

The two-year moratorium on new concessions in peatland and primary forests is part of a bilateral agreement with Norway, in exchange for which Indonesia will receive \$1 billion in funding for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD-plus) activities.

In order for the moratorium to be legally binding from its Jan. 1 start date, it must be backed by a presidential decree, which has still not been issued.

On Monday, a coalition of environmental and civil society groups urged President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to hold up Indonesia's end of the bargain.

"We, the civil society coalition for Indonesian forest protection, appreciate the government's efforts to take initial action to save the country's forests," a statement from the coalition read.

"The plan to issue a presidential decree on a moratorium on new permits in forests and peatland is an appropriate area to start before it's too late."

The coalition, which includes the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), Greenpeace, the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL) and the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN), warned of dire consequences if the moratorium was not enforced.

"To delay its implementation would mean losing even more of Indonesia's forests," it said.

The group also stressed that the decree should include strict instructions to the relevant ministries and organizations regarding their roles in forest management.

Agus Purnomo, a presidential adviser for climate change, said a draft of the decree had already been submitted to Yudhoyono but still needed to undergo a series of legal checks before it could be signed.

"The draft is in the president's hands but it has to be studied [by a legal team] for consistency with other regulations," he said.

"There's a possibility that if it comes up short, it could be returned for revision."

Agus said the bilateral agreement with Norway would not be affected as a result of the delay in issuing the decree, adding that the promised release of funds to Indonesia was "safe."

"Whether Norway is getting angry about this, you'd have to ask them," he said.

"All we're doing is delaying the implementation of the moratorium, that's the only impact on our side."

Giorgio Budi Indarto, from the ICEL, said if the draft was already with Yudhoyono, there should

be no reason for the delay.

“What’s taking so long?” he asked.