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29th TALKING ASEAN

Post-COP21 Climate Change: What Lies Ahead for Southeast Asian Countries and the ASEAN Region?

**The Habibie Center, Jakarta
February 3, 2016**

INTRODUCTION

JAKARTA—On Wednesday, 3 February 2016, The Habibie Center hosted its 29th Talking ASEAN dialogue entitled, **“Post-COP21 Climate Change: What Lies Ahead for Southeast Asian Countries and the ASEAN Region?”** at The Habibie Center building in Jakarta. This edition of Talking ASEAN was moderated by Wirya Adiwena (Head, International Relations, The Habibie Center) and featured an expert panel made up of Toffery Primanda Soetikno (Director of Development, Economy and Environment at the Directorate of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia), Moekti Handajani Soejachmoen (Assistant to President’s Special Envoy for Climate Change, Republic of Indonesia) and Andreas Pramudianto (International Environmental Law Researcher, Center for Research on Human Resources and the Environment University of Indonesia).

The objectives of this Talking ASEAN were to: a) assess the success/failure of the latest COP21 in advancing global effort to tackle global warming; b) identify the remaining challenges in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the threat of dangerous level of warming due to human activities; and c) explore the potential role ASEAN could play in global effort to tackle global warming.

This discussion report summarizes the key points of each speaker, as well as the question and answer session that followed.

SPEAKERS' PRESENTATION

— Toferry Primanda Soetikno



Toferry Primanda Soetikno - Director of Development, Economy and Environment at the Directorate of Multilateral Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Indonesia

Mr. Toffery Primanda Soetikno was part of the negotiating team along with Ms. Soejachmoen as well as the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in the COP-21, Paris 2015. He began by highlighting the importance of the Paris Agreement in the climate change regime. The agreement was an important outcome of the global effort to deal with global change at large. It also showed the success of the international community to bring every party on board: both developed and developing nations.

He further elaborated on some important features that the agreement covered. First, the agreement highlights capacity building and technicality support for climate change mitigation. Second, the agreement pushes the commitment to keep global temperature increases below 2.0 C. Also, financial assistance will be provided as much as USD 100 billion for support.

Another important issue during the negotiation is that all parties need to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The contribution is varied for developing and developed countries. The developed ones take the lead by providing supports. Meanwhile, the developing countries take the role to implement effectively and enhance efforts with the assistance of developed countries.

Mr. Soetikno continued by exploring the legal aspect of the agreement. Although it is considered as a binding outcome, there are no chapters to push the countries to fulfill the obligation. Compliance is a facilitative nature. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol which obliged certain countries to cut emission, the Paris Agreement offers the level of contribution based on the countries' convenience.

In the next part of his presentation, Mr. Soetikno examined the impact of the issue on ASEAN countries. One of the biggest challenges in the region is to balance economic growth and climate change action. The region has been one of the the most vulnerable to the challenges presented by climate change. ASEAN itself has already initiated multiple cooperations in addressing the climate change issues. As a common challenge that transcends national boundaries, ASEAN countries need to cooperate and enter partnerships at the bilateral, trilateral and regional levels.

For the conclusion, he rearticulated that the Paris Agreement has provided a new common ground in the climate change regime. Asia as the most prone area to the effect of climate change needs to take a timely step by initiating a regional solution.

“One of the biggest challenges in the region is to balance economic growth and climate change action... As a common challenge that transcends national boundaries, ASEAN countries need to cooperate and enter partnerships at the bilateral, trilateral and regional levels.”

- Toferry Primanda Soetikno -

SPEAKERS' PRESENTATION

Moekti Handajani Soejachmoen



Moekti Handajani Soejachmoen - Assistant to President's Special Envoy for Climate Change, Republic of Indonesia.

Ms. Soejachmoen's presentation focused on one major question: "Is the Paris Agreement the best chance that we have to save the one planet or is it going to be just another historical failure like the Kyoto Protocol?"

To answer, Ms. Soejachmoen proceeded by evaluating the existing Kyoto Protocol. She did not feel that it was necessarily a failure. When the Protocol was adopted in 1997, it was a different global setting back then. The world was dominated by two major groups of country, therefore the Kyoto Protocol was structured around that reality. In this current setting, the Kyoto Protocol's mechanism is a bit difficult to continue, because there was no acknowledgement by those Non-Annex I countries. It was always the developed ones who took the initiatives according to Ms. Soejachmoen. However, the Protocol has provided reasons for the need of a new universally binding agreement.

The Paris Agreement opens up the possibility for the countries' willingness to contribute as small as they can in the global climate change efforts. The main feature of the agreement is the countries' acceptance to accept the agreement itself by ratifying or implementing the clauses. However, Ms. Soejachmoen noticed that this agreement lacks punishment to those who do not comply, and therefore its implementation is based on their responsibility to their own commitment and the people.

One of the biggest challenge in this global effort is to maintain the people's right to development without compromising their climate and social quality. This is where Sustainable Development should take over. The second challenge is in transparency and accountability. Although this agreement is a bottom-up process, we need to make it work within the global community. A framework to suit every party to stay on the same page is another set up that has to be considered further.

In response to the agreement, a climate adaptive ASEAN with enhance institutional and human capacities to adapt to the impacts of climate change is an important feature to pursue. Cooperation in this particular area is key as ASEAN is very vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Beyond adaptation, the ASEAN countries can work together in a number of potential mitigation activities in the sector of energy or forestry. Cooperation within the region will show the rest of the world how ASEAN can be one of the leading actors in this global effort.

"A climate adaptive ASEAN with enhance institutional and human capacities to adapt to the impacts of climate change is an important feature to pursue. Cooperation in this particular area is key as ASEAN is very vulnerable to the impact of climate change."

- Moekti Handajani Soejachmoen -

SPEAKERS' PRESENTATION

— Andreas Pramudianto



Andreas Pramudianto - International Environmental Law Researcher, Center for Research on Human Resources and the Environment University of Indonesia.

Mr. Pramudianto began by explaining the important milestones in the climate change regime. The UNFCCC adopted in 1992 put a significant emphasis on nations to “ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.” It further set an understanding that climate change is a common concern of humankind, and therefore the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels on the matters are important to address.

In the next part of his presentation, Mr. Pramudianto highlighted some important activities leading to the Paris Agreement. At the beginning of 2015, the UN Secretary-General appointed Janos Pasztor (Hungary) as the first-ever UN Assistant Secretary-General on Climate Change. From the ASEAN side, the Association signed a declaration committing to economic, social, cultural, physical and environmental measures that will reduce vulnerability to disaster and climate-related risks. The signatories pledged their intention to systematically mainstream disaster risk management (DRM) and climate change adaptation into policy making at the local, national and regional levels through multi-stakeholder engagement.

In October 2015, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on climate change and international security, urging members of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance to reach an “ambitious” climate agreement in Paris this year and to fully recognize climate change-related risks as significant threat multipliers in their foreign and security policies. This resolution showed how climate change is now being considered as part of the international security issue.

With regards to the Paris Agreement, at least 55 Parties to the Convention that together accounted for at least an estimated 55 % of the total global greenhouse gas emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with the Depositary.

As his concluding remarks, Mr. Pramudianto articulated that the Paris Agreement was a long-process from the very first global initiative years ago. As it will be implemented in 2020, ASEAN needs to anticipate, plan and strategize to integrate and develop the efforts through several programs based on the Paris Agreement. In order to benefit the whole region, ASEAN countries needs to consider ratifying the Paris Agreement 2015.

“Climate change is a common concern of humankind, and therefore the importance of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels on the matters are important to address.”

- Andreas Pramudianto -

Q&A SESSION



Wirya Adiwena - Head of International Relations, The Habibie Center

Comment No.1

Minister Marsudi mentioned that ASEAN will continue as the cornerstone of Indonesia foreign policy. Is Indonesia going to continue to play the same role in this whole climate change affair?

Comment No.2

Has there been any discussion about ASEAN carbon market? And how do you think such mechanism is going to play out in ASEAN?

Toferry Primanda

Yes, we would like to continue assuming the leading role and help push the negotiation forward, not only in the region, not only in Paris Agreement, but also at the global level. This particular issue is considered relevant for Indonesia with the drowning islands caused by the rising sea levels.

Kuki Soejachmoen

The issue brought another challenge for member states to work with their fellow ASEAN countries. The new initiative under the Paris

Declaration offers a bottom-up approach to strengthen the means. Initially, it was easy to leave the responsibility to a certain country; however the agreement opens up participation from everyone to take part in addressing the issue of climate change. ASEAN countries are the most vulnerable to the impact but we are also potential emitters at the same time.

With regards to the ASEAN Carbon Market, there has been no conversation yet and it is not an interesting issue for most ASEAN member states. Besides, the cost for developing such project is considered expensive.

Andreas Pramudianto

The climate change issue presents an opportunity for Indonesia as the de facto leader of ASEAN to assume the leadership. As for the carbon mechanism, there have also been some initiatives, such as REDD+. However, it is a huge breakthrough if we can develop an ASEAN carbon market.

Comment No.3

How do people in general perceive the issue of climate change? Are they aware of its occurrence especially those who live in rural area?

Comment No.4

What are the key factors for ASEAN, especially Indonesia to be aware of the issue and to be able to contribute to the efforts?

Kuki Soejachmoen

The biggest challenge to mainstream people's awareness towards climate change is to frame this issue into an everyday issue. Our people even have difficulties to fulfill their basic needs, like foods and clothing. Therefore, we need some strategy to translate this climate change issue into their interests.

Q&A SESSION

Indonesia and ASEAN need to put more attention to the issue of energy. The post-2020 regime is going to need a certain type of advanced technology in order to respond to the changing landscape of energy situation.

Andreas Pramudianto

Indonesia's engagement and activity is relatively new on the issue of climate change. Many initiatives are performed by NGOs or university network. It is timely and important to develop certain support or initiative related to the Paris Agreement.

ASEAN puts too much focus on each countries development, while the current climate change situation is affecting the whole ASEAN region. ASEAN needs to cooperative and integrative policy, since the climate change is a cross-boundary issue.

Toferry Primanda

Most of the people do not see that global warming is the cause of many challenges that they are currently facing right now. For example on how there is a linkage between poverty and climate change. This kind of understanding occurs not only in rural area but also in other part of the world. There are more pressing issues that caught people's attention. It also has to do with the information dissemination by the media. Instead of the popular stories, there needs to be more exposure on the impact of climate change.

One important thing to explore is the relationship between the grassroots level and the government. It used to be a high-level engagement, but now with the bottom-up initiative that has been enabled by the Paris Agreement, more CSOs and local community has the opportunity to contribute. It further provides an arena between the government and the grassroots community to exchange information on how each other do. Therefore, beyond the negotiation, there are also real actions going on the ground.





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