

Govt urged to include communities in spatial planning

The Jakarta Post

JAKARTA

Alliance of Indigenous Peoples (AMAN) secretary - general Abdon Nababan on Thursday demanded the government involve indigenous people in spatial planning processes.

"A lot of customary land conflict occurs in the country primarily because the government never lets indigenous people, especially who live in the forests, voice their aspirations in planning deliberations," Abdon told *The Jakarta Post*.

National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) member Sandrayati Moniaga said the absence of participation in spatial planning process was categorized as a violation to the right of information and right of participate in development.

"It became more difficult for them to participate since they have

to acquire formal recognition of their presence and customary right from the government," Sandra said on Thursday.

On Wednesday, Komnas HAM revealed that the absence of formal recognition is one of the root causes to customary land conflict occurring in the country.

"The recognition would only be acquired when the regional administration issues a regional regulation on their status. Though, in fact, their ancestors have lived in the forests for generations," Abdon explained.

Sandra said in the spatial planning process, the government frequently invites traditional leaders but remote indigenous communities are never invited.

"For instance, the Dayak Customary Council in Central Kalimantan and the Papua traditional community institutions (LMA) in Papua, which were established by

the regional administration in their respective areas. But indigenous people in cut off areas don't know anything about any spatial planning occurring," Sandra said.

The process to obtain the recognition is also hurdled by the lack of coordination among state institutions concerning indigenous people.

Pocut Eliza, head of the center for national law evaluation and analysis at the National Law Development Agency (BPHN), said the authority to regulate indigenous people lay with several ministries, including the Home Ministry, the Environment and Forestry Ministry and the Law and Human Rights Ministry.

In an effort to resolve the hurdle of getting indigenous people involved in spatial planning, AMAN, along with the Community Mapping Network (JKPP), has been mapping customary land across the country since 2001.

"We conveyed the customary land map to the government every year," Abdon said.

Abdon said he had hoped the government would use their data as the basis for spatial planning processes.

"We did the project because regional administrations and regional legislative councils, which are the parties that create the spatial planning, use the central government's map as their basis in preparing the spatial planning. These are our good intentions, but it depends on them whether they use our data and finally involve indigenous people in the process," Abdon said.

Sandra said the mapping should have been conducted by the government, not an NGO like AMAN.

"If the government doesn't want to do the mapping project, it should allocate part of its budget for indigenous people to do the mapping," she said. (mos)