

PRESS RELEASE**Coral Reef Destruction should be included in the first 100-day agenda of the new Minister of Marine and Fishery.**

Jakarta, 2 November 2004. *Today a complete report on coral reef destruction, generated by destructive fishing and poor law enforcement in marine sector, has been launched by an NGO concerned about marine affairs. The issue is considered so important that the new Minister of Marine and Fishery is recommended to give it top priority during his first 100-day agenda.*

Indonesia's coral reefs, which are estimated to span over 51,000 km² or represent 18% of the world's total, are in great danger of destruction. They are being devastated by low-cost destructive fishing, particularly blast and cyanide fishing. Such practices are detrimental not only to the target fish but their habitats as well. Their *juveniles* and other marine lives die along with the habitats, i.e. the coral reef.

Telapak's monitoring during 1998-2002 showed that blast or cyanide fishing was responsible for 80% of the total catch of ornamental and live food fish. Furthermore, 80% of the ornamental fish catch and 50% of the live food fish catch died in the cage or during the transportation.

In its latest report entitled 'Deadly Spray in the Archipelago,' Telapak uncovered three main causes of the devastating Indonesia's coral reefs, namely poor law enforcement, KKN¹ and fisher's poverty. The situation has been even worsened by the complicity of the Navy and the Air Force, which are patrolling in search of money.

"In several cases that we found, the Navy and the Air Force required that each fisher's boat pay some Rp5 millions in order to operate/catch fish," said M. Imran Amin, the coordinator of Telapak's Marine Monitoring Program, "and even small traditional boats were also subject to this extortion."

Destructive fishing and KKN are two things that need special attention from the government. The practices are responsible for acute impoverishment of fisher's communities. Telapak does expect that the government could take concrete actions to improve fisher's well-being, provide legal protection for them, provide incentives for non-destructive fishing and introduce alternative fishing methods that are economically viable and socially acceptable. "The new Minister of Marine and Fishery *must* address the issue during his first 100-day agenda," stated Ridzki R. Sigit, the Executive Director of Telapak.

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¹ Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism

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Also available footage with broadcast quality and photos

Note to the Editor:

- More than 60% of Indonesia's poor people are fishers, who live at subsistence level and depend greatly on marine resources.
- *Potassium cyanide* can be easily obtained at relatively low price, ranging from Rp40,000 to Rp50,000 per kilogram.
- One single spray of potassium cyanide (approximately 20 cc) may kill coral reef of 5x5m in size in 3-6 months. On the other hand, it takes tens to hundreds of years for coral reef to recover.
- It is estimated that only 6% of Indonesia's coral reefs remain intact.
- Cyanide fishing has been practiced since early 1980s, introduced by the Philippines fishers in North Sulawesi waters. The practice has been spreading rapidly due to the diminishing stocks of fish and the increasing demand from the international market.
- Since 1998 Telapak, in collaboration with its partners that are incorporated in ProMola (Marine Monitoring Program), has been investigating *destructive fishing* and promoting an alternative non-cyanide fishing method.
- Telapak is a non-profitable independent NGO based in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia.