

Developing capacities for special autonomy in Papua

Jakarta — Max Demetouw and Mochamad Indraw

Peace and reconciliation have yet to settle in Papua. Papua's political elite who are having difficulties uniting have yet to sit down. H.S. Dillon of the Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia noted that it is imperative that the local leaders negotiate continuously, and reach agreements on the main governance issues.

The people of Papua need to determine the future of Papua. The dialogs and consultations should be carefully facilitated, and should integrate the analytical approach with traditional methods of consensus building.

The fate of the province's special autonomy status and the geopolitical division of Papua are prominently issues. To be effective, the special autonomy should reflect emotional, spiritual and intellectual ownership by the Papuans. Centralistic policy-intervention may cause further misinterpretations and conflicts over the special autonomy status, and should therefore be weeded out.

Regarding the geopolitical division for Papua, many among the central government's political elite have yet to realize that the blossoming of Papua is also the aspiration of many Papuan people. The question is how that should be undertaken. Again, space needs to be given, and even created, for the Papuan elements to decide how the emergence of Papua's new regencies and provinces should take place.

The central government should play more of a role of facilitator. The focus should be shifted to supporting reconciliation and capacity building in Papua. With so many conflicts of interest and divergencies of opinion in Papua, the central government may even help provide arbitration capacities to support those of the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP).

As pointed out in 2005 by Papua's late governor J.P. Solossa in his book *Mengangkat martabat rakyat Papua dalam NKRI* (Upholding the dignity of the people of Papua in the context of the Republic of Indonesia), the central government needs to establish and mobilize the country's commission for truth and reconciliation.

There need not be any fear in letting the Papuan people choose their best course. Appropriately empowered, excellent opportunities remain that the future of Papua and Indonesia can remain one, for the prosperity of both. The average Papuan accepts the fact that close to 40 percent of the people there today are migrants, and both sides can live side by side.

Development of local capacities in Papua is particularly important to make the special autonomy (and its relatively generous funds) benefit the people of Papua. Special autonomy should therefore benefit Papua's poor and marginalized. Only in this way can the special autonomy gain credibility, and dispel the justified concerns of its critics from within the Papuan elements.

Capacity building should be spent on integrated civil service reform, which entails major behavioral changes. The budgetary allocations to be received by local governments can even be based on the cost effectiveness of its services delivery. There is also the need to build meritocracy, where promotions depend on the individual performance of each official.

The Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia noted that local governments and civil society alike can successfully increase public sector accountability from many regions in Indonesia. For instance, the municipal government of Ambon has managed to establish an

accrual-based accounting system. Among the many results of this well-tested international system, expenditure of regional budgets became more efficient and more transparent.

Public control of procurement of goods and services, which are often the main source of misappropriation of funds, can be increased in more ways than one. For instance, Transparency International and the government of Indonesia have developed an integrity pact which allows the public to exercise relevant controls over local governments and corporations. The pact includes the commitment to implement open tendering for the procurement of goods and services, to ensure that a third party effectively monitors the procurement processes, and there are even clauses for establishing a witness protection system.

Measures should be taken to ensure the budgeting and administration of the funds are properly accounted, and effectively presented through the accountability reports of Papua's heads of regions.

In cases of misappropriation of funds, even figures of high political standing can be held accountable by civil society. In Aceh, investigation and advocacy by a local non-governmental organization, SoRak Aceh, helped lead to the ousting of the incumbent governor himself over a procurement markup. Investigation and advocacy led by Forum Perduli Sumatra Barat (West Sumatra) in 2004 brought 43 provincial legislatures to court, on charges of regional budget markups. This became a precedent for similar public control measures throughout the country.

There could be lessons to be learned from the recent integrated civil service reform being carried out by other provinces.

The then office of the state minister for the acceleration of development in eastern Indonesia -- now Office of the State Minister for the Development of Disadvantaged Regions -- has even embarked on developing a blueprint for public services delivery. Best practices from pre-selected regions were noted for possible adoption. In Pare-pare, South Sulawesi, as part of the legislation process the regional regulation draft must include evidence that the draft has been made in consultation with relevant stakeholder groups, and equipped with regulatory impact assessment documents. The integrated one-roof service in Pare-pare has also served as an example for services delivery based on good governance principles.

Of course, there is no guarantee that innovations and lessons from other regions can be directly applicable to Papua. Still, their full potential should be explored, because the actual experiences of others are one of the best sources for capacity building, as well as those from within.

The views expressed herein are personal opinions. Max Demetouw is a member of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) representing Papua, Mochamad Indrawan is a consultant at the Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia.

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