



united nations educational, scientific and cultural organization
organisation des nations unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture

UNESCO OFFICE, JAKARTA

Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
Office of the UNESCO Representative to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor Leste

Ref.: JAK/ CSI/ ...

25 Juni 2003

Dear Ir. Akbar Tandjung, Speaker of the DPR,

In relation to the current considerations in DPR Commission VIII and DPR Commission III on mining in protected areas and to support the fact-finding process in both commissions, we would like to bring the following information to your attention.

In recognition of the fact that marine sites are under-represented among global natural World Heritage sites, NOAA, IUCN and UNESCO convened an International Workshop in Hanoi in February 2002 in order to identify potential sites of outstanding universal value. A group of 62 international experts was forming five regional working groups in order to identify and rank potential sites in Southeast Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa and the Middle East. About 120 areas of importance as tropical coastal, marine and small island ecosystems that may merit consideration for World Heritage listing were identified and evaluated based on existing data.

A ranking of 25 sites in Southeast Asia resulted in the listing of 3 Indonesian areas among the top seven sites. These were the Raja Ampat archipelago including Gag island near Sorong, West Papua, the Berau Islands in East Kalimantan and the Banda Islands in Maluku. Among the remaining 18 listed sites were Wakatobi in Southeast Sulawesi, Bunaken in North Sulawesi and Teluk Cendrawasih in West Papua. Based on subsequent discussions with representatives from the mentioned Indonesian regions as well as with representatives of national government ministries and departments in Jakarta, UNESCO is currently cooperating with all stakeholders to prepare a potential nomination of 4 Marine World Heritage Sites in Indonesia.

Review of existing data and the results of several scientific surveys revealed, that the Raja Ampat archipelago contains the richest coral reefs with the highest marine biodiversity world-wide. In a recent three-week expedition, a team of scientists covered an area of 61,200 square kilometers and found that the number of reef fish and coral species in the area is even greater than previously expected. At least 465 coral species were recorded, with at least 20 species defying identification and under further study. This brings the total confirmed corals from the Raja Ampat islands to 505 species, which is an incredible 64-percent of all known coral species in the world.

During the trip, 828 fish species were recorded, adding an additional 95 (including four new to Indonesia) and raising the known total for Raja Ampat to 1,065 species - amongst the highest diversity in the world. While media reports of decimated and



degraded marine ecosystems in western and central Indonesia are common, this survey is clear proof that there is still a chance to conserve globally significant, high quality island and reef ecosystems in Indonesia and to ensure future sustainable income sources for the local communities.

A collection of secondary data and a rapid ecological appraisal of the Banda Islands in joint cooperation among LIPI, DKP, PKA, AIMS, TNC, TERANGI, Yayasan Banda and UNESCO were already in process before the Hanoi workshop convened. Based on the Hanoi WS outcomes the scope widened and a potential joint nomination of Raja Ampat, Banda, Wakatobi and the Derawan islands as a Serial Marine Biodiversity World Heritage Site has been proposed and is currently under consideration by local and national stakeholders including representatives of several Indonesian Government Ministries.

In the current DPR process of assessing the benefits and disadvantages including possible environmental impacts of mining operations and related submarine tailing disposal on Gag Island in the Raja Ampat archipelago, we trust that the information above may be of interest to commission members.

We wish all commission members fruitful discussions and would like to thank you very much for your attention,

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Stephen C. Hill

Director UNESCO Jakarta Office
UNESCO Representative to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Timor Leste

CC

1. Muhammad Prakosa, Minister of Forestry
2. Ir. Nabel Makarim, Minister of Environment
3. Prof.Dr. Firman Tambun, Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs
4. Ir. H. Awal Kusumah, MSc - Ketua Komisi III DPR
5. Dr. Iwan Prayitno, MSc, MPsi - Ketua Komisi VIII DPR
6. H.Rusnaid Yahya, Ketua Tim Kajian Penyelesaian Tumpang Tindih Lahan Pertambangan dan Kawasan Hutan Lindung, Komisi III DPR
7. Ir. Tari Siwi Utami, Sekretaris Tim Kajian - idem - Komisi III, DPR
8. Ketua Tim Kajian - idem - Komisi VIII, DPR
9. Sekretaris Tim Kajian - idem - Komisi VIII, DPR.