

Regents ‘unaware’ of climate change

JAKARTA: Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan admitted that the office was facing problems preventing the release of emissions from the forest sector as many regents remained unaware of climate change affairs.

“Many of the regents do not understand about climate change – how can local people living in remote nearby forest areas be informed about it?,” he told a workshop on climate change on Tuesday.

He said that regents could not comprehend statements from President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on dealing with climate change.

“What they know is the prices of commodities such as cacao and palm oil products are now soaring, so they convert the forest land into plantation areas,” he said.

The government pledged to slash 26 percent of domestic emissions by 2020, with some 14 percent coming from the forest sector.

Indonesia and Norway had signed a US\$1 billion climate partnership aimed at stemming forest losses, which have currently reached over 1 million hectares per year.

The deforestation was blamed on massive forest conversions for mining and oil palm plantations. – JP