

**Statement by
JOANGOHutan, Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS)
And Concerned Lawyers
18 March 2008**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

The Malaysia-EU FLEGT negotiation calls for full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders. Over the last 3 meetings we, the representative of JOANGOHutan, JOAS and Concerned Lawyers have been actively participating in this consultation process contributing the best of our experiences, knowledge and will.

Throughout this time we have expressed our views and concerns regarding our fundamental rights, which are a critical constituent to this agreement.

Mr. Chairman, we have made great efforts to be part of this process. However, it is with great disappointment that we have found ourselves marginalized right from the beginning of this consultation process.

In particular, our demand that the definition of legal timber should include the clause that *such timber and its products shall be free from aboriginal or native customary claims, and free from aboriginal or native territorial boundaries* has not been taken seriously.

This is our **minimum demand**.

The excuse given for not including it in the definition of legal timber is not acceptable to us.

Further, despite your assurances, Mr. Chairman, that all recommendations would be taken into consideration, none of our recommendations in the memoranda that we have submitted were included in the official documents. This is extremely disturbing in light of the relevance of these recommendations to our lives, our lands and our rights as peoples.

Mr. Chairman, we express our strong protest at this rejection of our minimum demand.

In view of this unacceptable censoring, we are left with no choice but to officially withdraw from this process until our minimum demand is met.

We refuse to continue to participate in a process that is making decisions over our lives and yet expects our participation to be mere endorsement of a process that does not respect us.

We will be considering further appropriate measures and will bring this up during the meeting with the Ministry and the EU tomorrow.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.