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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The starting point for this joint publication was to try to increase awareness at the international level about the sustainability of indigenous forest management systems. So many recent reports have focused on the problems facing Indonesia's forests: fires, illegal logging, the expansion of large-scale plantations, agriculture encroachment, endangered wildlife and conflicts over land and resources. At national and local levels, indigenous people have often been blamed as the agents of forest degradation and destruction.

Forest communities have retained a wealth of indigenous skills and knowledge, despite systematic attempts by the Indonesian government over four decades to eradicate traditional systems of natural resource management and decision-making. Customary law and shared values and belief systems – summed up by the Indonesian term *adat* – are an integral part of land use systems, including forest management, for indigenous communities. *Adat* is more than a traditional lifestyle and colourful ceremonies which attract tourists. It can provide the cohesion and direction necessary for indigenous peoples to protect their forest environment and develop sustainable livelihoods in the face of challenges from the outside world.

Moreover, the Indonesian indigenous network, AMAN, felt that the communities which make up the indigenous movement needed to develop greater capacity to take their issues to the international arena, particularly those related to forest destruction, illegal logging and sustainable forest management.



The Third Congress of the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (KMAN III)

Indigenous peoples in Indonesia

Indonesia has a population of around 220 million people - the fourth largest in the world after China, India and the USA. It is also a multi-ethnic society with 1,072 ethnic and subethnic groups spread throughout the archipelago from Aceh to Papua¹. This ethnic diversity represents a wealth of cultural assets combined in one nation state, as reflected in Indonesia's national slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*: unity in diversity. During the Suharto period, this slogan was interpreted in terms of unifying Indonesia's people through standardisation. Assertions of ethnic identity were considered dangerous to state unity. So there were a number of initiatives from 1965 onwards aimed at limiting the expression of ethnic identity, predominantly through policies and development programmes that emphasised uniformity and economic growth.

The Indonesian government has, and to some extent still does, refer to indigenous peoples in terms with negative associations such as native people, isolated people, swidden farmers, forest squatters and backward communities. For example, the department of social affairs described 'isolated peoples' in 1994 as "groups of people who live or

¹ Leo Suryadinata, Evi Nurvidya Arifin & Aris Ananta, 2003, *Indonesia's Population: Ethnicity and Religion in a Changing Political Landscape*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

are nomadic in geographically remote and isolated areas and are socially and culturally alienated and/or still underdeveloped compared to other Indonesia communities in general”². In the same policy document, indigenous peoples’ health, education, housing, clothing and lifestyles are said to be ‘underdeveloped’. Such definitions are deeply resented by the indigenous community.

Through the first national gathering of the indigenous movement, held in Jakarta in March 1999, Indonesia’s indigenous people defined themselves as *masyarakat adat*. This term refers to indigenous communities who have lived on their ancestral lands for generations and have sovereignty over their lands and natural resources. They have their own values and ideologies, social structures, economic and political systems and cultures which are governed by customary laws and institutions. Based on these criteria, the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) estimates some 50-70 million people in Indonesia belong to indigenous communities.

The growth of Indonesia’s forestry industry

Many of the problems facing Indonesia’s forests today have their roots in the model of development initiated in the mid-1960s. The vision of Suharto’s New Order for Indonesia was based on economic growth fuelled by the exploitation of natural resources. Foreign investment and the patronage of a powerful local elite, including Indonesia’s military, were an essential part of this policy. The first law passed by the Suharto government was to promote foreign investment³.

Indonesia faced serious economic problems in the 1960s and was desperate for foreign exchange. The country’s natural resources, including forests, were parceled up as large-scale concessions and put into the hands of private and state-owned companies. While this system generated substantial revenues for the central government in taxes and other levies, it brought very few benefits at the local level. Communities were stripped of their forest assets to support a huge administrative bureaucracy and a small powerful circle of businessmen close to the president.

² Director General of Social Welfare, Department of Social Affairs, Decree No 5/1994

³ UU No. 1/1967 *Penanaman Modal Asing*



Logging concession in West Kalimantan

For nearly two decades, the Indonesian forestry department claimed 144 million hectares of forest lands as ‘state forest’. This was divided up into four categories. Production Forest (64 million ha) was intended for selective logging as part of the permanent forest estate. Another 31 million ha of so-called Conversion Forest was destined to be clear felled for agriculture, settlements or non-forestry uses. Protection Forest covering 39 million ha, mainly on high land or steep slopes, was to be retained for watershed protection. Protected Forests (19 million ha) included National Parks and Nature Reserves where forest exploitation was forbidden⁴.

⁴ Indonesian Department of Forestry forest zoning, 1984 (*Tata Guna Hutan Kesepakatan*). This figure was later reduced to 120 million hectares.

The first logging concessions were set up immediately after the 1967 Forestry Law was passed, even though the regulations which spelled out the details of how forestry companies should operate only appeared in 1970⁵. By that time, 64 logging companies were active in concessions covering 8 million hectares. The numbers of logging concessions increased throughout the 1970s and 80s. For example, in East Kalimantan, PT Yasa Maha Kerta was one of the first timber companies to start operations in the Bulungan area in 1967. By 1983, an area of 11,678,540 ha had been allocated to 110 concessionaires in that province alone⁶. Nationally, the forestry department had issued permits for 578 logging concessions by 1990, with a total area of 59.9 million ha⁷. This figure is only slightly less than the 64 million ha zoned as Production Forest by the forestry department in 1985.

Indonesia's forestry sector soon became hugely important to the country's economy. The development of Indonesia's plywood industry, stimulated by an export ban on logs in 1980, generated even more revenues. In 1989, the export of timber products contributed US\$3.5 billion to central government coffers – over 15% of total exports or around 25% of exports from the non-oil & gas sector⁸.

The crisis in Indonesia's forests

This model of large-scale forest exploitation has proven to be environmentally or economically unsustainable. Indonesia's forests disappeared at the average rate of 2.2 million ha per year between 1985 and 1997⁹. This increased in the period of economic crisis and political uncertainty which followed the fall of Suharto and the Asian financial

⁵ This was the implementing regulation on forestry permits and fees *PP No. 21/1970 (Hak Pengusahaan Hutan dan Hak Pemungutan Hasil Hutan)*.

⁶ Although the Dutch colonial administration focused on forestry to meet local needs, it also gave some concessions to private companies. For example, in East Kalimantan, commercial forestry started in 1939 with logging permits for six companies with Dutch and Japanese owners. Some of the timber produced was for export. For further information see Rimbo Gunawan, Juni Thamrin & Endang Suhendar, 1999, *After the Rain Falls*, Akatiga, Bandung, p17

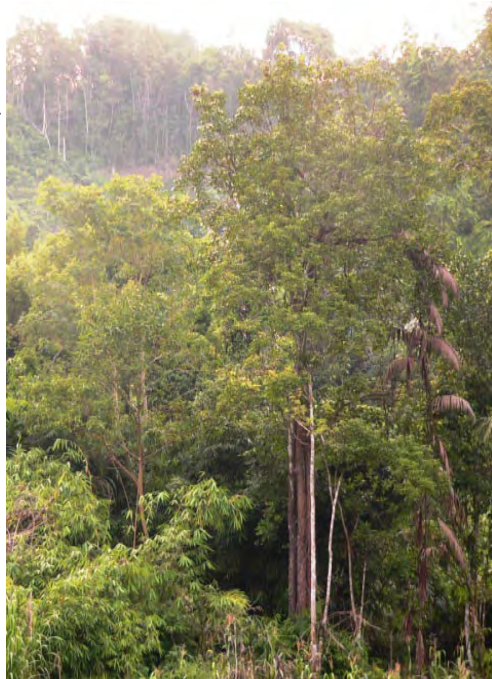
⁷ *op.cit.*, p8

⁸ Rizal Ramli & Mubariq Ahmad, 1999, *Rente Ekonomi Pengusahaan Hutan Indonesia*, 1993, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia, Jakarta, p18

⁹ *Portret Keadaan Hutan Indonesia*, 2001, Forest Watch Indonesia and Global Forest Watch, Bogor, p11

crash in the late 1990s in which many forestry companies became bankrupt and the massive debt burdens of others were taken over by the state. More recently, official figures for Indonesian deforestation rates were 2.8 million ha/year¹⁰, but forest NGO estimates were 3.8 million ha/year or higher¹¹.

Over-capacity in the wood-processing industry is a major contributor to forest destruction in Indonesia. Data on timber supply and demand, collected and processed by the Indonesian forest research group Forest Watch



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Customary Protected Forest

Indonesia, reveals a substantial deficit. In 2001, the wood-processing industry's demand for raw material (timber) was nearly 23 million m³, yet supplies were roughly half this amount at 11.5 million m³¹². And this is in addition to the demands from Indonesia's burgeoning pulp and paper industry. From 2000 onwards, paper pulp production has consumed 23-25 million m³ of timber/year, while production of pulpwood from plantations is still only 3.8 million m³/year¹³. So it is clear that the remaining 70-80% of timber supplies for Indonesian pulp plants comes from illegal logging or clearing natural forests.

The lack of sustainability in Indonesian forest management is also demonstrated by the number of timber companies that have stopped operating in recent years. In December 2003, 265 concessionaires were actively logging in forests covering 27,430,463 ha. But one year

¹⁰ Department of Forestry, 23/May/06, <http://www.depkominfo.go.id>

¹¹ Togu Manurung, director FWI, quoted in *Media Indonesia*, 20/Oct/2004

¹² *The State of Indonesia's Forests*, forthcoming.

¹³ *Portret Keadaan Hutan Indonesia*, op. cit. p45

later, only 114 companies were still operating in just 8,819,287 ha of forest concessions¹⁴: 18,611,176 ha of forest concessions had been abandoned. This again raises questions about the ability of Indonesia's wood processing industries to secure timber from legal, sustainable sources in future.

Amidst all the concerns about the sharp increases in the number of cases of 'illegal logging' and rates of deforestation, it is important to realise that most of Indonesia's logging concessions are not fully legitimate. The Indonesian government simply followed in the footsteps of the Dutch colonial authorities by declaring most of the country's forests to be state land. This move automatically deprived communities living in and around forests of their ownership of and access to forest lands and resources. One result was that many forest peoples now live in poverty. Under Indonesian law, the boundary of state forests should be negotiated and clearly marked. However, less than 12 million ha of this area has been properly gazetted. In other words, around 90% of state forests do not have a formal legal basis¹⁵.

The future for Indonesia's forestry industry looks increasingly gloomy. The gap between supply and demand in the wood processing and pulp industries, the high deforestation rate, illegal logging, unclear legitimacy and community conflicts in the forestry sector are likely to result in further environmental destruction and chronic poverty. It is not clear where the government sees the place of the 50 million indigenous peoples who live in and around Indonesia's forests in the macro-economic recovery of the forestry sector.

Meanwhile, national and international demand for timber will probably remain at least the same or, more likely, increase. One way out of this dilemma is to shift away from the failed paradigm of a forestry industry based on companies exploiting large-scale concessions and to replace it with a model of community-based forest management which brings direct benefits to local people.

¹⁴ *The State of Indonesia's Forests*, FWI, forthcoming.

¹⁵ AC Hermosila & C Fay, 2006, *Memperkokoh Pengelolaan Hutan Indonesia melalui Penguasaan Tanah*, World Agroforestry Centre, Bogor, Indonesia

Indigenous forest management and tenure

Indigenous people's understanding of customary/*adat* land¹⁶ is basically that of a community's living space. This territory forms part of their identity. The existence and integrity of this customary domain is an essential element of indigenous peoples' lives. The importance of maintaining the land, its resources and boundaries is reflected in the rules and regulations that indigenous communities have drawn up about how *adat* lands may be owned and used. Most concepts of customary land are characterised by a balance between individual and communal rights. Rights to land and natural resources, including forests, can be held communally for the benefit of the whole community and also individually to meet families' particular needs. The exact pattern depends on the indigenous community.

The relationship between communities and/or individuals and land and resources is further defined through customary regulations which divide the *adat* domain into zones and specify the function and management of each of these. The ownership of the various zones is also clearly set down. For example, religious, environmental, economic and social functions are fulfilled by areas designated respectively as sacred forest (*hutan keramat*), protection forest (*hutan lindung*), productive forest (*hutan produksi*), agroforestry areas (*kebun*), rainfed and irrigated fields (*huma/ladang* and *sawah*) and settlements. The type of tenure is related to the function of each area. For example, spiritual and conservation zones are communal land because these functions benefit the whole community, whereas productive land/forest and settlement areas may be under communal or individual tenure.

The state's concept of *adat* land predominantly focuses on communal land and is usually taken to mean sacred and protection forest, although this is not clearly stated in law. The result is that government authorities do not take into account the fact that productive forests and lands may also be under communal tenure or be a mosaic of communal and individual ownership. This difference between state and indigenous perspectives about customary lands has blurred the distinction between

¹⁶ The term *tanah ulayat* is also often used for customary/*adat* land, both by some indigenous peoples and in government land regulations. The term, originally Arabic, was first associated with indigenous communities in West Sumatra.

communal and individual tenure and, through various legal instruments, has contributed to the increasing trend towards individual ownership in *adat* lands. This phenomenon threatens the status of *adat* domains, the practice of customary land and resource management systems and, ultimately, the very identity of indigenous peoples.

Many communities have continued to retain some control over their forest resources and continue to manage them sustainably, despite the unfavourable social and political climate. A range of different terms are used for these community-based forest management practices in the literature and at national level: community forest (*hutan rakyat*), village forest (*hutan desa*), forest gardens (*kebun hutan*), agroforestry areas (*wanatani*). There is also a plethora of local terms such as *leuweung* (West Java), *repong* (Lampung), *tombak* (Tapanuli Utara, North Sumatra), *tembawang* (West Kalimantan), *katuan* (Meratus, South Kalimantan), *wanakiki* (Toro, Central Sulawesi), *gawar* (Lombok) and *ope dun karedunan* and *karetaden* (Tana Ai, Flores). These testify to the ability of communities to manage forests and to the fact that this is an aspect of their culture which is still very much alive today. Indigenous peoples' relationships with forests are multi-dimensional: forests have economic, social, religious and ecological value in their societies.

Much of the conflict between indigenous communities and the state or companies over forests stems from government legislation. The Indonesian government avoids the use of the words 'indigenous peoples', not least since to do so would recognise their rights under international law. In principle, Indonesian law does give some recognition to indigenous rights over land and natural resources. However, this recognition is very limited and much legislation uses terms that lead to confusion and disputes.

For example, the 1999 Forestry Law uses two terms - 'customary law communities' and 'local communities' - but often as if they are the same¹⁷. Yet local communities may be made up of many elements, including settlers and transmigrants from other areas who have no rights to land or natural resources under customary law.

¹⁷ Customary law communities = *Masyarakat Hukum Adat* and local communities = *Masyarakat Setempat*. The Forestry Act No. 41/1999 specifies five characteristics of *Masyarakat Hukum Adat*, but none for 'local communities'. These are only defined in later operating regulations. In contrast, the Water Resources Law (No. 7/2004) sets down what is meant by 'customary law communities' under that legislation.

In calling indigenous peoples 'customary law communities', the Forestry Law acknowledges that they are forest stakeholders. The legal text also recognises indigenous people's individual rights over forests and the fact that forest people manage forests¹⁸. However, other clauses make clear that these rights are subject to state control and can easily be negated 'in the national interest'. In other words, the law does not provide strong legal protection for forest peoples and their resources. Furthermore, all the 'rights' mentioned in the Forestry Law are only to manage the forests: the forestry department vigorously denies any acknowledgement of indigenous tenure.

The grudging acknowledgment of indigenous peoples' rights in the 1999 Forestry Law is only one example of the way that Indonesia's legislation marginalises them. The lack of legal support goes right back to the first Agrarian Law¹⁹. This states that a community's indigenous rights are only recognised if they fulfil the following conditions:

- They are still living in their ancestral lands²⁰;
- Their presence is officially recognised through local legislation (*Perda*);
- There is no conflict with the national interest.

Local recognition of indigenous rights

Indigenous communities who are judged to meet these criteria have certain rights as stakeholders under the Forestry Law. They are allowed to collect forest products, to manage the forest in accordance with customary law and to develop their skills and economic potential²¹. Further measures on 'customary law communities' were supposed to be defined in subsidiary legislation, including a regulation on *adat* forests, but regrettably these have never appeared.

¹⁸ As *hutan ulayat* or *hutan marga*

¹⁹ *UU Pokok Agraria* No. 5/1960.

²⁰ The law is not clear in the Bahasa Indonesia original whether it is the indigenous peoples, their customary law or both which must still be present before they are recognised. There are also no guidelines on who should commission the research proving indigenous communities' claims or how this should be done in order to gain formal recognition by the local authorities in the form of a bylaw.

²¹ Forestry Law No. 41/1999, clause 67:1. The word *pemberdayaan* literally means 'enrichment', but the law does not make clear exactly what form this should take. It is usually interpreted as eligibility to take part in government training courses and to manage certain areas of forest.



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Indigenous institutions are in urgent need of revitalization, enrichment, and empowerment

To add to the confusion, a 2004 circular from the minister of forestry, entitled 'The problem of Customary Law and Customary Law Communities' Compensation Demands', sets out in detail the department's position on indigenous forest rights²². This document refers back to the conditions required under the Forestry Law for indigenous people's official recognition. This means carrying out research to prove a community's continued presence in an area. The local authority then considers the evidence and formally acknowledges the indigenous people in a regulation.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that to date not a single local government has gone through this procedure. The very few authorities in Indonesia that have issued some form of official recognition to indigenous peoples since 1999 have done so using less rigorous methods. These are the districts of Kampar (Riau), Merangin (Jambi), Sanggau (West Kalimantan), Luwu Utara (South Sulawesi), Lebak (Banten) and Nunukan (East Kalimantan).

²² Surat Edaran Menhut No.S.75/Menhut II/2004 tentang Masalah Hukum Adat dan Tuntutan Kompensasi/Ganti Rugi oleh Masyarakat Hukum Adat.

The 1999 Forestry Law and contingent legislation do offer some other routes to recognition for indigenous forest practices. Forest lands can be designated Special Purposes Areas²³. The agroforests of the Pesisir Krui in West Lampung are the only areas to have been granted this status so far. Community forests which have been developed on individual property are eligible for designation as Village Forests, Community Forest or Private Forest²⁴. Examples of these are in Wonosobo (Central Java) where the local community planted *Paraserienthes falcataria* (*sengon*) around their homes and in South Konawe (on Mona Island in SE Sulawesi) where people in 46 villages have formed a co-operative based around teak plantations which they planted on their own land. Finally, there are opportunities under the Local Empowerment scheme, although these must await revision of the relevant regulation²⁵. The drawback of all these schemes for indigenous communities is that they are more easily applied to forest under individual rights whereas much customary land is held communally.

The introduction of regional autonomy in Indonesia in 2001 has made the legal situation over forests and rights even more complicated. The extent of local governments' powers with respect to forests is far from clear. This puts local authorities in a difficult position. On the one hand, they can stick to the rules set down by Jakarta and risk confrontations with communities who want their rights. On the other, they can seize the opportunity to introduce reforms at the risk of confrontations with higher levels of government. Local governments which are motivated by genuine concerns for forest people or which are under strong pressure from them to acknowledge their resource rights face a legal minefield.

The general case is that framework legislation on land and natural resources passed by Indonesia's highest constitutional body²⁶ and some national laws contain elements which recognise indigenous rights. However, these pieces of legislation are never fully implemented. The block in the system is usually that the operating regulations have not

²³ *Kawasan Hutan Dengan Tujuan Khusus (KDTK)*, previously known as *Kawasan Hutan dengan Tujuan Istimewa (KDTI)*, are allowed under UU No. 41/1999, clause 34.

²⁴ *Hutan Desa*, *Hutan Kemasyarakatan* and *Hutan Hak* (UU No. 41/1999 clause 5:1)

²⁵ *Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Setempat* (PP 34/2002 clause 51:1)

²⁶ *Tetapan MPR IX*, 2001

been issued by the relevant department and approved by parliament. This is the case with the proposed regulations on customary forests (*Hutan Adat*) and other areas such as village forests (*Hutan Desa*). In addition, the process of agreeing and gazetting boundaries is painfully slow and there are always budgetary constraints.

Local governments have tackled this dilemma in the following ways:

1. Break with standard practice: recognise communities' customary forests in one locality without going through the procedure required by Jakarta of proving the community's continued presence in the area. This was done in the Guguk case (Merangin district, Jambi) as we will see in Chapter 4.
2. Pass a local regulation: such as the regulations on community forestry and natural resources management in districts West Lampung, West Lombok and SE Sulawesi²⁷.
3. Use another entry point: such as the local regulations on customary rights issued in Kampar, Lebak and Nunukan districts²⁸ which also cover indigenous forest areas; the regulation on customary domain in Luwu district; and the regulation on local governance in Tana Toraja.

Central government (in this instance, the forestry department) has responded in various ways to this miscellany of local government measures. It demanded the withdrawal of the regulation in West Kutai and the cancellation of the regulation in Wonosobo, but has taken no action on regulations issued by the local authorities in NTB province and Sumbawa, Merangin and Bungo districts. In contrast, the National Land Agency (*BPN*) has shown no interest in investigating or challenging local regulations which relate to customary land; neither has the State Department bothered about local governance regulations, because it has yet to state its policy.

²⁷ *Perda HKm* = local regulation on community forestry; *Perda Pengelolaan SDA Berbasis Masyarakat (PSDABM)* = local regulation on CBNRM. These bylaws apply to all communities, not just indigenous ones.

²⁸ *Pengakuan Hak Ulayat*; *Pengakuan Wilayah Adat*; *Pengakuan Sistem Pemerintahan Lokal*; *Pengakuan Lembaga Adat*.

Indonesia's indigenous movement

The biggest challenge if a transformation to a just, prosperous society in Indonesia is to take place is to rehabilitate ecological and social systems. Indigenous institutions are in urgent need of revitalization, enrichment, and empowerment. The same is true for their social and political systems (including legal systems) and methods of natural resource management.

The first step towards restructuring the relationship between indigenous peoples and the Indonesian state was taken through the First Congress of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago held in 1999. This resulted in the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) and set out its mission statement and guiding principles for the indigenous movement. Its membership is based on communities or indigenous associations.

Over the last decade, AMAN has pushed hard for changes in policies and legislation which disadvantage indigenous peoples. It has also worked to strengthen indigenous organisations so that they form the basis for resistance to unfair policies, human rights violations and environmental degradation.

AMAN was created at time when Indonesia was emerging from more than three decades of dictatorship. So, from its earliest days, this indigenous organisation has been involved in some important social and political events in the life of the Indonesian nation state. The first of these was the Local Government Law No. 22/1999. This replaced the 1979 law which imposed a uniform system of governance on all villages in Indonesia, thus rendering indigenous systems powerless²⁹. The first AMAN Congress had demanded this measure in order to create the opportunity to replace the government village system with *adat* governance.

Secondly, an amendment to Indonesia's 1945 Constitution of the Amendment in 2000 gave a considerable boost to the status of indigenous peoples. It states that "The State recognises and respects the

²⁹ UU No. 5/1979 on *Desa* (Village) Government

units of indigenous community along with their traditional rights". It also emphasises that the cultural identity and other rights of traditional communities should be respected as human rights³⁰.

Thirdly, the Decree of the Peoples' Consultative Assembly on Agrarian Reform and Natural Resources Management in 2001 states that there should be recognition of, and respect and protection for, indigenous peoples' rights to natural resources³¹.

Future challenges

AMAN realises that these policy reforms are the new challenges for indigenous peoples in the future. Dozens of sectoral laws no longer in accordance with the amendment to the Indonesian Constitution and the Consultative Assembly's decree will have to be revoked and replaced. Hundreds of new local regulations need to be drafted and passed at provincial, district and even village levels once changes have been made at national level. All these pieces of legislation will require the full participation of all elements of the nation-state, including indigenous peoples, at local, regional, national and international levels.

One major problem is that current political structures and the prevailing political conditions have not provided sufficient opportunities for the Indonesian people to live in peace and harmony. The lack of access for indigenous peoples and other groups prevents them from participating in policy and decision-making processes at local and national levels. This has generated a sense of recklessness amongst political elites, as the people have little control over their representatives.

Corruption by local governments is just one manifestation of this phenomenon. Another example is the growing collusion between local elites and Jakarta in manipulating indigenous issues to gain political power. The results of polarising indigenous communities can be seen in the bloody conflicts of Poso, Sampit and Maluku.

³⁰ *Amendemen UU Dasar 1945* (2000), Paragraphs 18-B article (2) and Paragraph 28-I, in Chapter X on human rights.

³¹ *Ketetapan MPR No. IX/2001*

Such issues have led AMAN to the firm belief that it is important today, in the era of local autonomy, to restructure the relationship between indigenous peoples and the state by changing Indonesia's political systems and institutions. Increased political participation by indigenous peoples is one of the keys to making local political representatives more accountable to communities and more responsible for the impacts of their decision-making on peoples' lives and the environment.

It is also important for Indonesia's indigenous peoples to anticipate the negative impacts of globalisation. The agenda of liberal capitalism promoted by industrialised countries has gained considerable momentum in recent decades. The liberalisation of trade and investment represent a powerful challenge to indigenous peoples' political and legal standing. Unless there is adequate preparation at community level to develop democratic political and legal institutions, indigenous peoples will be helpless to resist the theft of their intellectual property rights, such as their traditional medicines, and the manipulation of their plants through genetic engineering.

However, local autonomy and globalisation can also be positive forces. They offer indigenous peoples opportunities to realise their sovereignty and autonomy over their lands and lives. In addition to driving out the concept of the *desa*³², local autonomy has brought indigenous peoples living in the outermost parts of the archipelago relatively closer to the sphere of policy and decision-making by granting greater powers to district level government. Similarly, globalisation has promoted solidarity amongst indigenous peoples from various part of the globe. It has also helped indigenous peoples to secure more established positions at the international level. They are now one of the major groups which have to be involved in policy and decision-making processes facilitated by international bodies and the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rio Declaration on Sustainable Development.

³² The top-down system of standardised village governance brought in in 1979.

