

## **Reformers wanted for environment-related ministries**

With many unresolved environmental agendas in the country, observers are demanding strong, reform-minded individuals to fill ministerial posts in the new Cabinet. Greenpeace Southeast Asia analyst Yuyun Indradi said the environment minister post should be given to a figure with the courage to make systemic changes to the ministry.

“The [current] Environment Ministry has no bite. With all the many interests involved, it must be supported politically,” Yuyun told The Jakarta Post on Thursday.

“We need someone who is vocal and is a bit of a rebel. Someone who is brave enough to change the system.”

Yuyun said a solid track record and reputation in the field were not enough to tackle the ministry’s internal problems, let alone urgent environmental conundrums.

He said the ministry had been too focused on effective management and less on environmental protection initiatives.

Yuyun also insisted that a figure with commitment, integrity and ideology was needed to break the vicious circle of vote buying in the natural resources industry.

Yuyun points to Presidential Working Unit for Supervision and Management of Development (UKP4) officials like Kuntoro Mangkusubroto and Mas Achmad Santosa, who were involved in the groundwork of the country’s forest governance.

The figures were also members of the reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) task force that prepared the institutions to run REDD+ programs, including the establishment of the REDD+ Management Agency.

Renowned environmental activist Emmy Hafild suggested the incoming government should first focus on forming a coordinating ministry for natural resources and environmental affairs before it could come up with names for ministerial posts.

Emmy said there was no synergy between the different ministries that regulated the natural resources field. She said a coordinating ministry with enough authority to “break down the silos” of individual government bodies needed to be installed.

“This is one reform that has long been postponed,” Emmy told the Post on Thursday.

She said the coordinating ministry needed to have its planning, funding, oversight and evaluation programs reinforced. She suggested that such a ministry should be able to oversee several ministries, including the Environment Ministry, the Forestry Ministry, the Agriculture Ministry and the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry.

Emmy refused to endorse any figures, but she said many credible academics and researchers were up to the job. She also doubted that UKP4 figures would join the new government as they were linked to the current regime.

Emmy further urged the new government to reduce the number of ministries to streamline the bureaucracy. She said there should be a maximum of 26 ministerial bodies to regulate the country’s affairs.

President-elect Joko “Jokowi” Widodo and his team of advisors have produced an online poll called the “The People’s Choice for an Alternative Cabinet” published on jokowicenter.com.

In the survey, the team proposed three different names for each ministerial post in a Cabinet of 34 ministers. The poll also provides an option should respondents wish to propose another name.

For the environment minister post, Jokowi provided three names relatively well known in the field: former Papua State University rector and forest activist Frans Wanggai, former environment minister Mohamad Prakosa and Gajah Mada University forestry scholar Satyawan Pudyatmoko. (tjs)