

Green groups accuse paper giant of breaking logging promise

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This photograph taken on March 16, 2013 and released on March 28, 2013 by the Consortium of Kalimantan Forest Monitoring Volunteers (CKFMV) shows a new peat canal in a peatland forest in West Kalimantan province of Indonesia's Borneo island. Indonesian green groups accused Asia Pulp & Paper of again breaking its promise to stop clearing natural forests and peatlands in the country.

Indonesian green groups on Thursday accused the world's third-largest paper producer Asia Pulp & Paper of again breaking its promise to stop clearing natural forests and peatlands in the country.

APP in February announced that it had stopped using logs from Indonesia's natural forests after years of campaigning by Greenpeace that lost the firm major clients, including Barbie-maker Mattel and food giant Kraft.

But a coalition of environmental groups in West Kalimantan province on Borneo and WWF Indonesia said two APP suppliers, Asia Tani Persada and Daya Tani Kalbar, were still clearing natural forests and building deep canals on peatlands.

"Our observations from the field showed that forest and peatland clearing with heavy machinery are still taking place in the concession of two APP suppliers," Ian Hilman of WWF Indonesia told AFP.

"In the end we doubt (the firm's commitment). Is it a matter of merely showing a good face or do they really want to make a change?" Hilman said.

APP said Thursday the suppliers in question had "strongly indicated" they were not in breach of the company's policy, adding that the likely cause is overlapping land-use boundaries with other companies and it was now verifying data, maps and information on the ground.

"In the spirit of transparency, we will publish our findings and response to (the green groups) as soon as the verification process is completed," APP said in an emailed statement to AFP.

Anton Wijaya of Friends of Earth Indonesia (Walhi) West Kalimantan said: "We call on global buyers of pulp and [paper](#) to remain sceptical and await independent verification by independent NGOs... before making any new purchasing decisions."

The groups raised doubts over APP's commitment after the company

failed to carry out similar initiatives in the past, including a 2003 agreement with WWF to protect high-conservation-value forests over an initial 12-year period.

WWF cancelled the agreement in 2004, saying the company had failed to make any progress on its commitment.

APP produces over 18 million tonnes of pulp, paper and related products annually, the firm said.

Deforestation accounts for 70 percent of carbon emissions in Indonesia, the world's third-biggest emitter, according to UN data.

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