

People of Riding Viillage and PT. Bumi Mekar Hijau Sign Forestry Partnership

Palembang, 21 April 2017 –The Ministry of Forestry and Environment (KLHK), through the Directorate-General of Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership (PSKL), is actively carrying out its Social Forestry program. This involves awarding permits for forestry management to village forests and for the use of communal forests and owned plantations.

This forest protection and recognition scheme targets forests subject to rights and forestry partnerships. This position was outlined by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's Director-General for Social Forestry and Environmental Partnerships, Hadi Daryanto. He noted this while handing over a Partnership Agreement to the people of Riding Village. These villagers had entered into a forestry partnership with APP supplier PT Bumi Mekar Hijau (BMH) on April 21, 2017 in Riding Village, Ogan Komering Ilir district, South Sumatra.

“The government welcomes forestry partnership efforts undertaken by the community in collaboration with the private sector. This effort supports the Social Forestry Program which will affect 12.7 million hectares of land,” explained Daryanto.

Since 2005, the people in Riding Village have made claims over areas within PT BMH’s concession which are licensed to commercially develop timber from industrial forests. The disputed area had been used for agricultural purposes by the people of Riding Village. During this period, these villagers had used slash and burn techniques to clear farm land; this was well before the company’s operation started.

Impartial Mediator Network (IMN) Director, Zazali, noted this land conflict, which was resolved between PT BMH and the people of Riding Village, is exemplary in conflict resolution faced jointly by communities and private companies. “The conflict resolution in Riding Village is a good case study for other tenurial conflicts,” said Zazali, whose organization had also mediated conflicts between PT Surya Hutani Jaya and the people of Manamang Kiri Village in East Kalimantan.

PT BMH President Director, Jhonson Lumbang Tobing, says prolonged conflicts fail to benefit both communities and companies. “It is time to work together and support each other: for us all to make progress. I strongly support the forestry partnership concept which the Indonesian government is promoting through social forestry activities,” said Tobing.

He added, the forestry partnership will cover an area of 10,000 hectares. “The management zones of this forestry partnership will be directed to the protection of river borders, green spaces for ox feeds, crops, settlements, as well as acacia plantations intercropped with food crops,” he said.

“Through the partnership, the acacia plantation will be used as a raw material supplied to PT OKI Pulp and Paper,” Tobing added.

In this conflict resolution, the government, through the Directorate for Tenurial Conflict Resolution and Customary Forest, played an active role in facilitating a resolution. This came about on March 16, 2016. On that day, PT BMH and the people of Riding Village signed both the reconciliation agreement and the partnership agreement. (***)

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