

Greenpeace wants firms to stop deforestation

Greenpeace Indonesia has called on consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble (P&G) to stop sourcing palm oil from firms responsible for destroying the natural habitat of the orangutan and Sumatran tiger.

Greenpeace Indonesia found that orangutan and tiger habitats had been cleared for plantations linked to P&G's suppliers, including publicly listed PT BW Plantation and Malaysian multinational Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad (KLK), in West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, parts of Sumatra and Belitung Island.

"They need to immediately stop supplying from producers who destroy the forests and habitats of protected animals. They have to realize that forests are of extreme importance to our lives in many ways," Greenpeace's forest campaigner and researcher, Annisa Rahmawati, said on Wednesday.

Greenpeace has been confronting P&G over the last eight months, urging the firm to comply with the government's forest conservation policy and change its products to forest-friendly ones. P&G produces brands such as Head & Shoulders, Gillette, Pampers, Wella and Oral-B. "Some 144,000 hectares of orangutan habitat were cleared for plantations between 2009 and 2011, and the figure is rising as we continue to discover deforested areas at many sites in Kalimantan and Sumatra," she said.

Five years ago, the number of orangutan in Sumatra and Kalimantan stood at 6,500 and 55,000, respectively, while today's figure is estimated to have decreased by more than 20 percent. The rampant clearance of forests has also reduced the number of Sumatran tiger to fewer than 400.

Both the Sumatran tiger and orangutan are on a list of the world's most endangered animals, compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Meanwhile, senior forest campaigner Wirendro Sumargo said they had found several dead orangutan near the Tanjung Puting National Park in Central Kalimantan, where BW Plantation's subsidiary, PT Bumi Langgeng Perdanatrada (BLP), operated.

Wirendro said the firm was responsible for the deaths of many orangutan in that area. "We also found [BW Plantation's] subsidiaries, PT Adhyaksa Dharma Satya and PT Wanacatur Jaya Utama, clearing thousands of hectares of forested areas where orangutan live on their plantations. Both companies are likely to continue destroying the forests since they have been given concession rights to manage these vast areas," he said, adding that Adhyaksa Dharma and Wanacatur Jaya had respective concession rights for 5,446 hectares and 9,400 hectares of forests.

Contacted separately, BW Plantation's corporate secretary, Kelik Irwantoro, rejected the claims.

Kelik said the company always promoted sustainable development in its business practices.

"We are responsible for developing our business; we are not destroying the forests and animal habitats as Greenpeace is saying. We believe in order to further our business, we need to take care of the environment," he told The Jakarta Post.

