

Youth forum calls for early education on environment

Young environmental activists exchanged ideas on how to preserve the environment at the 2011 Indonesian Youth Mini Conference on Saturday.

Muhammad Ridwan, presenting one of 10 selected papers at the conference, highlighted the environmental importance of the Giam Siak Kecil peatlands in Riau Province.

The peatland area, which includes a sustainable timber production industry and two wildlife reserves, is one of seven Indonesian biospheres internationally recognized by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

“The Giam Siak biosphere can absorb greenhouse gases, which is desperately needed not only by Indonesia but also the global community to increase our resilience to climate change,” he told journalists on the sidelines of the conference, which was hosted by Sampoerna School of Education’s STKIP Kebangkitan Nasional.

Several endangered species live in the peatland area, including the Sumatran tiger, Sumatran rhinoceros and leaf monkey.

Another presenter, Kandis Sekarwulan of Urban Friend Community (Komunitas Sahabat Kota) in Bandung, West Java, said it was crucial to educate young people about sustainable development.

“We have designed educational programs on environmental development that incorporate catchy techniques, such as story-telling, games and songs. Thus, environmental issues can be fun for children,” she said.

Sampoerna School of Education Dean Paulina Pannen said the mini conference, titled “Youth Action for a Sustainable Future”, provided opportunities for young Indonesian students to help develop a healthier and greener tomorrow.

“This conference will hopefully breed awareness on the importance of youth involvement in creating a brighter sustainable future,” she told the Post.

Ten young speakers presented papers on three issues: Environmentally friendly technology inventions, the “Three Rs” (Reuse, Reduce and Recycle) Activities, and “Green Activities”.

The conference, arranged by The Green Teachers, an SSE student teacher association, also encouraged the guests to participate in events to save the environment, such as by campaigning through creative works, such as comics, drama and music. **(ebf)**