

Press Release: Sorong, August 24, 2020

Appreciation for Sorong District Head, Jhony Kamuru, for the Revocation of Palm Oil Plantation Company Permits of PT. Mega Mustika Plantation in Distrik Klaso, Distrik Moraid, and more generally in Lembah Klaso, Sorong District, West Papua.

On Friday, August 14, 2020, in Della Village, Distrik Selemkai, Sorong District, Sorong District Head (Bupati), Dr. Johny Kamuru, S.H. M.Si, delivered three government documents on the revocation of palm oil plantation company permits of PT. Mega Mustika Plantation, to the Indigenous Moi communities. The documents were accepted by the head of the Klaso Customary Council, Danci Ulimpa.

The three documents comprised of (1) Sorong District Head (Bupati) Decree No. 521/Kep. 223/VIII/Year 2020, on the Revocation of Sorong Bupati Decree No. 221 Year 2011 on Granting Location Permit for Palm Oil Business Purposes of PT Mega Mustika Plantation in Distrik Moraid, Sorong District, West Papua Province; (2) Sorong Bupati Decree No. 521/Kep. 224/VIII/Year 2020 on Revocation of Sorong Bupati Decree No. 660.1/16/Year 2013 on Environmental Permit for Palm Oil Plantation Activity and Palm Oil Mill of PT. Mega Mustika Plantation in Distrik Moraid and Distrik Klaso, Sorong District, West Papua Province; (3) Sorong Bupati Decree No. 521/Kep. 225/VIII/Year 2020 on Revocation of Sorong Bupati Decree No. 660.1/127/Year 2014 on Plantation Business Permit of PT. Mega Mustika Plantation.

It is stated that the decision to revoke the permits for palm oil company PT. Mega Mustika Plantation (PT. MMP) considered the technical team's study and PT. MMP's negligence of regulations and its responsibilities, as well as requests from the Moi and Klaso Indigenous communities, the Klaben Youth Student Association and Yayasan Pusaka.

"Since 2012, the Moi Indigenous communities from Kalaben and surrounding area have fought and voiced opposition against the granting of permits for palm oil plantation business on our customary land and forest. We have customarily rejected it and have staged actions in protest, met with the district government all the way to the national government. We are worried that our customary forest will disappear and Indigenous People will lose its source of livelihood until we become miserable and poor," explained Sem Vani Ulimpa, a Kalaben youth figure and Head of AMAN Malamoi.

Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat's study (2019) on the legality of PT. MMP's permits and its potential impacts found that the process and establishment of the permit policies neglected the customary rights of local communities, had minimal participation and consent from communities, had discrepancies in the forest management interests, and a concentration in the control of land by the company group Ciptana Group as the owner of PT. MMP as it also owns three additional companies in Sorong District and Teluk Bintuni District. The total area controlled by the group exceeds the maximum area allowed of 20,000 hectares in one province, as regulated in Agrarian Minister/Head of National Land Agency Regulation No. 2 Year 1999.

The Sorong District Government has demonstrated its commitment and promise to the Moi Indigenous People to revoke the palm oil plantation company permits of PT. MMP. The Moi Indigenous Communities and civil society organizations appreciate the policy and step taken by the Sorong Bupati.

"This policy deserves appreciation, support and should be expanded, primarily in the context of realizing good governance, protection and respect for Indigenous rights, and sustainable development in support of the Moi Indigenous communities. We hope this step forward can be followed by other regional leaders," said Loury da Costa, Director of Perkumpulan Bantan Hukum Keadilan dan Perdamaian Papua.

The Sorong Bupati, Dr. Johny Kamuru, S.H., M.Si, during the delivery of the decision, stated "I present this Bupati Decree on the revocation of palm oil permits so that this forest can return to the people, the people protect the forest, take care of nature, nature will also take care of the people".

The Sorong Bupati's statement is in line with the policies outlined in the Sorong District Regional Regulation No. 10 Year 2017 on the Recognition and Protection of the Moi Indigenous Peoples in Sorong District, and Bupati Regulation No. 6 Year 2020 on the Guidance for Recognition and the Determination of the Existence and Rights of the Moi Indigenous Peoples over the Customary Lands and Forest in Sorong District.

"We hope the Sorong Bupati will immediately publish the decision to determine and recognize our existence and rights over the Indigenous land and forest in Kalaben, as well as all the Moi customary areas in Sorong District," stated Sem Vani Ulimpa.

Since 2018, the Moi Indigenous communities in Kalaben have submitted social documents, information and data related to the subject and object of rights over customary land and forest, customary forest management, including maps of customary land and forest, to be

determined and recognized as customary rights as stipulated in the Sorong District Regional Regulation No. 10 Year 2017 and Bupati Regulation No. 6 Year 2020.

Thank you.

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This press release was prepared and supported by:

1. PD-AMAN Malamoi,
2. PD-AMAN Sorong Raya,
3. Perkumpulan Bantuan Hukum, Keadilan dan Perdamaian,
4. Perkumpulan Belantara Papua,
5. Papua Forest Watch,
6. Yayasan Pusaka Bentala Rakyat,
7. Ikatan Keluarga Besar, Pemuda, Pelajar dan Mahasiswa Kalaben
8. Gempar-Sorong Raya
9. Dewan Pemuda Adat Region Papua
10. Dewan AMAN Nasional Region Papua-Barat
11. Forum Studi Noken Ilmu
12. Komunitas Sagu Bakar
13. Sanggar Alam Semesta Selemkai (SALSES)
14. Pemuda Klaben
15. DPP-IWARO
16. IKMR-Ikatan Kampung Malaumkarta Raya
17. Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar Kampung Klaili Raya
18. Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar dan Mahasiswa Kampung Kawakek Raya
19. Sawit Watch Indonesia

Thank you

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