

Indonesia News & Views

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Celebrating 101 Years

National Day of Resurrection

20 May 1908 - 20 May 2009

It has been one hundred one years celebrating National Day of Resurrection. Notion of the National Resurrection have endeavored by all our predecessors to create unity and strength among Indonesian nations and its components. It gave the spirit to liberate people from colonialism and release them from backwardness. These values are the foundation of the youth to struggle and organize the youth movement called "Boedi Oetomo" on May 20, 1908. This spirit of unity becomes increasing and strenghten moral values as a nation in a pledge *Soempah Pemoeda*, on 28 October 1928. Finally, long struggle had brought the nation's independence from colonialism by proclaiming independence on August 17, 1945.

source: www.kebangkitan-nasional.or.id

photo (left-right): dr. Wahidin Soedirohoesodo and R. Soetomo (national heroes and founders of "Boedi Oetomo")

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- ♦ "the participation of Indonesia in the UN peace mission in Somalia is based on the UN's trust .."(page 1)
- ♦ "Indonesia was considered safe and prospective from various aspects ... a new commitment that raises our (Indonesian rupiah) foreign exchange reserve "(page 2)
- ♦ "Index of consumers' confidence in April 2009 for the first time surpassed the optimistic level of 100 to 102.5 "(page 4)
- ♦ "Bali has received at least 25 awards from various international magazines and countries since 1998 "(page 6)
- ♦ "... participants of the WOC will strive to achieve long-term conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources and coastal habitats through appropriate application of precautionary and ecosystem approaches "(page 11)

Bali Again Wins Best Asia-Pacific Island Award



Bali has again received an award as The Best Island in

Asia Pacific 2009 from the Hong Kong-based DestinAsia

DestinAsianReaders' Choice Magazine.

"Bali has been honored as The Best Island in Asia Pacific 2009 by DestinAsia Magazine in Hong Kong," Culture and Tourism Ministry's director for

promotion facilities Esthy Reko Astuty said here on Thursday (14/5).

She said Bali won the honor through a vote for Awards in a survey which sought readers' opinions on their favorite... (continue to page 6)

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INDONESIA

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DOMESTIC ISSUES

Political Issues

RI to Send Military Officer to Somalia

Jakarta, - The Indonesian government will assign a military officer to serve in the UN peace-keeping mission in Somalia following the expiry of the African Union Mission (AMISOM)'s mandate in the African country.

The military officer to join the UN peace mission in Somalia was currently undergoing a capability test, Vice Marshal Sagom Tamboen, a spokesman of the Indonesian Defense Forces (TNI) said here on Wednesday (6/5).

"On his departure, we are still waiting for confirmation from the UN. For sure, the participation of Indonesia in the UN peace mission in Somalia is based on the UN's trust in Indonesia in joining UN peace missions so far," he said.

In his report on April 16 the UN Secretary General presented his views on a possible UN peacekeeping operation as a follow-on force to AMISOM as requested by Security Council resolution 1863, including recommendations on its mandate.

In UN Resolution 1863, adopted on January 16, the UN Security Council said it would decide on the issue by June 1, 2009.

The security situation in Somalia has remained volatile. At least 10 civilians were killed on April 11 when fighting broke out between the insurgent group Al-Shabaab and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) after a mortar attack on Mogadishu's main port. (ANTARA)

President Discusses Developments in Several Sectors with Ministers

Jakarta, - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono chaired a meeting here on Wednesday (6/5) with a number of ministers to discuss developments in several sectors.

During the meeting which started at 1 p.m. at the presidential office, the president discussed the latest developments in security, economy, food resilience, and preparations for the World Ocean Conference (WOC) in Manado with related ministers.

"In the economic realm, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) meeting and ASEAN+3 Financial Ministerial Meeting were held successfully. Hopefully it will be of great advantage to our country and have a positive impact on our national economy at present and in the future," President Yudhoyono said at the meeting.

In the food sector, the president discussed this year's planting season which was expected to run well.

"The planting season this year is good enough if it continues to be the same, our hope to have rice surplus can be achieved and at the same time we can improve our food resilience," the president said.

In the security sector, the president asked for a report on the latest developments in Papua.

"Although I continue to monitor the situation in Papua, I need reports about the latest situation there," the president said, adding that he continued to monitor the reports or complaints sent to him by short text messages.

The head of state said the short text messages he had received were mostly about problems in the education, health, and manpower fields.

"Please report to me what we have done so far," the president said at the meeting which was attended by Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Aburizal Bakrie, Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Widodo AS, Trade Minister Mari Elka Pangestu, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro, Agriculture Minister Anton Apriantono, Minister/State Secretary Hatta Radjasa, and Cabinet Secretary Sudi Silalahi.(ANTARA)

Three Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates to Run

Three presidential and vice presidential candidates are to run in the July election. They are Megawati Soekarnoputri-Prabowo Subianto, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono-Boediono, and Jusuf Kalla-Wiranto.

Megawati and Prabowo decided to run together after having been uncertain for a week. "Yes, that's final," said head of the

Leaders' Council of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), Tahjo Kumolo, after attending the meeting at Megawati's house at Jalan Teuku Umar, Jakarta, yesterday (13/5).

The meeting between PDIP and the Great Indonesian Party (Gerindra) was almost stuck as both parties targeted the position of president.

Meanwhile, the idea of having Boediono as Yudhoyono's running mate apparently upset the parties involved in a coalition with Democratic Party. Last Tuesday (12/5), the Democrats tried to make peace with them. They were asked to show their understanding for Yudhoyono's decision to run with Boediono.

However, some of them who still disagree with Yudhoyono tried to find a new ally in the election. The Prosperous Justice Party and the National Mandate Party now are approaching Golkar. (**TEMPO Interactive**)

Economic Issues

Indonesia Becoming More Attractive to Investors

Jakarta, - Indonesian is getting more attractive to foreign investors following the improvement in economic conditions, supported by a conducive social and political situation, an economic think tank said.

"There are a lot of positive issues about our economy. For example, the safe legislative elections can induce more investors to operate in Indonesia," director of the Institute for Development, Economic and Financial Studies (INDEF) M Ikhsan Modjo said here on Tuesday (5/5).

He said a number of developments, including the outbreak of swine flu in Latin America and Europe, had given a positive impact on the economy in Indonesia.

"The swine flu epidemic has made foreign tourists who originally planned to visit Europe or Mexico to turn their attention to Indonesia instead," Ikhsan Madjo said.

In principle, he said Indonesia was considered safe and prospective from various aspects.

According to him, social and political factors were also considered more conducive in Indonesia than in Thailand which was hit by political crisis recently.

He said this was the reason why foreign investors have now started to eye investment opportunities in Indonesia.

"It also includes a new commitment from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and a number of Bilateral Currency Swap Arrangements (BCSA) that raises our foreign exchange reserve," he said.

In addition, he said the strengthening of rupiah exchange rate was an indicator of the improvement in Indonesian economic condition. (ANTARA)

Indonesian Processed Tuna Products One of World's Best

Manado, - Indonesia's processed tuna fish product is one of the best in the world at present, Anova Food Group President Blane Olson said here on Thursday (14/5).

"Indonesian processed tuna fish product now is one of the world's best," he said.

The condition was far different compared to that 10 to 15 years ago when the country's processed tuna fish product still had a lot of shortcomings.

He said it took up to 15 years to make the country's fish processing industry to improve like now. It would give an added value to process fresh fish into fish products rather than selling it raw. "It is better to process it to give it an added value than just shipping the fish from one to another region, which could also reduce its quality and price," he said.

Regarding tuna supply in the country Olson said it had dropped sharply. "Five years ago every day is a heaven for fishermen. Now seven days of heaven in a month are already good," he said.

He said actually 2009 was a good year for tuna fishing compared to last year when the catch had caused worries for tuna fish processing industrialists. Fishing using a hook gave better catch than using a long line. "We support fishermen who fish using a hook. While their catch is a lot the quality of their catch is also better," he said.

Olson said his company now bought steak tuna from Bali, Makassar and Jakarta for exports to the US and Europe. "Eighty percent of his processed tuna is exported to the US and

20 percent to Europe," he said. Fish processing companies in the country needed to assure that their products were certificated sustainable seafood products.

He said consumers in the US and Europe were now more critical on the fish product they consumed. They would always ask about the country of origin of the products they would consume. (ANTARA)

Indonesia Still Needs Soft Loans : Minister

Indonesia still needs soft loans to finance its poverty alleviation programs and infrastructure development, a cabinet minister said. "They (international financial institutions) offered us commercial loans while we still need official development assistance (ODA), or soft loans to finance social-safety nets (JPS)," National Development Planning Minister/National Development Planning Board Chief Paskah Suzetta said here on Monday (4/5).

He said Indonesia had become a country with a middle per capita income so that it would be reasonable if its development projects, including a subway system in Jakarta, were financed with commercial loans with higher rate of interest.

"But we also have poverty alleviation programs, social safety net projects and infrastructure development which will have an impact on poverty reduction and for all of this we need ODA loans," the minister said.

He said he had suggested that multilateral financial institutions adopt various funding policies so that Indonesia would also be able to take advantage of it. The minister said the funding schemes of multilateral institutions were also used as a reference in the extension of bilateral funding schemes, except Japan which was so far still providing Indonesia with soft loans.

"Reforms of the financial institutions require us to also increase our funding capacity through our participation in increasing Asian Development Bank (ADB)'s funds," he said. On the financing of infrastructure development in Indonesia, he said that because soft loans were small, they could only be used as a stand-by loan.

"Although ADB has given a signal to us that it would provide us with financial support, it would likely be accepted as a stand-

by loan and would be disbursed if we really need it," he said.

He said that the government would give priority to funding through the state budget with issuing more flexible bonds, grant funds and funding from a public private partnership scheme. "We will give priority to using funds from these schemes before using loans," the minister said. (ANTARA)

BI: World Economy Now Contracting at Slower Pace

Jakarta - The world economy is still contracting but improvements in certain economic indicators suggest the process is now taking place at a slower pace, Bank Indonesia (BI/the central bank) said.

"In Bank Indonesia's view, the world economy is still experiencing contraction but it is now happening at a slower pace," Dyah NK Makhijani, BI's strategic planning and human relations director, said here on Tuesday (5/5).

She said the slowing down of the economic contraction was seen in the improvement of stock market indexes and a drastic fall in the risk premium spread.

BI was of the view that the drastic drop in risk premium spread had fueled the return of capital to emerging markets, including Indonesia with its positive impact on the strengthening of the rupiah, stock indexes and state debentures' yields.

The world economy which is showing an improvement had also enabled a better export performance as compared with the initial prediction. For growth at home, Bank Indonesia believed it would be within a range of 5-7 percent.

Besides that, Bank Indonesia also viewed that the domestic banking world was still in a strong and stable position with a capital adequacy ratio reaching 17.4 percent and non-performing loans of five percent.

The composite index at the opening of the Jakarta Stock Exchange (BEI) on Tuesday increased 1.03 percent as share trading by local and foreign buyers continued to increase.

The board of governors of Bank Indonesia (BI/the central bank) decided on Tuesday to lower the bank's benchmark rate (BI Rate) by 25 basis points to 7.25 percent.

Since December 2008, the BI rate has been cut by 2.25 basis points to 7.5 percent.

The BI rate cut this month by 0.25 basis has previously been predicted by several analysts after seeing the downward trend in inflation.

The Central Bureau of Statistics announced recently that Indonesia experienced a deflation rate of 0.31 percent in April 2009, where based on the calendar year (January-April) it was noted at 0.05 percent. Inflation based on the annual basis reached 7.31 percent. (ANTARA)

BI Survey: Consumers Optimistic of the Economy

Jakarta, - Results of a recent Bank Indonesia survey showed optimism for the future economic development with consumers' confidence index of 102.5, rising 3.9 points on a monthly basis and 15.7 points on an annual basis.

"Index of consumers' confidence (IKK) in April 2009 for the first time surpassed the optimistic level of 100 to 102.5 after staying at a pessimistic level since December 2007," according to the central bank on Wednesday (5/5).

The rise in the index was driven by increasing index of present economic conditions (IKE) and consumers' expectation (IEK) respectively by 2.0 points and 5.8 points.

The rise in the IKE was driven by increasing index of current income and index of employment availability, it said in its website.

It said the secure and conducive socio-political conditions in the country until the implementation of the legislative elections in April 9 were predicted to have helped increase public confidence in the country's economic conditions making the IKK to pass the optimistic level.

Compared to the year before the IKK rose quite significantly by 15.7 points, driven by increasing optimism of respondents towards the IEK which was up quite high by 22.7 points and the drop in the IKE by 8.7 points.

The results of the survey done in April still showed the present economic condition index (IKE) was still at a pessimistic level of 88.2 points although it had increased by 2.0 points from the month before.

The rise in the economic condition index (IKE) was caused by rising index of income by 3.5 points and index of employment availability by 3.3 points.

Annually the index of economic conditions (IKE) also rose 8.7 points from the previous year. The rise was caused by the strengthening of components that formed the IKE namely income index now at 9.6 points, index of timely purchase of durable goods of 4.4 points and index of employment availability of 12.1 points.

In April 2009, the index of economic conditions (IEK) was recorded at 116.8, rising 5.8 points compared to the results of survey last month.

The driving factors behind the increasing index of economic condition (IEK) were strengthening index of economic expectations of 8.1 points and lowering of level of pessimism towards employment availability of 9.6 points.

Compared with the year before the index of economic conditions (IEK) had also increased by 22.7 points. The rise occurred because the index of all components underlying it, namely the index of income expectations rose 7.0 points, index of economic expectations rose 39.0 points and index of employment expectations rose 22.1 points. (ANTARA)

Minister: RI Suitable for Investment in Oil Sector

Jakarta - Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Purnomo Yusgiantoro said Indonesia was still very suitable for investment in explorations.

The minister made the statement during the opening of the 33rd Indonesian Petroleum Association (IPA) convention in Jakarta Tuesday (5/5).

The occasion also witnessed the signing of 12 upstream oil and gas contracts and three CBM (Coal Bed Methane) contracts, in the presence of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

"Right now there are 107 oil and gas exploration areas and the 15 contracts bring the total number of exploration areas in Indonesia to 119," Purnomo said.

Purnomo said that 70 pct of investment in the energy and mineral resources sector in 2008 came from the oil and gas sector.

Total investment in the first three years under the 15 contracts reached 219.1 million US dollars. Under the 15 contracts, the state will receive a signature bonus of 26.85 million

dollars, and some 2,000 workers will have additional employment.

The 33rd Indonesian Petroleum Association (IPA) convention was opened by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono also in the presence of IPA President Roberto Lorato. (ANTARA)

EXXON to Explore Four Blocks in Indonesia

Jakarta, - Exxon Mobil Oil Indonesia (EMOI) will soon carry out explorations in four oil and gas blocks in the country, its vice president, Maman Budiman, said here on Wednesday (6/5).

The decision was taken after preparations for initial oil production in Block Cepu in Banyu Urip, East Java, were finished, he said.

The oil blocks to be explored are Gunting in East Java, Cendrawasih in Papua, Surumanak and Mandar in the Makassar Strait.

Maman said the exploration in the areas would still be aimed at seeking oil reserve potentials.

"Exploration in the four areas is also part of efforts to find new oil sources following declining national production of oil," he said.

He said investors still needed certainty with regard to oil contracts with the authorities, meaning "deals that have been put in the contract must be commonly agreed and implemented consistently."

This is what is now being discussed at the IPA meeting so that no problem would happen or changes were made in the middle of working period, he said. "After all investors also wish their money will return," he said.

West Sulawesi governor Anwar Adnan Saleh, meanwhile said he fully supported the exploration to be done by EMOI in his region despite some negative reaction from the people towards the project.

He said the reaction could still be overcome through familiarization of exploration benefits for the local people and allocation of Corporate Social Responsibility funds for the region.

"The people would also enjoy the benefit of the oil exploration," he said. (ANTARA)

Korean Interested in Gowa Sand Quarrying

Makassar - After the development of potato in Gowa regency, South Sulawesi, Korean mining company Dongrim Co.Ltd became

interested in the good quality sand quarrying mining industry for the production of concrete, bridges, high-rise buildings and other buildings.

"They became interested in the sand quarrying industry in Gowa regency for the production of concrete, bridges, high-rise buildings and other buildings," Gowa Regent Ichsan Yasin Limpo said Monday (11/5).

Following research, the Korean mining company Dongrim Co.Ltd signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a regional administration company of Gowa regency.

The signing of the MoU was done by director of the Gowa regional administration company H Wakito and the operations director of Dongrim Co.Ltd, Park Jin Pho flanked by Kim Wj Alex and Chung Young Hun, in the presence of the regent.

Under the cooperation scheme, the regional administration company will provide 30 ha of land in Bili-Bili.(ANTARA)

Fifteen Countries Invited to Invest in Tourism

Jakarta, - Indonesia has invited 15 countries to participate in the tourism, trade and investment (TTI) exhibition offering Borobudur Temple as a main tourism object.

"The exhibition is packaged in the form of tourism, trade and investment as part of the Visit Indonesia Year 2009 program," Tourism and Culture Minister Jero Wacik said here on Wednesday (6/5).

The TTI exhibition will be held in concurrence with the Borobudur International Festival 2009 as it will be part of the event on July 16-20, 2009.

The event would be themed "Presenting a World Wonder" and was expected to be able to attract more foreign investors to invest in Borobudur tourism.

"The activity is expected to be able to highlight cultural and tourism in Indonesia," the minister said.

According to plans the exhibition event will also be used as a forum of meeting between buyers from 15 foreign countries and sellers from 32 provinces in the country.

Sellers are expected to offer various tourism packages including the Borobudur Tourism Package.

The 15 countries to be invited to the event are Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar, China, Queensland, South Korea, Germany, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, the US, Belgium and India.

The minister hoped through the event more visitors would come to the country and lengthen their stay.

In 2007 299,443 foreign tourists visited Borobudur in addition to 1.68 million local tourists. Most visitors to the temple took the Borobudur-Prambanan-Yogyakarta Palace-Dieng Tourism Package. (ANTARA)

Socio-Cultural Issues

Bali Again Wins Best Asia-Pacific Island Award

Bali has again received an award as The Best Island in Asia Pacific 2009 from the Hong Kong-based DestinAsia Magazine.

"Bali has been honored as The Best Island in Asia Pacific 2009 by DestinAsia Magazine in Hong Kong," Culture and Tourism Ministry's director for promotion facilities Esthy Reko Astuty said here on Thursday (14/5).

She said Bali won the honor through a vote for DestinAsian Readers' Choice Awards in a survey which sought readers' opinions on their favorite destinations, hotels, and airlines in the Asia-Pacific region and announced every February. According to her, readers in Asia Pacific were asked to nominate a winner in each category and provide a short explanation on the reasons for their choice.

"Bali has been chosen four times consecutively as the Best Island in Asia Pacific by DestinAsia Magazine since 2006," she said.

DestinAsia Magazine is a travel magazine published and marketed in Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, India, Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan and several Middle Eastern countries.

Astuty said with the award Bali must improve the quality of its tourism as main destination to maintain the image as the best island and being the best destination in Asia Pacific.

"Having been named The Best Island in Asia Pacific region for four consecutive years, Bali proves to be still a 'primadona' (a woman who is considered excellent) of tourism destinations in the Asia Pacific region," she said.

According to Bali Tourism Office records, Bali has received at least 25 awards from various international magazines and countries since 1998. Most of the awards were given to Bali for its unique destination and natural beauty found nowhere else in the world.

Not long ago, Bali also received an award as The Best Spa of the World from Senses Wellness Magazine.(ANTARA)

UNESCO Recognizes "The Indonesian Kris"



World Heritage Organizations in education and culture body UNESCO, reinforces Indonesian Keris as cultural heritage monument belonging to all nations in the world.

"The world now recognizes the existence of the Indonesian Keris. It receives the international award and encourages us to collect hundreds of heirloom Keris," said the manager as well as a founder of the Neka Museum, Ubud art village, Gianyar, Pande Wayan Suteja Neka, Sunday (10/5/2009).

The Neka Museum has 272 Keris collections, besides 312 paintings and sculpture collection. The Keris collections has selected solicitously by Keris experts Mr. Haryono Haryoguritno and Mr. Sukoyo Hadi Nagoro which have hundreds collection of Keris since year 1969.

The kris or keris is a distinctive, asymmetrical dagger from Indonesia. Both weapon and spiritual object, the kris is considered to

possess magical powers. The earliest known kris go back to the tenth century and most probably spread from the island of Java throughout South-East Asia.

Kris blades are usually narrow with a wide, asymmetrical base. The sheath is often made from wood, though examples from ivory, even gold, abound. A kris' aesthetic value covers the dhapur (the form and design of the blade, with some 40 variants), the pamor (the pattern of metal alloy decoration on the blade, with approximately 120 variants), and tangguh referring to the age and origin of a kris. A bladesmith, or empu, makes the blade in layers of different iron ores and meteorite nickel. In high quality kris blades, the metal is folded dozens or hundreds of times and handled with the utmost precision. Empus are highly respected craftsmen with additional knowledge in literature, history and occult sciences.

Kris were worn everyday and at special ceremonies, and heirloom blades are handed down through successive generations. Both men and women wear them. A rich spirituality and mythology developed around this dagger. Kris are used for display, as talismans with magical powers, weapons, sanctified heirlooms, auxiliary equipment for court soldiers, accessories for ceremonial dress, an indicator of social status, a symbol of heroism, etc.

Over the past three decades, kris have lost some of their prominent social and spiritual meaning in society. Although active and honoured empus who produce high-quality kris in the traditional way can still be found on many islands, their number is dramatically decreasing, and it is more difficult for them to find people to whom they can transmit their skills. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia and Kompas.com)

International Batik Week Yields Transactions Worth Rp1.47 Billion

Pekalongan, - The value of batik transactions at the week-long International Batik Week (PBI) here reached Rp1.47 billion, PBI organizing committee chairman Arie Putranto said on Tuesday (5/5).

He said the amount did not include the value of orders for future delivery and book sales during the event.

"In our judgment, the International Batik Week in Pekalongan was a great success and therefore it is expected to boost the image of batik as one of Indonesia's cultural heritages," Arie Putranto said.

He added that the PBI was an important event that had also improved the economy of the people in Pekalongan.

Meanwhile, Pekalongan Mayor Basyir Achmad said the success of PBI which is held biennially would increase the interest of participating countries in the event and this was good for the promotion of Indonesian batik.

Basyir Achmad said the second International Batik Week which lasted from April 29 to May 4, 2009 in Pekalongan was visited by buyers from Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

When opening the PBI, Trade Minister Mari Elka Pangestu said Indonesian batik was superior to similar products from Malaysia or China.

Therefore, the minister said Indonesian batik producers should not worry about the competition from Malaysia or China.

"We don't have to worry about the competition from China and Malaysia because our batik designs are superior and difficult to emulate by other countries," Pangestu said.

She said Indonesian batik was more oriented to painted and printed designs and thus its superiority was difficult to match by China and Malaysia.

Commenting on Malaysian batik, the minister said its motifs and colors were less competitive than batik work from Indonesia.

"Malaysian batik is completely different from Indonesia's because it has bright colors with one or two flowers on it but ours has a lot of flowers on it," she said.

Asked about the number of batik producers who had been registered as patent right users, Mari said the Trade Ministry still did not know the exact number.

"I still don't know the exact number of batik producers who have been registered because it is an affair of the Intellectual Property Rights (HAKI) Directorate General at the Law and Human Rights Ministry," Pangestu Said. (ANTARA)

Indonesia by province: West Sumatra



Much of its highland formed by the Bukit Barisan Mountain range; virgin jungle inhabited by elephants, tigers, leopard and rhinos. Minang people have firey-hot dishes and ancient matriarchal customs. The women own property and the men leave home to seek their fame and fortune. Travelling is considered a mark of success, Padang restaurants are found in all major towns across the nation. The people are hospitable and eloquent; primarily speak bahasa Minang, with poetic style of speech. West Sumatran days are filled with colourful ceremonies and festivals. Legend has it the Minangkabau are descendants of the youngest son of Alexander the Great, King Maharjo Dirajo. During the early 19th century, the area was disrupted by wars between the followers of the traditional Islam or Padris, and those adhering to the traditional law (Adat) of the Minangkabau.

Tourist Office

Jl. Khatib Sulaiman 22 Padang, West Sumatra
Phone. (62-751) 55711, 446282, Fax. 55183
<http://www.minangkabautourism.info>

Best season to visit:

April to October every year

Getting there

- Padang's Tabin Airport is the main gateway to West Sumatra and is serviced by Merpati Nusantara Airlines.
- PELNI's ship "Kerinci" sails every two weeks for Jakarta from Teluk Bayur harbour. Smaller vessels from

Muara harbour sail to small towns along the entire west coast of Sumatra.

- Regular bus services run between Padang, Bukittinggi and other major cities of Sumatra, as well as via the trans-Sumatra Highway to Jakarta.

Tourism Events

- Dances performed on the Bukittinggi museum's open stage every Sunday and on public holidays, the famous bullfights at Padang Lawas (6 Km south of Bukittinggi) are every Tuesday at 05.00 p.m, where the antics of local owners and bettors are as much fun as the fights themselves.
- Pacu Jawi every July performs bull race in Payakumbuh. The uniqueness of its race, the joky bite its tail to make the bull runs faster.
- Selaju Sampan and Dragon boat race every September is a traditional watersports in Muko-Muko, Lake Maninjau.
- Wild Hog Hunting every May on Sunday in Solok by the farmers with well - trained dog.

Places of Interest

Air Manis

Air Manis 4 kms South of Padang, down the hill and across Batang Arau River is a fishermen village on Padang's scenic west coast. A rock standing in the water a short distance from the shore is said to be the hull of Malin Kundang's boat, which shipwrecked in a storm after it was cursed by the defiant young man's mother.

Bungus

Bungus 20 kms South of Padang sheltered by a bay, there are two good beaches : Carolina and Karang Tirta.

Anai Resort and Golf Course

Anai Resort and Golf Course. The Anai resort is located in gorgeous natural setting roughly 550 meters above sea level. This resort is incorporating first-class hotel facilities.

Batang Palupuah

Batang Palupuah, 12 km from Bukittinggi, is a refuge for the giant flower *Rafflesia arnoldi*, blooming only once a year in November. A

guide can be obtained from the office at the reserve.

Rimbo Panti Nature Reserve

Rimbo Panti Nature Reserve. Just aside the road to Medan, at the distance of 108 kms from Bukittinggi, this nature and wild life reserve where various monkey species and black panther found in here.

Bung Hatta Forest Reserve

Bung Hatta Forest Reserve. Situated 15 kms from Padang in the direction of Solok, known in the past as the Setya Mulya Botanic Garden. The reserve has giant flower *Rafflesia arnoldi*.

Batu Basurek

Batu Basurek. A stone with inscriptions in the old Palava script of India, bearing the legend of Adityawarman in the year 1347.

The Twin Lakes

The Twin Lakes (Lake Diatas and Lake Dibawah) 65 km from Padang the two lakes, one a little higher than the other are located at +1000 meters above sea level and covered by thick mist. There are several cottages and coffee shops in Lake Diatas resort.

Pagaruyung Kingdom

Pagaruyung Kingdom. Situated at the outskirts of Batusangkar the capital city of Tanah Datar Regency. In the past, it was the seat of the ancient of Minangkabau Kingdom, Pagaruyung : which at the beginning of its history was ruled by a queen named Bundo Kanduang. Relics of that ancient past are still scoffered over the area among them are Batusangkar stone inscriptions found in some areas.

Lake Singkarak

Lake Singkarak is surrounded with green hills and mountains, the biggest lake in west 129,70 kms square and lies on the Trans Sumatra between Bukittinggi and Solok regency. It is 36 km from Bukittinggi or 86 km from Padang.

Tanjung Alai

Located at 7 kms Lake Singkarak, enjoy gliding in the fresh and coolness of its air.

Mount Talang tea plantation

Mount Talang tea plantation. 35 km from Padang, one of the highest mountains 2,572 meters above sea level has a green and fresh views. From here you can overlook the beautiful Twin Lakes and Lake Singkarak.

The Mystical Rao-rao

The Mystical Rao-rao. Some 15 kilometers from Batusangkar. A village in which the Minangkabau building style is well preserved.

Belimbing Village

Belimbing Village. Some 20 km from Batusangkar, this traditional village has some beautiful old Minangkabau long houses. Around the village one can enjoy the beauty view and traditional social life of Minangkabau matriarchal society.

Tabek Patah

Tabek Patah. 30 kilometers from Batusangkar, is a lookout point in the foothills offering a wide open view on the magnificent central Minangkabau countryside.

Batu Sangkar

Batu Sangkar is 41 km southeast of Bukittinggi, a center of the Minangkabau culture. Megalithic remains found in the area support the theory of a large community living in the area some 2000 years ago. Many fascinating historical sites were found at Batu Basurek, a stone with inscriptions in the Palava script of India, bearing the legend Adityawarman, the Emperor of Kanaka Mahindra (the island of gold).

Pariaman has 300 years old traditional houses. Make sure to visit the open council grounds with ancient stone seats, the mosque and hot spring.

Ngarai Sianok

Ngarai Sianok is a canyon in a city, a steep colorful valley surrounded by 100 meter cliffs. 4 km from Bukittinggi, there are many tunnels and caves made by the Japanese during WW II. The pathway leads to Koto Gadang that is renowned for its fine silver filigree and hand embroidery.

Pandai Sikek village

Pandai Sikek village is 13 km south of Bukit Tinggi and famous for its hand weaving and carving industry. The village has a thousand of looms and turning out richly colored cloth.

Carved wooden ornaments and furniture also made here.

Harau Valley

Harau Valley is 15 km northeast Payakumbuh, 100 to 200 meter steep granite walls shelter this 315 ha fertile valley. It is a nature and wildlife reserve, where wild goats and tigers still roam.

Ngalau Indah Cave

Ngalau Indah Cave can be reach on the way from Bukittinggi to Payakumbuh, it has extend deep into the mountainside. The domain of thousands of bats, the main entrance is the outline of an elephant visible on its face. The paths through these caves lead out to the top of the mountain and panoramic views.

Siberut National Park

Siberut National Park: Using a regular ferry, which regularly sail three times a week in the night from Padang (Muara Padang) to Muara Siberut/Muara Sikabalan/Muara Saibi. The trip takes approximately 10 hours of sailing. Or use an express ferry that travels every Thursday morning from Padang to the town of Tuapejat in Sipora Island and then further to the southern part of Siberut Island for only four hours of sailing.

Padang

Padang is the capital of West Sumatra; and gateway to the homeland of Minangkabau. Its bustling harbours a crossroads for rubber, cinnamon, coffee, tea and nutmeg. There are Minang houses, prehistoric artifacts, ceramics, manuscripts and modern art. In Kampung Cina (Chinatown) you can wander streets lined with turn-of-the century houses, Chinese herbalist and coffee shops. Good hiking and wonderful views of the city can be had a Bukit Monyet and Gunung Padang.

Lake Maninjau

Lake Maninjau Perhaps the most beautiful lake in Sumatra, Maninjau is far smaller and less developed than its neighbour lake Toba to the north the road to the lake is famous for its forty four bends offering superb panoramas as it meanders down to the water's edge. The lake is punctuated by pretty Moorish styled mosques, perhaps designed by some long ago Arab traders who came to her shores. Dotted about the lake are small and friendly villages.

Mountain bikes for rent offer a perfect way to explore along the flat roads.

Bukittinggi

Bukittinggi is the West Sumatra's center of culture and tourism, nestled in the highlands north of the provincial capital of Padang. It is a pleasant two-hour drive (90 km) from Padang through the gorgeous Anai Valley up to Agam Plateau. Located 930 metres above sea level, it has a cool climate and is surrounded by tree volcanoes: Tandikat, Singgalang and Merapi. The central landmark is the town's clocktower, referred by the local people as Jam Gadang. It overlooks the market square, a beehive of activity and fantastic place to do some souvenir shopping. Also worth visiting is the Rumah Gadang Museum, a traditional extended family house built in the 19th century.

Mentawai Islands

Mentawai Islands is made up from four islands: Siberut, Sipora, Pagai Utara and Pagai Selatan. The people of these islands still live in comparative isolation, maintaining their age-old ways. Siberut is an area for trekking and visiting these ancient cultures, and its virgin rain forest, inhabited by a number of some rare monkey's species. Beautiful coral reefs are found offshore, and its wave is famous for surfing. The best season to visit is January to September. (Indonesian Embassy)

ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

RI Trying to Unite Support of Ocean Nations

Indonesia will try to convince the world of the key role of the ocean in climate change and the importance of including it as a part of United Nations climate talks when the five-day World Ocean Conference in Manado kicks off Monday (11/5).

Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda said Saturday the ocean had been overlooked for years by the world as a major carbon sink, despite covering two-thirds of the Earth's surface. "The ocean plays a major role in determining the world's climate system, but climate change talks have not included it so far. We aim to bring the declaration of this conference to the UN climate talks in

Copenhagen by the end of this year," he told reporters when conducting final checks on the event's preparations.

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Freddy Numberi has repeatedly said the ocean should be given credit for its role in absorbing carbon dioxide (CO₂), similar to forests that help control climate change. He highlighted the latest legal framework that governs the use of the ocean, the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, (UNCLOS), which is now 27 years old.

"We hope the Manado Ocean Declaration will be incorporated into talks during the 15th UNFCCC Conference of Parties meeting in Copenhagen," he said. Hassan pointed out Indonesia's long struggle to convince the world of the importance of the ocean. "We need to unite all the ocean countries to be able to push for the inclusion of the ocean in the Copenhagen talks," he said.

"We have to work hard to determine what's next after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012. With the declaration, we hope the ocean dimension will play a greater role *in a new agreement* after the Kyoto Protocol." The WOC is also expected to produce a joint declaration acknowledging the destructive impacts of climate change on the ocean and small-island states, with the rising rate of global climate change in recent times threatening marine species and the livelihood of the people living in those countries.

Manado is also set to host the Coral Triangle Initiatives (CTI) Summit, which will be attended by leaders of six countries: Malaysia, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. Maritime minister Freddy said donor countries had granted US\$70 million through the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) for the conservation of coral reefs, marine resources and ecosystems within the region. Indonesia, he added, had also received \$40 million from the US alone for the same cause. Indonesia now hopes to receive the largest portion of GEF funds as it initiated the CTI process, the minister said.

Hassan said that as the country with the largest area within the coral triangle, Indonesia deserved to get the most funds. The country also wants the secretariat of the CTI to be set up in North Sulawesi. Hosting the WOC has prompted an influx of investment and tourists. Indroyono Susilo of the

organizers said total private investment from outside and inside the province had reached Rp 1.5 trillion, mostly in the construction of facilities and hotels.

With all hotels fully booked for the duration of the event, foreign and local tourists are expected to jump in the coming months. In March, the number of tourists jumped by more than 20 percent, or 1,700 people, from March last year, Governor S. Harry Sarundajang said. (The Jakarta Post)

WOC Winds Up With Adoption of MOD

The four-day World Ocean Conference (WOC) wound up in this capital of Indonesia's North Sulawesi province on Thursday (14/5) with the adoption of the Manado Ocean Declaration (MOD).

In their 21-point declaration, participants of the conference stated among others that they will strive to achieve long-term conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources and coastal habitats through appropriate application of precautionary and ecosystem approaches.

They will also strive to implement long-term strategies in meeting internationally agreed sustainable development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration related to the marine environment. In doing so, they will strengthen global partnership for development.

They stressed the need for national strategies for sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems as protective and productive buffer zones that deliver valuable ecosystem goods and services that have significant potential to address the adverse effects of climate change.

They agreed to implement integrated coastal and ocean management, including marine and coastal land use planning to minimize and reduce the risk and vulnerability of coastal communities and critical infrastructure.

In order to enhance the health and resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems, they will strive to reduce pollution of ocean, coastal and land areas and promote sustainable management according to relevant international agreements and codes of conduct.

They also agreed to promote gathering and exchange of information on the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems,

communities, fisheries and other industries; emergency preparedness, monitoring and forecasting climate change and ocean variability; and improving public awareness of early warning system capacity.

They emphasized the need to develop, consistent with international commitments, comprehensive adaptation measures including within national sustainable development strategies to address climate-related impacts on oceans and coasts and develop environmentally sound policies for integrated coastal and ocean management based on reliable scientific assessments and internationally agreed goals, particularly for the most vulnerable communities that fully depend on marine resources for their livelihood.

For the purpose of increasing coral atolls and coastal communities' resilience and preparation for the impacts of climate change on oceans, the WOC participants are determined to promote the development of national adaptation measures including the effective use of all relevant information, climate-impact projection scenarios, early warning systems and disaster risk reduction and risk management.

They stressed the need for financial resources and incentives to further assist developing countries' efforts in promoting diversified, environmentally sustainable livelihood options for coastal communities most vulnerable to climate change.

Noting the relevant provisions in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), they also stressed the need to promote affordable, environmentally sound, and renewable ocean technologies and know-how, particularly in developing countries.

The WOC participants invited Parties to the UNFCCC to consider developing and submitting climate change adaptation project proposals for coastal and ocean management to the Adaptation Fund Board for consideration.

They agreed to the efforts of the UN secretary general to facilitate cooperation and coordination in the UN system to address climate change and emphasize the importance of ensuring that ocean-related activities continue to be reflected in this process.

They reiterated the importance of achieving an effective outcome at the COP-15 of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen later this year

and invited parties to consider how the coastal and ocean dimension could be appropriately reflected in their decision.

Prof Dr Emil Salim, a former Indonesian environmental affairs minister said on the sidelines of the WOC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) here early this week the MOD would be an international political agreement to always include the sea in international conventions on climate change.

Emil further said that after a political commitment was made, emphasis had then to be placed on saving the sea through cooperation in the coral reef triangle.

Until now there had been three international conventions related to global warming but focusing on land, soil and earth issues and did not specifically touched sea issues.

He said discussions on sea issues were lagging behind, and therefore not many people were aware that the sea absorbed carbon, was a source of food and a potential source of energy.(ANTARA)

President Calls for Halt to Rapid Destruction of Coastal Resources

Manado - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono asked on Thursday (14/5) countries all over the world to stop the widespread and rapid destruction of the world's marine and coastal resources by applying ecosystem-based adaptation measures.

"We must protect them from human abuse and over-exploitation, and from the injurious impact of climate change," the president said in his keynote address to the World Ocean Conference (WOC) here.

All countries must preserve the marine and coastal resources as legacy for future generations so that they might live free from the shackles of poverty, he said.

He reminded all states of their obligation to protect and preserve the environment under article 192 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) adopted in 1982.

"Indonesia will do all we can to faithfully implement UNCLOS provisions for the governance of the oceans," he said.

The head of state all asked all countries to enhance these priceless resources which could be a large part of the solution to the problem of food security.

"That means, apart from protecting the oceans, we must learn to sustainably farm them so that they will yield much of what we need for human nutrition-without depleting them," he said.

He said the world community could galvanize and synchronize ocean and marine research activities, noting that there was just so much people did not know about the deep ocean and the inter-relationship between the oceans and climate change.

"We can take measures to maintain the capability of our oceans to serve as the earth's thermostat, regulating our atmosphere and the cycle of the seasons," he said.

He called for efforts to revive the dying mangrove forests to enable them to protect coastal communities from the assaults of storms and even tsunamis.

Through better fisheries management and the sanctuary of marine protected areas, people could make deep sea and coastal fisheries much more resilient in the face of climate change.

"By conserving our coral reefs, and making them particularly resistant to bleaching, we can ensure that they continue to serve as the nurseries of thriving fisheries," he said.

All the measures were some of the ecosystem-based adaptation ones that countries could and needed to carry out if they were going to reverse the degradation of marine and coastal resources, he said.(ANTARA)

News Focus: WOC to Try Saving Lives Of Coastal People

The ongoing World Ocean Conference (WOC) in Manado, North Sulawesi, will formulate efforts to save not only the seas and marine resources but also the lives of people living in coastal areas. "The adaptation and mitigation framework that the meeting will formulate is aimed at safeguarding not only the seas and the resources they hold but also the lives of people living in coastal areas," Indonesian Minister for Maritime and Fisheries Affairs Freddy Number said when opening a WOC senior officials' meeting in Manado on Monday (11/5).

People living in coastal areas of small islands in developing countries are groups of settlers whose lives are seriously threatened by the impact of climate change such as the rising

sea surface. "The rise in the sea surface will submerge some of the outlying islands, while climate change will also affect the conditions of sea water and the marine biota population," the minister said.

In this case archipelagic countries and nations with vast coastal areas should cooperate in increasing the people's understanding of the relations between the climate change and the sea and their impact on the ecosystem, bio-diversity and coastal community living in small developing countries.

The need to safeguard the people in coastal areas from the impact of climate change was also expressed by Moses Murihungurire, director for resources management of the Namibian Ministry of Maritime and Fisheries, and Gabriella Bianchi, senior officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Both shared the opinion that the dynamic change of ecosystem as a result of climate change affected people in coastal areas whose life and protein need depended on the sea resources. Excessive exploitation of sea resources by human beings also caused the ecosystem to undergo changes. "For this purpose, ecosystem-based fishery management needed to be applied," Bianchi said.

The ecosystem-based management is basically an integrated fishery management applied by taking into account the sustainability of the ecosystem. With fishery management model that takes into account the sea ecosystem balance the people, particularly those living in the coastal areas, would be able to utilize sea resources without harming their sustainability. In order to adopt a comprehensive formula, the participation of the people living in the coastal areas is needed. Chairman of the WOC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) chairman Eddy Pratomo said meanwhile that a formulation would be sought to involve farmers and people living in coastal areas in future forums like WOC.

"We have yet to involve them, but the time will come when we seek a formulation to involve farmers and people in coastal areas in future forums like WOC," Pratomo said at a press conference at the Grand Kawanua Convention Center. He said the first WOC this time was specialized for government representatives to obtain political support from WOC participating countries.

"We have a common understanding that people at coastal areas are affected by climate change at sea," Pratomy said. According to Achim Steiner, executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the world's oceans and seas are now understood to be the biggest sink of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels. Indeed experts now estimate that up to 40 per cent of the CO₂ entering the atmosphere is being cycled through the marine environment playing a crucial role in moderating climate change.

But experts are warning that the marine realm cannot continue to soak up man-made pollution forever without consequences. Many marine living creatures from corals and crabs to plankton at the base of the food chain need seawater that is alkali to build their skeletons. The average pH of water at the ocean's surface has now fallen from 8.16 to 8.05 since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution - small falls, but with potentially huge impacts if this continues.

Steiner said the governments must affirm their determination to 'Seal the Deal' in Copenhagen at the UN climate convention meeting in order to begin steering the world onto a low carbon course. "We have to improve the health of our oceans. They have to be as fit and resilient as possible, so that they can cope with the climate change burden-- so they can continue to provide us with food and the myriad of other economically-important services," he wrote to ANTARA. This means governments have to urgently address the multiple challenges weakening our seas, from land based pollution and discharges from ships up to overexploitation of the globe's.

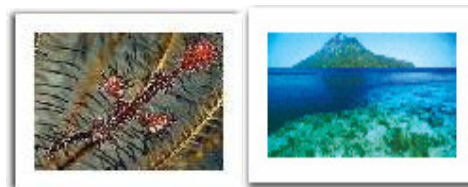
In its efforts to overcome the problem of sea resources, Indonesia, in its part, cooperated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Cooperation between the Indonesian Maritime and Fisheries Affairs Ministry (DKP) and the NOAA maritime issues, which will require funds amounting to US\$12 million, will be focused on four sub-working groups.

DKP Secretary General Widi Agoes Partikno said both sides will discuss the four sub-groups of work, namely coastal area and marine resources management, marine and climate change, fisheries and marine explorations. "For the cooperation in 2009 we have funds valued at US\$2 million and in 2010

there will be five to ten million dollars," said. He said that DKP and NOAA had signed in 2007 a memorandum of understanding of cooperation for the implementation of work frames in four sub-working groups.

In the fields of fisheries, the cooperation would be expanded to cooperation on port preparation, guidance on fishery product quality, hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) training and marketing. Cooperation on marine explorations will focus on the study of seabed lines to know whether or not they contain oil or other mineral elements. "In carrying out the cooperation, we are looking forward to 25 or 50 years ahead," he said. (ANTARA)

Bunaken's Coral Reefs, Fish Still Lure Tourists for 23 Cents



Manado has long been famous for the nearby Bunaken Island and its marine park. The fact the city now hosts the World Ocean Conference and the Coral Triangle Initiatives Summit strengthens that attribute. Bunaken is one of the main attractions for summit participants as well as for tourists flocking the city. Diving and snorkeling in the marine park is on almost everybody's agenda during the event.

Colorful fish swim gracefully in groups around their magnificent coral reef homes, ignoring the people ogling them from glass-bottomed boats. Not only will you meet the clown fish made famous in the movie Finding Nemo, but you will also meet the crescent-masked butterfly fish, the Napoleon wrasse and the tiger fish. Tourists who can't swim or dive can still enjoy the view through a glass-bottomed boat.

"There are around 15 boats like this and we are making six more," Iwan Kaempe, an operator of a glass-bottomed boat, said Saturday (9/5). Iwan is one of 2,000 residents in Bunaken Island earning a living from the tourism industry. On Saturday, boats plied back and forth to Bunaken, carrying mostly domestic tourists. "It's always crowded during

public holidays," said Masna Tatauhe, a 40-year-old souvenir vendor.

Established as a national park in 1991, Bunaken Island is divided into three zones, namely the diving and snorkeling zone, the utilization zone, and the nurturing zone. "The nurturing zone is clear of any activity, except cleaning *the beach*," Onil Lahengking, a member of the Bunaken Marine National Park's management board. He said fishermen, instructed not to use destructive fishing methods, could fish in the utilization zone.

Despite its popularity among divers, the entry fee to Bunaken Island is incredibly cheap - only Rp 2,500 (23 US cents). Other dive sites such as Wakatobi in Southeast Sulawesi and Raja Ampat in Papua are said to surpass the beauty of Bunaken. Indonesia - along with Malaysia, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste - is expected to issue a declaration in preserving the coral reefs in the six countries' "Coral Triangle" area. They will also emphasize the importance of coral reefs in supporting food security. The declaration is expected to come out on May 15, the closing day of the six-day event. (The Jakarta Post)

UNESCO Indonesia Optimistic About WOC Result

Manado - Indonesian National Commission for UNESCO chairman Arief Rachman has expressed optimism that the ongoing World Ocean Conference (WOC) would yield a joint agreement on global marine issue.

"WOC is just the beginning and thus we have to be optimistic about its outcome," Arief Rachman said the opening of WOC Senior Official Meeting (SOM) at Grand Kawanua Hall here on Monday (11/5).

Through the World Ocean Conference, he said a joint agreement was expected to be yielded to mitigate negative impact of climate change on the seas around the world.

"The impact of climate change can be reduced by controlling the quality of our seas," Arief Rachman said, adding that UNESCO through Intergovernmental Oceanography Commission (IOC) took part in the WOC to make sure that there would be a good coordination on the world's marine issue.

He said IOC had a role among others to protect the quality of the seas in Indonesia, to exploit wisely the world's marine resources, and to see if the law of the sea at local, national, and international levels was relevant to environmental preservation.

"IOC also tries to include a number of undersea nature preserve such as Bunaken in North Sulawesi and Raja Ampat in Papua in Natural World Heritage," Arief Rachman said.

He said that through the WOC, the younger generation would be motivated to occupy themselves with marine issues and the government should support them to make marine researches.

"The seas have no boundary and therefore they need joint global coordination," he said.

Meanwhile, Indonesian environmentalists Emil Salim and Sarwono Kusumaatmadja said on the occasion that through the ongoing WOC, the marine issue should be included in the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) agenda in Copenhagen in December, 2009.

"Through the World Ocean Conference (WOC), we hope the marine issue can be included the IPCC meeting in Copenhagen in December this year," former Environment Minister Emil Salim said.

He admitted that the marine issue so far has gained less attention in the international meetings on climate change and bio-diversity. He said that although the sea had a great potential to absorb carbon dioxide (CO2) the issue on it was frequently ignored in the international meetings on bio-diversity and climate change.

Besides Emil Salim, other environmentalist Sarwono Kusumaatmadja and Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Freddy Numberi at the World Ocean Conference expressed hope that the marine issue could as well be included in the IPCC agenda.

According to them, the sea has important role in climate stability and therefore researches on it were frequently conducted but the issue was

less discussed than forest role at international meetings on environmental safety.(ANTARA)

Indonesia Trains Forestry Personnel from Timor Leste

The Indonesian government is conducting a training course for 30 officers of the Timor Leste forestry office here May 4-19 as part of the implementation of a forestry cooperation agreement. The agreement was signed by Indonesia's forestry minister and Timor Leste's agriculture, forestry and fishery minister in Jakarta on October 29, 2008.

The training was officially opened by the foreign affairs ministry's information and public diplomatic director general, Andri Hadi, and at the presence of among others Timor Leste's Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery Minister Mariano Assanami Sabino, Indonesian Ambassador to Timor Leste Eddy Setia Budhi, the forestry ministry's rehabilitation and social forestry director general, Indiatuti, and NTT Vice Governor Esthon L Foenay.

The training course was entitled "International Training on Multi Disaster Risk Management: Focusing on Forest Rehabilitation for Timor Leste". Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has launched a tree planting movement with a slogan of "One Man One Tree" and the Indonesian Tree Planting Day to be observed on every November 28.

Timor Leste's Forestry Minister also planned to launch a National Tree Planting Movement with a target of planting at least one million trees. Apart from the bilateral cooperation with Timor Leste, Indonesia is preparing a draft agreement on trilateral forestry cooperation which will also involve Timor Leste and Brazil. The cooperation will include forest restoration, land erosion mitigation, wood product revitalization, and tree rejuvenation, as well as forestry trainings.(ANTARA)

transnational crimes convention to the United Nations recently, during the 18th Session on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Indonesia's Permanent Mission to the UN and other International Organizations in Austria says.

Under the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crimes (UNCTOC), Jakarta can seek international assistance in dealing with money laundering, corruption and terrorism. The document was handed over by the Indonesian Mission's Charge d'Affaires Rainer Luhanapessy to the UN's Treaty Section legal adviser Annebeth Rosenboom. Indonesian Foreign Ministry director for international security and disarmament Desra Percaya was also present at the handing over ceremony.

The convention, which was approved by the House of Representatives in January this year, will have binding power 90 days after the instrument was presented. The UNCTOC will be an additional instrument to the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance and other existing bilateral agreements that have been signed by Indonesia.(The Jakarta Post)

REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

RI Hands Over Ratified UNCTOC Document to UN

Indonesia has handed over the document of the ratification of the UN