

Remarks by
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On the Occassion of
The Workshop on Forest Governance and
Decentralisation in Africa

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- o Madam P Yako, Director General, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry of the Republic of South Africa, and Chairperson of the Session (check against real situation)
- o Madam CC September (MP), Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee; Water Affairs and Forestry
- o Mr. Obed Mlaba, Mayor of eThekweni
- o My Colleague Dr. Boen Purnama, Secretary General of the Ministry of Forestry Indonesia, and Chairman of UNFF8 Bureau
- o Mr. Peter Csoka, the Officer in Charge of the UNFF Secretariat,
- o Distinguished participants,
- o Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government and people of South Africa for inviting Indonesia to attend this Workshop, and for the hospitality accorded to us. My warm greetings also go to colleague participants to this Workshop, with whom I share the passion to promote good forest governance.

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to have this opportunity to share Indonesia's experience in implementing forestry decentralisation. I will present to you a perspective that is different from but complementary to the one just presented by my dear friend Christian Kuchli of Switzerland. Mr. Kuchli and his Switzerland colleagues have been among the champions of the promotion of forest good governance and decentralization, including in Indonesia. I share this session to show our continuous commitment to the endeavour, which began with the Interlaken Workshop back in 2004, followed by a national workshop in Jakarta in the same year, and then the International Workshop on Decentralization in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 2006.

I understand that such commitment is shared by the co-sponsors of this workshop, that is UK, Norway, U.S. and Germany, as well the UNFF, CIFOR, and INTERCOOPERATION of Switzerland, who have provided technical support. To all of them go my congratulation for convening this important workshop.

Indonesia's commitment to forest governance and decentralization is because it is of our national interest, besides the international interest. Just as common with many developing countries, Indonesia is facing the problems of deforestation and degradation, because of illegal logging, forest and land fires, and encroachment. These causes of deforestation and forest degradation are actually only symptoms, while the underlying cause is indeed poor governance. In saying this I am referring to governance in general, not only by the government but also the business sector and the civil societies.

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It always fascinates me to learn from Switzerland how it took time for forest governance and decentralization in Switzerland to take into the present shape. Mr. Kuchli took us back as far as mid 19th century, from which there are also valuable learning, including the disastrous impacts on the forests, including floods. We also learned that after the dark period was over, the forests gradually prosper and from the beginning of 20th century the forests there can enjoy sustainable management, and performing the economic, social and environmental functions.

Our experience in Indonesia shows that a similar history have taken place in Indonesia these last ten years, when decentralization is implemented intensively, including in forestry, and when governance in general experiences great changes. However, decentralization of forestry in Indonesia actually goes back to over half a century ago, when in 1957 the Government issued a Regulation on Transfer of Partial Authority in Ocean Fisheries, Forestry, and Community Rubber Plantation. By the regulation, the Central Government gave the authority for the Provincial Governments to administer their respective forests to certain extent, such as timber extraction concession up to 10 thousand hectares over 20 years, up to 5 thousand hectares over 5 years, and a smaller concession over 2 years.

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The next period in Indonesian forest governance was the intensive exploitation of forests outside Java Island. In view to escape from the 1960s economic crisis, the new Government focused on economic development and saw forests as potential resources. While investment in timber extraction was promoted through issuance of a Law on Domestic and Foreign Investments, at about the same time, i.e. in 1967 the Government issued a Law on Forestry.

In doing so, the Indonesian Government began its stand to balance between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, if I can borrow Robyn Eckersley's terms in his ecophilosophical theories. Such middle position means that the forests should serve both the people and the environment. This has been implemented through a forest land use planning which allocates over 43% of

the 120.35 million hectares of forest area into ecocentricism functions, that is protection forests (29.1 million ha) and conservation forests (23.4 million ha), and 57% into anthropocentricism functions of production forests (44 million ha) and convertible forests (13.7 million ha).

Despite the early steps of decentralization, much of the authorities for the management of all those forest functions were centralistic until the dramatic change of governance after the economic and political crisis from 1998. The reform process, often called Reformasi, greatly promotes democracy after the previous authoritarian governance. The main elements of the democratization are: (i) The Parliament was given greater roles, towards a more balance of power between the executive and legislative functions; (ii) Numerous new political parties were founded; (iii) The Government's tight control of the press is lifted; and (iv) Decentralization was implemented with only two years preparation. The positive impact is that many province and district capitals have shown visible infrastructure development, though in expense of their rural areas.

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Indonesia's recent forest governance and decentralization has changed within the context of national Reformasi and its excesses. Without enough preparation, the administration of forest, except conservation forests, was delegated from the Central Governments to the Districts, with the Provinces looking after inter-districts issues. Without the necessary implementation regulation, nor adequate explanation on "non-hierarchical relations" mentioned in the Law, there occurred overlapping on one hand, such as double taxation on forest activities and products, and on the other hand lack of administration, such as of protected forests. Many Provincial and District Governments complained that there had been lack of necessary capacity building and funding for implementation of the decentralized authorities. This has led to their view that forest is just one of the resources for locally sourced revenues, with forest exploitation permits often given excessively and against the law.

The situation was worsened by the economic crisis, which increased unemployment, including in villages adjacent to forests. Many people occupied forest areas in the name of customary right, and convert them into cash crop farms and oil palm estates. Rampant deforestation and forest degradation occurred mostly in areas where economic activities are lacking, where people surrender to the temptation to help timber trader and industries illegally logging the forests.

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

To highlight, Indonesia started forest decentralization in 1959 with only limited extent of power being handed over, and little impact on forest governance. The economic crisis and political turbulence in the 1960s have exposed the

forests outside Java to exploitation to support national development, with forest administration recentralized. The forest administration pendulum swung back to decentralization as the recent economic crisis hit in late 1990s and resulted in Reform.

Indonesia has learned some lessons from the young implementation of decentralization. Firstly, the value of decentralization has been widely accepted, with people seeing such immediate results like capability of many provincial and district cities in infrastructure development, and in increasing people's welfare through better education, health service, etc.

Secondly, the disastrous impacts, as my colleague Mr. Christian Kuchli calls it, are expected to intensify only at the early years, and subside as the implementation is improved. Our studies on national deforestation has shown such trend: the deforestation that rocketed during the early phase of decentralization, which coincided with the beginning of the economic crisis, has gone down quite substantially.

Thirdly, decentralization cannot take short cuts. The hasty implementation of decentralization have brought about negative impacts on the natural resources, including the forest and its functions. People have seen that the ill treatment of the forest has contributed to the increased flooding, and, recently, even climate change. All steps, including the important capacity building and budget support, need to be carefully attended, though they should be accelerated. Stepwise (gradual) and accelerated: these are the two key words that I would like to emphasis.

Fouthly, decentralization is not only transfer of authority, but also transfer of responsibility and accountability..

Upon learning these lessons, Indonesia has taken corrective steps to put the process back in track, towards the three goals of decentralization: (i) minimizing externalities or negative impacts, (ii) increasing efficiency, and (iii) improving public service. We have seen that some authorities cannot yet be implemented by District and Provincial Governments without the necessary capacity building and budget support, in which case the Central Government handle them.

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to draw your attention to the great challenges that the Earth is facing, such as climate change and scarcity of food, energy, and water. In this regard our forests have significant contribution in mitigation climate change, reducing the scarcity of food, energy and water. This would only happen if we apply sustainable forest management (SFM), of which good forest governance is a prerequisite.

I hope that Indonesia's experience can be a reference for colleagues in Africa here who want to accelerate decentralization. While the Swiss experience

may be universal to some extent, some elements from Indonesia's experience may be more applicable to Africa as we share the characters of tropical condition and developing countries, and also the character of state ownership of most forests.

As fellow guardians of tropical forests, we should enhance cooperation, both South-South and Triangular with North Countries. We need to emphasize a partnership, rather than donor-recipient relationship, because each has respective roles of equal importance. Such cooperation could be through the recent initiative by Indonesian President to establish a like-minded grouping of tropical rainforest developing countries, the Forestry-11. F-11 was established on the margin of the High Level Event on Climate Change in New York on September 24, 2007, and was followed by a Ministerial level meeting at the brink of the Bali Climate Change Conference, December 2007. Four African countries have been involved so far, namely Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, and Gabon, and more fellow countries from Africa would be most welcome. F-11 started with the shared interest in winning the potential finance available for SFM from the carbon market, but now is identifying all potential fields for cooperation. We are going to formulate these in an expert workshop mid this year, before having a ministerial meeting later this year. Please feel free to contact us should you would like to come and join.

Madam Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

These are the points that I wish to share with you on this occasion. Once again thank you for having me and my colleagues from Indonesia. I wish all the best for forest governance in Africa, for the benefits of the poor who depend on the forests. I also look forward to learning from this African process for improvement of our efforts back home.

Thank you.

Wahjudi Wardojo

Wahjudi Wardojo is the Director General of the Forestry Research and Development Agency within Indonesia's Ministry of Forestry. He has served in the Ministry of Forestry for over thirty years, holding a variety of senior positions including Forestry Attaché to Japan, Director General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (2001), and Secretary General of the Ministry (2001-2005). Mr. Wardojo has also been a leader in many international efforts to protect forests. He was one of the initiators of the East-Asia FLEG in 2001, the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP) in 2002, and the Interlaken Workshop on Forest Governance and Decentralization in 2004. He is the Asia Pacific Region Representative to the UNESCO Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, a coordinator of the Indonesia Forest Climate Alliance, and an advisor to the President on COP-13 UNFCCC. Mr. Wardojo chaired the ASEAN Senior Officials on Forestry (2006-2007) and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Center for International Forestry Research from 2006 until present.