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Joko and Solo Receive Best City Award

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Bangkok. Solo Mayor and Jakarta gubernatorial hopeful Joko Widodo was honored with the Best City Award at the Delgosea Conference in Bangkok on Thursday.

Joko, or Jokowi, was recognized for rallying Solo citizens to abide by municipal policies, according to Peter Wood, the head of the United Cities and Local Government for Asia Pacific, who spoke at the Delgosea conference.

Delgosea cited Jokowi's success in negotiating with Solo's street vendors to convince them to relocate, striking a balance between cleaning up the streets and maintaining traditional businesses.

"I think this is one of the reasons why he was nominated as a candidate for the gubernatorial election in Jakarta, in addition to his concept on transparency and good governance which he has implemented in Solo," Wood said. Joko was also one of 70 people nominated for the 2012 World Mayor Prize, which will be announced in December, and was recognized by the Ministry of Home Affairs as the Best Mayor of 2011.

Delgosea was launched in March 2010 and was co-funded by the European Commission and funds from the German Ministry for Development Cooperation. The Delgosea Conference recognized the best cities of several Asean member counties, including Cambodia, the Philippines and Thailand.

Four Indonesian mayors who attended the two-day conference in Bangkok hailed the resumption of Delgosea in the Asean region as a way to further accelerate the development of their respective municipal areas. Delgosea is known for its network of successful programs such as waste management.

H. Udin Hianggio, the Mayor of Tarakan Municipality, said "Delgosea has actually helped us in solving waste-related problems by adopting the handling of waste already implemented in Marikina city in the Philippines."

Tarakan was eventually recognized by the Central Government for cleanliness and improved waste management.

Kupang Mayor Yonas Salean said Delgosea also trained his staff on waste management techniques, and in making use of the West Timor capital's "existing potential."

Pangkal Pinang Mayor Drs. H Zulkarnain Karim said the guidance provided by Delgosea helped improve the marine environment for the sake of the people and the sustainability of the environment.

Despite its financial hardships, the European Union announced that it will continue to fund Delgosea for at least the next 32 months.

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