

KIARA: Water Conservation Area Targets 20 Million Ha Marginalizing Traditional Fishermen and Killing Local Wisdom

Jakarta, July 9th, 2013. People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice (KIARA) have assessed the targeted expansion of marine reserves covering 20 million hectares in 2020 that disregards the active participation of fisher folk and indigenous peoples, as well as burying local wisdom which has been passed on for generations in Indonesia.

Sustainable management of marine resources has been applied since the 16th century by the indigenous peoples scattered across coastal areas and small islands in Indonesia. KIARA noted such management measures amongst the Sasi in Maluku, the Bapongka in Central Sulawesi, the Awig awig in Bali and West Nusa Tenggara, and the Ola Nua in East Nusa Tenggara. The management model is conducted independently (without being ordered to by outsiders) with the active participation of all members of society. The process does not require the creation of debt to raise funds.

Traditional fishing communities realize that the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources is a prerequisite for the realization of a prosperous and fair life. Moreover, they realise the magnitude of the benefits for their lives that marine resources offer. This is a stark contrast to the water conservation that the government has arbitrarily implemented solely motivated to obtain foreign loans and a positive image at the international level.

KIARA Data and Information Centre (June 2013) found that foreign funded conservation projects in Indonesian seas included: (1) In the period 2004-2011, Program Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management (COREMAP II) reaching more than Rp1, 3 trillion largely sourced from the World Bank's foreign debt scheme and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), (2) U.S. Government through USAID agencies providing aid through grants to Indonesia worth USD 23 million. The plan sees grants awarded over a four-year period for the conservation area (worth USD 6 million) and for strengthening fisheries industrialisation (worth USD 17 million).

In practice, this coral reef conservation program actually failed / was not effective and there were incidence where a leakage of funds had occurred, based on CPC Report 2013. Having been proven as a failure, CTF instead want to continue the project COREMAP III for the period 2014-2019 by adding a new conservation debt of U.S. \$ 80 million from the World Bank and ADB. Furthermore, the establishment of marine protected areas also triggers horizontal conflicts.

Even more ironic, the government unilaterally changed the Batang Regency Decree No. 523/283/2005 dated December 15, 2005, reducing the Regional Marine Conservation Area (KKLD) Ujungnegoro-Roban in the coastal area of Batang, from an area covering 8639.75 ha to 4015.2 ha through Batang Regency Decree No. 523/194/2012, determined by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries in Decree No. KEP.29/MEN/2012.

KIARA found that in fact at the KKLD beach area, the reduction of Ujungnegoro-Roban MP3EI infrastructure investments was due to ulterior motives, namely the construction of a 2,000 MW power plant, meaning the water conservation area of 4.624.55 Ha was no longer a protected zone. The policy change was not for the benefit of the people of Indonesia. Therefore, KIARA urges the President to evaluate marine conservation projects that have proved to be a financial burden on the State, a failure, and which have led to the castration of the rights of indigenous peoples and communities, and further urges that the government should promote the management of marine resources in accordance with the existing local knowledge.

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