



Pengurus Besar Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (PB AMAN)

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Publication

Meeting between the President and AMAN at the Presidential Palace: **President Joko Widodo Supports Draft Law and Task Force on Indigenous Peoples**

Jakarta, March 22, 2017 - President Joko Widodo constantly encourages the Draft Law on Indigenous Peoples to be completed by the parliament and the establishment of Indigenous Peoples Task Force. This was communicated by the President during a discussion with the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara/AMAN) at the Presidential Palace on Wednesday (22/3).

To speed up the passing of Indigenous Peoples Draft Law, President said he will provide the Presidential Letter for transmission for the parliament. The President also requested that the Task Force on Indigenous Peoples to be established soon. "Let it be formed quickly. The Task Force will help the verification process of lands to be released. The more land area verified the better," he said.

On the same occasion, the President also asked the Home Affairs Ministry to push the acceleration of decision letters on indigenous peoples and request the indigenous peoples to push for the acceleration of Regional Supreme Court Resolutions. "These resolutions will speed up the process to return the land of indigenous communities," the President said. He also said, "Once there are regional regulations and national decision letters, the land will be returned."

The President explained that currently there are 18 letters being prepared by the government. This is in continuation of those being given to 9 communities in December 2016. "But that was just a small number. The land is there but we can't get it done without regional regulation and regent decision," he commented.

According to the President the forests are best managed by the indigenous peoples. "I know that this is right of the indigenous peoples. If we give the rights to the indigenous peoples, I'm sure that the forests will be better kept and more green. I saw this myself in the field," the President said.

The meeting was initiated by the President Joko Widodo, who had been unable to attend the fifth Congress of Indigenous Peoples (Kongres Masyarakat Adat Nusantara ke-V/KMAN V) in Kampong Tanjung Gusta, North Sumatera, March 15-19, 2017.

"Congratulations to Ms. Rukka Sombolinggi, the newly elected Secretary General of AMAN and congratulations to the new National Council of AMAN," said the President. The President also requested that there should be regular meetings between him and AMAN every three or four months for evaluation purpose.

The Secretary General of AMAN Rukka Sombolinggi positively welcomed the meeting. "The President is still expressing his support for the Draft Law and the Task Force on Indigenous Peoples. After the meeting AMAN and the Office of Presidential Staff sat together and discussed to ensure the establishment of the Task Force as the President himself already stated in front of the representative of the indigenous peoples for the Task Force to be formed."

The meeting was also attended by the Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya and the Head of the Office of Presidential Staff Teten Masduki. They both had attended the opening of KMAN V on March 17, 2017, in lieu of the President.

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The Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara/AMAN) has 2.332 communities as its members. More information about AMAN is at www.aman.or.id