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Regional Youth Summit Menoken Southeast Asia 2021

A Meeting of Indigenous Youths from Indonesia and the Philippines

Bogor, 18 November 2021. Hosted simultaneously in two Southeast Asian countries, namely Indonesia and the Philippines, this latest *Menoken* event will be held from 19-21 November 2021. Unlike previous *Menoken* activities, which took place in a single location but involved several communities, this iteration will involve communities in seven locations in the Philippines, along with nine communities throughout Indonesia. In Indonesia, *Menoken* activities will be hosted by communities in Central Java, West Java, South Sulawesi, West Kalimantan, Bali, Jayapura, Merauke, East Nusa Tenggara and Flores. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, *Menoken* activities will take place in Calamianes (North Palawan), among the Calamian Tagbanwa Indigenous Peoples; in North Mindanao, with the Higaonon, Talaandig, Bukidnon and Menuvu tribes; in Kidapawan with the B'laan, Manobo Tagabawa and Maguindanaon; in Surigao, with the Mamanwa and Badjao; in Tandag, among the Manobo; and in Maguindanao, with the Teduray and Lambangian tribes.

The *Menoken* event, which is entitled ***Regional Youth Summit, Menoken Southeast Asia 2021: A Meeting of Indigenous Youths in Indonesia and the Philippines***, aims to provide opportunities for all indigenous youths, both in Indonesia and the Philippines, to reconnect relationships that have been disrupted by issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as mobilisation, distance and various other restrictions on activities. This Southeast Asian *Menoken* event therefore aims to build or renew social relations between various indigenous youth groups through cultural exchanges, experiences, sharing of concerns regarding the pandemic situation and formulation of plans for the reunification of indigenous youths.

Menoken activities are generally held in interesting locations close to nature, such as in mountainous areas, around rivers or lakes, and of course in customary (*adat*) areas. With the concept of camping out or spending the night in a tent, *Menoken* events become a medium for participants (or '*nokeners*') to get back in touch with themselves, with other people, with nature and with their ancestors.

At each location where *Menoken* activities are scheduled to be held, communities have prepared a variety of unique and interesting activities. Youths who are members of Indigenous communities in both Indonesia and the Philippines have designed their own activities and programmes, with various discussion topics identified by working groups in each community. These topics include discussions around the rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically in relation to environment and climate, culture and tradition, traditional food, coding applications and internet technology, recycling activities, tree

planting programmes, exchanging millennial agricultural experiences, learning sign language, film-making, and entrepreneurship.

In addition to a series of dialogues covering these various topics, there will be numerous cultural interactions through dance, singing and games that have been prepared by indigenous youths with the aim of sharing the cultural heritage of each Indigenous community. *Gambusuk*, which is an abbreviation of 'Gowa Traditional Art & Music', traces ancestral cultural values through *Dayak Kanayatn* music, combined with traditional dances from *Pangkur Sagu* and *Tana Timor*; with various songs and inclusive music performances, these are some of the traditional art performances that will characterise *Menoken* activities in the Indonesian region.

"It's amazing – young friends organising Menoken activities simultaneously in dozens of places all over Southeast Asia. In my opinion, it's fitting that, while the older generation organise 'blah-blah-blah' events such as the recent COP26 in Glasgow, or various other coordination meetings whose end is yet to be seen, the young ones are hosting vibrant, dynamic activities in nature and in their communities. Young people don't really like that 'blah blah blah' anyway."

– Ambrosius Ruwindrijarto | Founder of the *Noken* Movement, Samdhana Institute

This *Menoken* event will bring together all members of indigenous youth groups, including youngsters with disabilities who are among the event organisers. Sign language translators have been provided by the organisers in Indonesia, and will accompany deaf *nokeners*. Resti, a blind barista from West Java, will lead the *Blind Adventure* activity at an event that's set to take place in Leuweng Adat Kasepuhan Karang, West Java, where *nokeners* will explore the campsite with their eyes closed. This activity aims to stimulate other senses beyond eyesight, to illustrate that everyone has different abilities despite their physical differences. This is how *Menoken* activities build solidarity – by supporting each other with love and compassion, regardless of social barriers.

The young *nokeners* will be accompanied by their Elders, who will also share their local wisdom and ancestral history. *Nokeners* from Indonesia and the Philippines will have the opportunity to interact with each other and watch traditional performances of each indigenous community online, in order to unite *nokeners* from far and wide who are involved in this activity.

The implementation of *Menoken* activities among indigenous youth groups in the Southeast Asian region is the result of a collaboration between indigenous communities in Indonesia and the Philippines. In Indonesia, this includes the *Community of Activists Caring for the Rights of Children* (PAPHA) from Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara; the *Tanah Timor* Community, from East Nusa Tenggara; the *Tabi* Community, from Papua; the *Deaf Coffee* community, from West Java; the *Animha* Community, from Papua; the *Movement Caring for Children with Disabilities* (GPAD), from Central Java; *Patamuan Talino Cultural School Community*, from West Kalimantan; the *Pattalasang* Community, from Gowa; the *Tamblingan Indigenous Community*, from Bali; The *Desa Les* Community, from Bali; and the *Domberai* Community, from Papua; all are supported by the Samdhana Institute, *Kaoem Telapak Bogor* and *Yayasan Rumah Solusi Beta Indonesia*.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, *Menoken* activities will be held in collaboration with indigenous communities such as *Paraigu Kawataan*, from Calamianes; *Anak ng Tribu Higaunen-Talaandig*; the *KAGDUMA Youth*; *Sinabuwa ho mga Basbasenen Higaonon ta Cagayan de Oro*; the *Dulangan Youth Group*; *MAMACILA Youth*; *Kalanawan Youth*; *Man-ai Indigenous Youth Community*; representatives from the *Bukidnon Indigenous Cultural Communities Ancestral Domain*, including Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental; the *Unified Kirinteken Ilantungon Menuvu Tribal Council Youth*; the *Serusaat Menuvu Tribal Organization* and *Neumpong ne Memenguhen te Serusaat*, from Southern Bukidnon; the *Inter-Cultural Organizations Network for Solidarity and Peace* (Kidapawan); the *Diocesan Social Action Center of Surigao*; the *Diocesan Social Action Center of Tandag*; and the *Teduray, Lambangian Youth and Students Association*, from Maguindanao.

“For three days, nokeners from nine regions in Indonesia and seven regions in the Philippines will gather together, share knowledge and joy, and support each other with love that transcends social barriers or situations that limit action and creativity. Menoken activities are all about stitching together relationships through honest and true connections; to that end, Samdhana supports this event as a vital opportunity for youths from various indigenous communities in Southeast Asia to reconnect with each other, build the future and become leaders. Armed with local wisdom for environmental sustainability, [they are] representing Indigenous Peoples throughout Indonesia, the Philippines and in other parts of the world.”

- Martua Sirait | Director of the Samdhana Institute | Indonesia Operations

About Menoken:

Menoken is a concerted effort to build a forum that unites communities, their products and knowledge through social solidarity. Menoken is based on the ‘noken’ philosophy, wherein values of love, compassion, solidarity, strength in flexibility, usefulness, openness and a passion for sustainable living are highly valued. Menoken activities are generally informal, flexible and characterized by a sense of camaraderie; these occasions are all about gathering together, camping, cooking, sharing food, exchanging stories and knowledge, singing, dancing, enjoying art and culture together, and fostering enthusiasm and social solidarity for a better life.

Nokeners can be anyone who engages in the sharing of knowledge and joy, who support each other with love.

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