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Parallel Sessions- Session 3A 11.00am – 12.30pm

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Presentation Title: Developing a Disclosure Policy on Forest Sector Information in Indonesia

Indonesia's parliament has long been deliberating a draft Freedom of Information Act submitted for consideration in 2001. Adoption and implementation of this Act is hopefully inevitable, but likely to take some time. Meanwhile, demand for transparent forest sector information has increased in light of growing concerns about deforestation rates and forest governance problems that have resulted in rampant illegal logging, rent-seeking behavior and corruption.

In the absence of an overarching Freedom of Information Act, the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry is exploring the possibility of developing a disclosure policy specifically for forest sector information. This initiative is a core component of a forest sector and accountability project (known as FOMAS), which seeks to make relevant, reliable, accurate and up-to-date forest sector information continuously available to decision makers and the general public.

Aside from developing comprehensive guidelines on disclosing forest sector information to the general public, the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry needs to consider a number of challenging issues: how can a disclosure policy on forest sector information be legally binding?; how can appeals and complaints be handled without the installation of an Information Commission?; should penalties be handed down if government officials fail to comply with the disclosure policy?; and what measures can be taken to ensure that a disclosure policy on forest sector information does not contradict the draft Freedom of Information Act being deliberated by the Indonesian Parliament?