



WWF *for a living planet*

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Press Release

For immediate release – 12 February 2007

A third of Borneo to be conserved under new rainforest declaration

Bali, Indonesia – An historic declaration to conserve the “Heart of Borneo” was officially signed today between the three Bornean governments - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia. The tri-country declaration will conserve and sustainably manage one of the most important centres of biological diversity in the world, covering approximately 220,000 square kilometres of equatorial rainforests – almost a third of the island.

“This is an historic occasion which marks new collaboration between our three countries,” said Mr MS Kaban, the Indonesian Minister of Forestry. “This will put the Heart of Borneo on the world stage as one of the last great blocks of forest in the world.”

The Heart of Borneo Declaration, signed by ministers from the three South-east Asian countries at an official ceremony held in Bali, is a lifeline for Borneo’s rainforests that are threatened by unsustainable logging, forest fires and forest conversion for plantations. Since 1996, deforestation across Indonesia has increased to an average of 2 million hectares per year and, today, only half of Borneo’s original forest cover remains.

The island is home to 13 species of primates, 150 species of reptiles and amphibians, over 350 species of birds, and around 15,000 species of plants, and continues to be the source of many new discoveries – more than 50 new species were discovered last year alone.

“This event is more than symbolic as it represents a commitment between our three countries to conserve and sustainably manage the Heart of Borneo,” said Dato Seri Azmi bin Khalid, Malaysian Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

“It has become clear since we started to discuss cooperation on the vision for the Heart of Borneo that the world outside our countries is excited by what we are doing and is prepared to lend us support,” said Pehin Dr Awang Haji Ahmad bin Haji Jumat, Minister of Brunei Darussalam’s Industry and Primary Resources.

“Future generations will look back on this occasion and admire the leadership and courage shown by the three governments today to conserve the Heart of Borneo,” said Dr. Dionysius Sharma, WWF-Malaysia’s Chief Executive Officer. “That three countries have come together with a shared vision that will promote sustainable development, protect vital natural resources and reduce poverty, should be an inspiration to everyone.”

WWF has supported the three governments in their desire to conserve the Heart of Borneo since the announcement of their joint intention at the Convention on Biodiversity in Brazil in March 2006. “WWF stands ready to assist Borneo’s three governments in realizing the groundbreaking commitment they have made today,” added Sharma.

For further information:

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

- The Heart of Borneo Declaration also formally ends the plans to create the world’s largest palm oil plantation in Kalimantan along Indonesia’s mountainous border with Malaysia. The scheme – supported by Chinese investments – was expected to cover an area of 1.8 million hectares and would have had long-lasting, damaging consequences to the Heart of Borneo.