Tana’ Ulen, Customary Forest: A legacy of Indigenous Kenyah Dayak people for forest conservation

by

Ndan Imang
Center for Social Forestry (CSF)
University of Mulawarman
Samarinda, INDONESIA
Email: ndan_imang@yahoo.co.id
Who are the Kenyah Dayak?

- The Dayaks are indigenous people of East Kalimantan, even in West and Central Kalimantan.
- Population: 350,000 (11% of East Kalimantan population).
- Practicing, and highly depending on Swidden agriculture.
Typical Village territory utilizations by the Kenyah Dayak

- Customary Forest (tana’ulen)
- Agricultural area
- Settlement
- Communal forest (baí)
Criteria for selection of Tana' Ulen (Customary Forest)

- Primary forest
- Rich of timber
- Size various 80-500 ha
- Located at most 2-3 km away the village
Purposes of Tana’ Ulen (Customary Forest)

- In ancient era, *Tana’ Ulen* is a certain area for the aristocratic family for hunting and fishing.
- To provide timber for communal purpose: Church, Customary Hall, boat.
- Provide timber for emergency needs: coffin, house burnt.
- Water reservoir for village.
- Environmental service.
- Wild animal protection.
Regulation of *Tana’ Ulen*

- Cutting timber is strictly prohibited
- Land clearing for agricultural is prohibited
- (previously) wild hunting was prohibited → now it is allowed
- Collecting NTFP and fishing-hunting in limited amount is permitted
Potential Threats to Tana’ Ulen

- Logging activity
- Coal mining (1,500 concession in East Kalimantan Province)
- Succession of generation and village leader
- District fraction in which the newly district need fund by exploiting natural resources
Future challenge and strategy to Sustain Tana’ Ulen (1)

- To get legal recognition from government by following up the Constitution Court (Mahkama Konstitusi) decision which explicitly recognizes the authority of customary community on customary forest x Forestry Law No. 41, 1999.
- To draft written Regulation on Tana’ Ulen, and at least recognized (signed) by Regent (Bupati)
- To explain the history and importance of Tana’ ulen to young generation (successor)
Future challenge and strategy to Sustain Tana’ Ulen (2)

- Strictly punish anyone violates customary law
- National and International support on *Tana’ Ulen* by actively conducting research on *Tana’ ulen*
Thank you