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Climate Change and Forest Governance: Lessons from Indonesia

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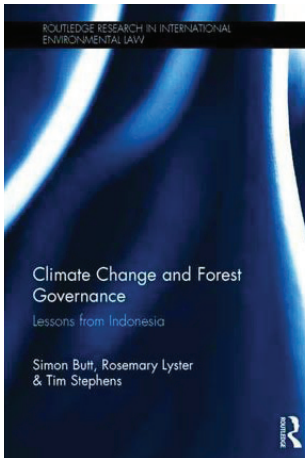
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BOOK REVIEW

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOREST GOVERNANCE: LESSONS FROM INDONESIA



Climate change and forest governance have always been discussed between scholars, governments and all stakeholders who engage in the issues. Discussions have been arisen from time to time on how devastating the impacts of environment loss caused by the acts of people. These impacts have brought people and countries to see the problems more seriously and attentively.

Based on the background, every country is focusing in reducing the deforestation and forest degradation in their territory. Active role by reducing the emission in countries might help in limiting the massive destruction caused by emissions.

Efforts to collaborate and contribute in preventing environmental degradation are not only delivered by countries, but also by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In UNFCCC, countries are pushed to minimize the rate of climate change and to stabilize their greenhouse gases (GHG).

The UNFCCC has brought the intense discussion between countries by using the Conference of the Parties (COP) mechanism. One of the pivotal stages in COP meetings was the 13 COP where they created the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) agreement. This agreement addresses state parties to give efforts to preserve their forests and thus receive financial supports for the purpose.

In this book, the writers focus on how Indonesian government handles issues of climate change and forest governance. This book is divided into ten parts. There are parts which are relevant to Indonesia: The institutional environment for REDD+ in Indonesia, Implementing international law in Indonesian law, national regulatory framework for REDD+ in Indonesia, Jurisdictional conflicts and REDD+ in Indonesia.

The writers draw attention on the implementation of Indonesian REDD+ in internal policies and regulations. The crucial issue is “triangle tug war” between government of Indonesia, local communities and REDD+ mechanism itself. Conflict rose when Indonesian government divided the power between central and districts. On one hand, districts governments try to captive income by giving permits to investor, especially in forest use. However, these permits create a lot of problems to local community (particularly the indigenous people) and environment.

In this regard, the writers focus on the permits (from local government) which do not view and underline the “fragile structure” and shortcoming in covering the indigenous people protection. This weakness begins with a lack of recognition of the existence of indigenous people, which is only mentioned in the constitution, without any further implementing rules. Furthermore, Indonesian government initially

equalizes the definition of the state forest, where indigenous communities live and have rights to manage and exploit natural resources therein.

This book does not mention the new progress in Indonesian regulations, especially regarding the indigenous people position after the Constitutional Court decision. Constitutional Court delivered a decision on 2012 (Constitutional Court Decision 35/PUU-X/ 2012, called as MK35) which was viewed as a “hope” for indigenous people acknowledgment. After the MK 35, Ministry of Trade of Republic of Indonesia then passed a Minister Regulation No. 1 Year 2014 regarding the recognition of indigenous peoples; this regulation mentioned three criteria of indigenous peoples which are, first; the unity of indigenous people with active using of traditional rights, second; in accordance with the development of society, and three; in line with the principle of the Republic of Indonesia. Given the legal framework above, there is no reason for local governments to ignore the recognition and protection of indigenous peoples, and arguing the absence of rules as an excuse. Currently it is “a burden” for local governments to ensure the recognition and placement for indigenous people in their respective regions; this will be an appropriate mechanism in reducing and eliminating conflicts between government and indigenous people.

Another shortage from this book is that this book does not show the role of Indonesian women in REDD+. Gender issues at the provincial level show that gaps occur in regards to development issues. These issues are related to inequality between men and women. Treatment in gender issue affects from forest management, forest decision-making, tenure, climate change and up to the sustainability of forest. Using women’s active role, experience and knowledge in utilizing the forest will help reducing the rapid progress of climate change.

In general, the authors are quite succinct in exhibiting the cases from Indonesian courts and relating the cases to the REDD+ implementation. Furthermore, the authors have proven that they conducted a massive research not only in environment and forest sectors but also expanded it to other discipline and institution which are directly and indirectly associated with the issues of REDD+. Therefore, this is a great book to gain knowledge on how Indonesian government encounters climate change and forest governance.

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