1. Definition and scope of illegal logging

Smith (2002) mentioned that illegal logging term refers to timber harvesting-related activities inconsistent with national (or sub-national) laws. The scope of those activities can be the entire industry from wood harvesting until product reaching the market. Illegal cutting includes logging inside protected areas or outside concession areas. Logging within concession areas will be determined as illegal activities if it is not in accordance with law. Cutting restricted species, or over the allowable limit, or before the concession or licence is active, constitutes an illegal act. The following are different types which considered as illegal logging (Brack & Hayman, 2001):

- Logging in violating contractual obligations
- Obtaining concessions illegally, for example, corrupt means
- Logging nationally-protected species without explicit permission
- Logging outside concession boundaries
- Logging in forbidden or protected areas
- Removing under or over-sized trees
- Laundering illegal timber through a concession
- Use of old log permits or licences to collect illegally felled timber

Furthermore, Bract et al. (2001) mentioned that Illegal logging takes place when timber is harvested, transported, bought or sold in violation of national laws. There is a wide term of illegal in this case. It can include corrupt means to have access to forests, extraction from a protected area, cutting of protected species or over-cutting. Illegalities may also take place during transport, including illegal processing and export and avoidance of taxes.

2. Illegal logging in Indonesia

Illegal logging and other forest crimes have expanded into protected areas of Indonesia. There are more pressure on endangered and endemic species of flora and fauna. A number of high profile species now face a real and ever-present threat of extinction (Wardojo et al., 2001).

Larsen (2002) has mentioned that Indonesia’s domestic wood supply of 2002 was 20 million cubic meters, while the demand stood at some 60 million cubic meters. This gap was filled by illegal logging and destroy ten million hectares of Indonesia’s forest.

In 2001, as it was requested by the Government of Indonesia, ITTO council had organized a Technical Mission to Indonesia. This mission was meant to identify the ITTO support for sustainable forest management with particular emphasis on some aspects including curbing illegal logging. The report of the Technical Mission was presented to the Council at the Thirty-first Session (ITTO, 2001).

The council had identified the causes and contributory factors to illegal logging (ITTO, 2001). The failure of forest laws, insufficient of management and control in
timber production, availability of markets for illegal logs, low risk and high profitability of illegal logging, lack of inter-sector coordination are among factors mentioned by the Council.

Casson & Obidzinski (2002) mentioned a number of factors attributed to the recent boom in illegal logging including changes arising from “reformasi” – a calling for democracy, reform and change – and the new decentralization laws. Central government give the authority to local government to manage their natural resources. Governors and Regents have the authority to issue permits for small forest concessions. Governors were allowed to grant concessions of up to 10,000 ha, and Regents were allowed to grant concessions up to 100 ha.

The grant issued by Regents is known as HPHH (Hak Pemungutan Hasil Hutan, or license to collect forest products) and IPK (Izin Pemanfaatan Kayu, or license to extract and use timber). This was later redefined as IPPK (Izin Pemanfaatan dan Pemanfaatan Kayu, or license to collect and use timber). HPHH were meant to be allocated for extracting non timber forest products, while IPK/IPPK licenses providing legal means for opening up, or clearing small forest areas for community plantation (Casson & Obidzinski, 2002).

Pearce and Brown (1994) in Palmer (2000) mentioned that the most important underlying causes of unsustainable forest activities, i.e. illegal logging, are market and government failures. Figure 2.1. shows in details the linkages between corruption, economic and political causes of corruption, and direct causes of illegal logging.
3. What can be done to combat illegal logging?

Illegal logging is a problem that must be addressed. Actions need to be done at both the national and international levels with good coordination. In monitoring and detection of illegal logging activities, all stakeholders from government to civil society need to be involved. Sharing information between stakeholders and training in monitoring methods and technologies are among the key steps. Any attempt in addressing illegal logging must be done within the context of overall sustainable forest management (Smith, 2002).

Illegal logging will be more difficult if importing countries insist the certification of timber and its products under internationally recognized environmental and social standards like those of the Forest Stewardship Council (Larsen, 2002).

There is a need to work closely together in addressing the problem and simultaneously build stronger and more transparent political commitment to strengthen forest law enforcement (Wardojo et al., 2001). Many organisations have a role to play in combating illegal logging. Donors, communities, governments and industry can work together or separately to create change (Smith, 2002).

References


