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UN-REDD lauds C. Sulawesi's active support for forests

Central Sulawesi, which has been chosen as a pilot project for the United Nations REDD plus program, has been very active in ensuring the success of the forest-protection program, a UN official says.

National Programme Director for UN-REDD, Yuyu Rahayu, said Friday that local communities, including forest-dependent indigenous people, particularly in Central Sulawesi, had arranged initiatives related to REDD plus issues, showing an increased awareness of the importance of good management of forests and wise use of forest resources as part of global efforts to fight climate change.

Citing an example, he said the Central Sulawesi governor would establish a REDD plus task force team in 2011, comprising representatives from the local government, civil society organizations and NGOs, and indigenous people.

"It will make Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) of forest carbon as the subject at the center of a future REDD plus mechanism more transparent since all stakeholders will be represented in the task force," he told The Jakarta Post, adding that the task force would arrange the implementation of UN-REDD activities at province, district, and community levels.

Central Sulawesi was selected as the main pilot province of the UN-REDD Program Indonesia in October last year due to its sizable forests.

Yuyu said that a relentless consultation process involving multi-stakeholders both at national and sub-national levels and facilitated by UN-REDD Indonesia had increased public awareness of the importance of their involvement in REDD plus.

Local NGOs, he said, had developed some activities to prepare for their participation in the implementation of UN-REDD at all levels.

"Local government and NGOs [in Central Sulawesi] are very active in supporting UN-REDD activities," he said, adding that UN-REDD Indonesia needed to ensure that the benefits of REDD plus could reach the communities in the field.

UN-REDD Indonesia is a collaborative initiative between the Forestry Ministry, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It assists the implementation of REDD plus projects carried out by the Indonesian government.

Indonesia was chosen as one of the UN-REDD Pilot Countries, along with Bolivia, Congo, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia.

The UN granted US\$5.6 million for REDD programs in Indonesia, of which US\$2.95 million is managed by the UN-REDD Program Indonesia under the assistance of three UN agencies: FAO, UNEP and UNDP.

Forestry Ministry Secretary-General Hadi Daryanto said the government had made efforts to prevent any negative impact of REDD plus by jointly discussing the free, prior and informed consent of REDD plus projects before implementing any of the projects.



According to The United Nations' Commission on Human Rights, free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) recognizes the inherent and prior rights of the indigenous people to their land and resources.

Despite achievements, UN-REDD Indonesia activities and projects under UNEP and FAO have been delayed due to different rules and regulations of the two UN agencies.

UN-REDD Indonesia is the first of its kind in terms of a project managed by those three different UN agencies — FAO, UNEP and UNDP — which have different rules and regulations.

Yuyu said the UN-REDD Indonesia project in Central Sulawesi should have been completed in May this year. However, the project has to be extended to May 2012 due to the late start of the project resulting from technical differences among three UN agencies.

FAO, for example, used to provide technical assistance instead of grants, resulting in difficulties in implementing the UN-REDD Indonesia program. Meanwhile, UNEP has experience in arranging proposal-based programs.

Of the US\$2.95 million managed by UN-REDD, only \$250,000 has been disbursed. (ebf)