

HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

PATRICIA A. FORKAN
President

April 4, 2006

Ambassador Robert Portman
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ambassador Portman,

On behalf of Humane Society International (HSI), I am writing to express my support for the ongoing efforts of the United States and Indonesia to combat illegal logging and the associated illegal trafficking in wildlife through the completion of a Bilateral Agreement between the two countries. The continued illegal destruction of forests in Indonesia and the trafficking in animals living in these forests must be stopped. In order to achieve this objective, however, it will take vigilance on the part of both the Governments of the United States and Indonesia to end these destructive practices. The Bilateral Agreement with Indonesia, therefore, represents a positive step taken by the United States to acknowledge the role it can play in curbing the international trade of illegal timber. The challenge now is to develop an action plan that reinforces existing programs and strengthens the ability of Indonesia to manage its resources in a more effective manner.

In this regard, the single most useful action would be for both parties to create and enforce a "chain-of-custody" tracking system for wood from the stump in the forest all the way through the processing, sale and export of timber. Such a tracking system is vital to separate illegal from legal timber, and is necessary to provide the proper incentives to pursue legal operations. A tracking system is also essential in maintaining the integrity of protected areas by ensuring that illegally harvested timber will not enter the supply chain. In addition, a "chain-of-custody" tracking system is consistent with other international efforts, such as the European Community's Voluntary Partnership Agreements and is in line with domestic Indonesian efforts, some of which are already supported by USAID. Thus, it is the position of HSI that the most productive way to implement the policy prescriptions in the Bilateral Agreement, including the strengthening of enforcement and increasing the involvement of the private sector, is through the adoption and enforcement of a "chain-of-custody" tracking system.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Forkan
President, Humane Society International

Promoting the protection of all animals worldwide

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