

Closing comments

Eduardo Mansur, ITTO: Community forestry is about managing conflicts. This conference addressed two important issues—people, and conflict management. We heard the voices of communities, civil-society organizations and governments. These opportunities for bringing communities and governments together are rare. The way ahead is spelled out in the declaration; it synthesizes the path. The time has come to take community forestry to the next stage, where communities are engaged in the market. We must all continue fighting for community recognition and rights. Those who own the forest take care of the forest. The magnificent resource of tropical forests and the violence of poverty are not compatible, yet they coexist at the moment. Recognizing rights to tenure and access helps the forests to be forests and the people to be better off. ITTO is proud to have contributed to moving this issue forward in Indonesia and elsewhere.

Andy White, RRI: It has been a rich and productive week. As per the other two conferences, we have done this together and we have much to be proud of. Everyone has contributed. We leave with a more complete understanding of the current state of tenure reform in Indonesia, in other parts of Asia and throughout the world. The declaration demonstrates our clear vision that will drive the work of many of us. During this conference we have heard the strongest-ever commitments to support tenure reform from the Government of Indonesia and ITTO.

This conference has revealed that a movement is brewing that will transform the forest sector as we know it. As Pak Kuntoro said, the challenge now is implementation, implementation, implementation. This is an important moment for Indonesia and their indigenous peoples and local communities, who have worked so hard for this transformation. This conference has brought more clarity and honesty; honesty is always cathartic and necessary and often brings great opportunity. We have reached a tipping point in the history of Indonesian forests and those around the region. Thank you all for your openness and willingness to share your experiences and expectations.

Abdon Nababan, AMAN: To the Ministry of Forestry, thank you. This is the first time I've been invited by the Ministry to a meeting where the topic has specifically been forest-tenure reform. This is the most important topic in Indonesia right now. There is a crisis in forest governance that stems from two problems: corruption and conflict. Neither can be solved without tenure reform. Thank you to RRI—I was sceptical and you really convinced me that this conference would be beneficial. Thank you for your persistence and faith that this conference could make a



Reaching out: Conference participant Martini Mohamad Safai'ee meets a Lombok youngster during a field trip. *Photo: Tetra Yanuariadi*

difference. Thank you to ITTO—we haven't had much to do with each other before, but I think now we will collaborate more. Many friends convinced me of the importance of this conference, so sorry for not seeming too enthusiastic at the beginning.

In the last few days we have learned some bitter truths, and it makes us wonder how on earth we can solve these problems. But the truth can drive us towards reconciliation. Indeed, there can be no reconciliation until there is truth. I realize now that these problems exist throughout Asia and that they were not created by the Ministry of Forestry. We still have to free ourselves from the remnants of colonization. Hopefully the Ministry of Forestry feels the same way. The Ministry of Forestry is part of the journey.

Let us take these messages back home with us. In Indonesia I hope we can meet to continue talking about these issues. There are huge problems, and an international conference cannot solve them unless we in Indonesia can sit down and talk. It will be easier to do so now.

Hadi Pasaribu, Ministry of Forestry: When the Government of Indonesia decided to host and take part as co-organizer of this conference, the intention was clear; we wanted to be open about the tenure problems we have and to address them in a more principled and fundamental way. The situation today is a result of the past; it's not to put blame on others, but we want to resolve these historical problems with a more contemporary approach. I am offering to meet with civil society in the next 3–6 months to discuss what we will do together to reform our tenure system. This conference is not the end; it is the initial step. It is a ceasefire to put on the table the principles we can agree on.

