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Indonesia called on parties to the UN biodiversity convention to stop receiving illegally traded endangered species, or loss of biodiversity would continue.

A senior official from the Forestry Ministry warned that Indonesia's measures to protect endangered species, such as tigers and orangutans, by restoring their ailing habitats could be futile if foreign countries took no serious action to deal with illegal trade.

"It is similar to illegal logging. We could not rub it out if countries like Malaysia and China still accept illegal wood from Indonesia," Darori, the ministry's director general for forest protection and nature conservation, told The Jakarta Post on Wednesday.

The two countries could be entry points for transfer of illegal timber from Indonesia to other nations, he added.

Darori made the statement as negotiators from 193 countries to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are preparing for a two-week summit in Nagoya, Japan, to seek solutions on how to protect biodiversity.

The tenth conference of parties (COP) to the CBD would be held on Oct. 18 to Oct. 29, with the closing three days slated for ministerial meetings.

International demand for rare species is still high, Darori said.

"We recently seized three tiger skins being exported at prices between Rp 50 million [US\$5,550] and Rp 100 million per pelt," he said.

Indonesia once had Javanese and Balinese tigers, but they are now extinct. The ministry predicted there were only 500 Sumatran tigers left in the wild.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature named the Sumatran tiger as critically endangered, while the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora placed it in Appendix I, prohibiting its trade.

"We want the upcoming CBD summit to discuss illegal trade of endangered species to protect biodiversity," Darori said.

The three big outcomes of the COP10 meeting in Nagoya would be global agreement on a new

strategy, the mobilization of finance, and a new legally-binding protocol on access and benefit sharing, a statement by the secretariat of CBD said on Wednesday.

“The decisions we take now will affect biodiversity for the coming millennium. We can’t have one outcome without the others. The COP10 meeting is all or nothing,” the Convention on Biological Diversity executive secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif said.

The CBD statement specifically elaborated on biodiversity issues in Indonesia. Indonesia was labelled as one of seventeen “megadiverse” nations, and has more biodiversity than any country other than Brazil, and is home to 10 percent of the world’s flowering plant species and 12 percent of all mammals. Many of Indonesia’s species — and more than half of the archipelago’s endemic plant species — are found nowhere else on Earth.

This biodiversity provides many natural goods and services to people of Indonesia, but it faces direct threats from human activities.

Since 1997, the rate of deforestation has reached 2.4 million hectares per year, mostly due to logging, conversion for agriculture and forest fires, the statement said.

This has contributed to the increase of the items on Indonesia’s list of threatened species, which now includes 140 species of bird and 63 species of mammal.