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# Heart of Borneo

*Three Countries, One Conservation Vision*

## *Lessons learnt*

*Stuart Chapman, Programme Director, WWF-Greater Mekong Programme*



## THE HEART OF BORNEO DECLARATION

### DECLARATION ON THE HEART OF BORNEO INITIATIVE *Three Countries, One Conservation Vision*

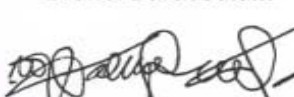
We, the Governments of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia, recognizing the importance of the Island of Borneo as a life support system, hereby declare that:

- With one conservation vision and with a view to promote people's welfare, we will cooperate in ensuring the effective management of forest resources and conservation of a network of protected areas, productive forests and other sustainable land-uses within an area which the three respective countries will designate as the "Heart of Borneo (HoB)", thereby maintaining Bornean natural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations, with full respect to each country's sovereignty and territorial boundaries, and also without prejudice to the ongoing negotiations on land boundary demarcation.
- The HoB Initiative is a voluntary trans-boundary cooperation of the three countries combining the stakeholders' interests, based on local wisdom, acknowledgement of and respect for laws, regulations and policies in the respective countries and taking into consideration relevant multilateral environmental agreements, as well as existing regional and bilateral agreements / arrangements.
- We are willing to cooperate based on sustainable development principles through research and development, sustainable use, protection, education and training, fundraising, as well as other activities that are relevant to trans-boundary management, conservation and development within the areas of the HoB.

To support this Declaration, we, the three countries will prepare our respective project documents incorporating the strategic and operational plans, which will form the basis for the development of our road map towards realizing the vision of the HoB Initiative.

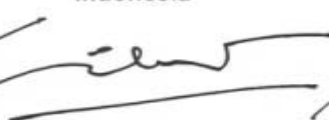
Done at Bali, Indonesia on the twelfth day of February, two thousand and seven in three original copies.

For the Government of  
His Majesty the Sultan  
and Yang Di-Pertuan of  
Brunei Darussalam



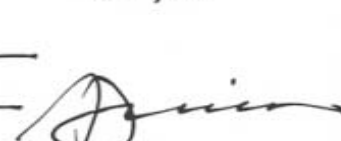
H.E. Pehin Dato Dr.  
Awang Haji Ahmad bin  
Haji Jumat  
Minister of Industry and  
Primary Resources,  
Brunei Darussalam

For the Government  
of the Republic of  
Indonesia



H.E. Mr. M. S. Kaban  
Minister of Forestry,  
Republic of Indonesia

For the Government of  
Malaysia



H.E. Dato' Seri Azmi bin  
Khalid  
Minister of Natural  
Resources and Environment,  
Malaysia

*“This is an historic occasion which marks new collaboration between our three countries. This will put the Heart of Borneo on the world stage as one of the last great blocks of forest in the world.”*

MS Kaban, Indonesia's Minister of Forestry  
12 February 2007  
Bali, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

Borneo is the world's third largest island. It is home to an incredibly rich diversity of plants and animals that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Over the past ten years, new species have been scientifically described at an astonishing average rate of three per month. Borneo is undoubtedly one of the most important centres of biodiversity on the planet. It straddles the transboundary highlands of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia and reaches out through the foothills into the adjacent lowlands. This area is called the "*Heart of Borneo*".

In April 2005, the Government of Brunei Darussalam hosted a workshop that was attended by more than one hundred participants, comprising mainly senior diplomats, government officials, scientists and conservationists, from the three Bornean countries and various global organisations and NGOs. They met to explore the idea of working together to protect the forests of the Heart of Borneo and to see how conservation and sustainable development, including the management of human activities to benefit the people of Borneo, might be achieved within a framework of co-operation between Malaysia's, Indonesia's and Brunei's governments, with the backing of broad global support.

Over the subsequent two years, the Heart of Borneo, through targeted communications was placed on the regional and international map of conservation priorities. In Bali, Indonesia on 12 February 2007, an historic declaration to conserve the HOB was officially signed between Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia. The area to be conserved and sustainably managed equalled almost a third of the island (220,000 sq km).

Based on these experiences a number of lessons learnt may be applicable to the countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion. In addition, globally there are a number of other precedents which may also be applicable. For example:

### **The Yaoundé and Brazzaville Summits for West-Central African Forest Conservation**

The historic 1999 Yaoundé Summit for West-Central African Forest Conservation was hosted by H.E. President Biya of Cameroon, attended by five African Presidents who together signed the Yaoundé Declaration. It was the first ever African regional forest conservation declaration and was signed by Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Chad and Congo. In 2001, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, Colin Powell, then US Secretary of State, announced US\$53 million in funding to promote forest conservation in the Congo Basin to support the work resulting from the Yaoundé Forest Summit. Lessons could clearly be learnt from the Yaoundé process.

It was followed up in February 2005 by the Brazzaville Summit (also known as “Yaoundé+5”) when the leaders of ten West and Central African countries met, with the President of France in attendance, to sign the continent’s first ever regional treaty on conservation and sustainable management of forests, the COMIFAC Treaty. This was signed by Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, the Central African Republic, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Sao Tome and Principe, Rwanda and Burundi.

**Cover photos:** *left:* Dense forest landscape in Sabah, Borneo © WWF-Canon / A. Christy Williams; *Middle:* Three countries, one conservation vision: (from left to right) Pehin Dr Awang Haji Ahmad bin Haji Jumat, Brunei Darussalam’s Minister of Industry and Primary Resources, MS Kaban, Indonesia’s Minister of Forestry and Dato Seri Azmi bin Khalid, Malaysia’s Minister of Natural Resources and Environment. Heart of Borneo Declaration Signing Ceremony, 12 February 2007, Bali, Indonesia © WWF-Indonesia. *Far right:* Mother & baby Orang-utan (*Pongo pygmaeus*), Central Kalimantan, Borneo © WWF-Canon / Alain COMPOST