASBI Chairman Unang Sunarno, Dewi Kartika from the Consortium for Agrarian Reform (KPA), and Umbu Wulang Tanamaah Paranggi from Walhi. These speeches invited all citizens to believe in the ideas of the people, and take steps together in fighting for those ideas that will bring more socially and ecologically just Indonesia.

The speech of Zenzi Suhadi, emphasized the environmental damage that Indonesia is currently experiencing, a result of the country's political decisions as it is trapped in an extractive economy, without being able to recognize and appreciate the uniqueness and economic potential of its people.

"The state has failed to distinguish between shareholders and mandate holders. Those who manage the country feel as if they own the country," said Zenzi. He emphasized that the Indonesian people are the rightful owners of the archipelago's natural wealth, which is currently being seized by a handful of individuals. Zenzi invites everyone to stand firm in the homeland, swim in the ocean that belongs to us, as an effort to remind the usurpers of the people's rights that this archipelago still has its owners.

Cultural performances illustrated the situation of the people, the environment and natural resources in Indonesia. An exhibition of Wilayah Kelola Rakyat products was also organized, aiming to show that sustainable management of natural resources by many communities is the foundation of the nation's economic strength. Not to forget, talk shows involving youth in talking about the environment and politics, reminded the importance of the principle of justice between generations as a foundation for the country.

On June 5, a public discussion was held at Park Regis Kemang on June 5, 2023 with an invitation to the people to re-explore the values of Pancasila as a common ground to reflect and unite ideas towards an ecologically just Indonesia.

NUSANTARA FUND: DIRECT FUNDING TO IPLCs TO SCALE UP CLIMATE CRISIS MITIGATION

On May 08, 2023, three Indonesia's largest environmental and indigenous organizations, WALHI, AMAN and KPA, launched Nusantara Fund, the first direct fund to support Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) in Indonesia. The fund aims to establish support for IPLCs' initiatives to protect and manage their resources to increase their contributions in reducing emission related to deforestation and forest degradation, increase carbon stocks and improve their quality of life.

Before it was launched, 30 pilot projects were taking place. The farmers community in Ibun village, West Java, was among those who received 50 million rupiah from the Nusantara Fund pilot projects. Communities in Ibun understand the importance and benefits of land management for the preservation of the ecology and climate. In managing their land, they intercrop with other plants because it is said to provide fertility to the land. Furthermore, it helps in ecological rebound and increase biodiversity.

With the help from Nusantara Fund, the Ibun community is able to improve the governance of their managed areas. "We now have a coffee production house, slowly but surely we are improving the quality and quantity of our production, while doing the preservation of the environment," said Undang Syahrudin, farmer from Ibun.

While efforts to combat the climate crisis continue, IPLCs have been consistently asserted as the best guardians of our planet. Growing research in the past ten years has shown how IPLCs have contributed significantly in stopping deforestation, protecting biodiversity and even improving public health. Yet, less than one percent of global development funds reach them directly. While at the same time they are increasingly threatened due to weak protection and recognition from the government.

The Nusantara Fund is set to be supporting system for IPLCs in Indonesia to get recognition and security of rights over land and resources and

strengthening of IPLCs governance system, management system and sustainable livelihoods and also to support and empower IPLCs organizations and networks to allow them to continue doing the work they have been doing so effectively with so little support.

This fund is part of the \$1.7 billion pledges of both government and philanthropist organizations which was announced at COP 26 in Glasgow. The goal is to invest in Indigenous peoples and local communities in helping to safeguard the biodiversity of tropical forests that are critical in protecting the planet from climate change, biodiversity loss, and pandemic risk. In the first year since the pledge, 19% (almost \$322 million) of \$1.7 billion was disbursed, but only 7% of \$322 million went directly to indigenous peoples and local communities.

“The people closest to the problem are the same people who can solve it. This is not just a metaphor, it is a necessity,” President of the Ford Foundation Darren Walker said at the launch of Nusantara Fund in Jakarta on May 08 2023. The foundation is among the 22 groups who pledged 1.7 billion USD over five years.

Kevin Currey, Ford Foundation's Natural Resources and Climate Change Program Officer shares from the funder's perspective. “The more money we can get to the local level, the more we can devolve decision making to people on the ground in communities who know it's really needed, the better off will be,” said Kevin, adding that these new direct funds are going to be very important in providing a new pathway for philanthropist organizations to support communities more directly.

IPLCs, best guardians of the planet

Indonesia is wealthy as the country is home to a myriad range of ecosystems that support a diverse range of biodiversity, earning it the title of second most biodiverse country. In terms of cultural diversity, Indonesia has more than 1.300 ethnic groups that have been officially registered by the government, with thousands more who have not.

Indonesia's wealth in terms of biodiversity and culture should serve as the foundation to build its nation. However, today's situation is pretty alarming. At present, the number of cultural diversity, biodiversity loss of IPLCs are gradually



Fig. 8: Launching of Nusantara Fund. Photo: WALHI

decreasing due to the relentless expansion of extractive industries.

Data from WALHI in 2019 show that at least 33.000 villages have disappeared to date. The gradual erasure of IPLCs and their knowledge marks not only an irreversible loss for Indonesia, but also for the world.

According to Zenzi Suhadi, Executive Director of Walhi National, the two crises that the world is currently dealing with, climatic and economic crises, are the result of economic development being prioritized and putting aside the social and environmental concerns.

Indonesia is experiencing an environmental crises and contributes massively to the release of emissions in the last sixty years because the country has deliberately concentrated its economy on extractive industries and failed to recognize the characteristics and long history of the people of the archipelago who used to shape their social, environmental and economic order by adapting to nature.

"With this Nusantara Fund, we have to put our trusts to those who are on the front lines (IPLCs). They are not objects of development. They have big potential to address the climate and economic crises." Said Zenzi, referring to the rich yet irrevocable knowledge of IPLCs, they play vital roles in combating the crises and contributed greatly in protecting the planet.

"We don't have an alternative planet, but we do have an alternative economy," added Zenzi, "with the fund from Nusantara Fund, the communities are able to restore their environment and economy". Zenzi expects that the community's production will help build the road for the economy to grow in the right direction. "The right path for this nation is the people's economy, which restores the environment, protects people's rights, and develops the economy."

In line with Zenzi, Secretary General of AMAN–Indonesia's largest indigenous group, Rukka Sombolinggi stated, "IPLCs is the biggest private sector. The biggest private sector comes from the villages, the communities. When all of the businesses of the villages are incorporated into one, we are the largest private sector."

Global recognition and potential of scaling up

With the hope of greater global recognition and awareness of IPLCs roles, the potential of scaling up this fund is there. These kinds of funds have actually been around for about ten years and have shown very good results. The Nusantara Fund follows the first direct fund that has been given to other countries such as the Mesoamerica Fund in Central America.

David Kaimowitz, Program Officer Chief at The Tenure Facility, is confident that over time the number of these funds will continue to grow and spread to other countries. There is growing donors' proclivity to enhance the possibility to support this kind of model because it actually helps us reach our goals in combating the crisis.

"One thing I was thinking of is the amount of money involved here is quite small. Usually one would think that is not newsworthy because other people are pledging billions of dollars, why be interested in \$3 million? But precisely what is newsworthy is that these territorial funds are well positioned to accomplish with a few million dollars what governments and big donors have not been able to do even though they throw huge amounts of money at these things." added David Kaimowitz.

These relatively small funds might not make into a headline, but they make the news and make big differences. In contrast to what we are used to hearing when hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in a certain project, the results are sometimes unclear or even disastrous and merely add to the severity of climate crises. However, with this direct support and the hope that it will continue to increase in the future, it is making a significant difference that, in many respects, can be more successful because communities on the ground know best how to manage and are also becoming more organized.

What WALHI, AMAN, and KPA are doing is just the beginning of bigger things that are bound to happen. We need to get the message out about the significant roles of indigenous peoples and local communities in protecting our planet. They are the best guardians of the planet for no reason.[]