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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

### Yogyakarta Special Province: Addressing Human Security and Regional Development Issues through “Gotong Royong” Ideas and Practices

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Discussing human security and regional development, Yogyakarta Special Province (*Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*; hereinafter, DIY) may serve as a good example from which important lessons could be learned. Considered the most densely populated part of Java, where the man-land ratio is extremely high,<sup>1/</sup> and where almost all the land suitable for agriculture in the province has been intensively cultivated, DIY appears to have been rather successful in achieving satisfactory levels of human security for its population.<sup>2/</sup> Not only is the life expectancy of the people of DIY the highest in Indonesia, after Jakarta, but also from other social and economic indicators, the population enjoys other important aspects of human security. The fact that such conditions were not in existence thirty years ago raises several interesting questions which need to be addressed. First, what were the human security conditions in DIY thirty years ago and what factors caused such conditions? Second, how have such improvements been achieved and what was the process and mechanism? Third, what are the roles and involvements of each development actor — the government, the community, and the intermediary agencies such as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other socioreligious groups — in achieving such conditions and how do all these parties combine in the dynamic process of increasing human security in the region? Such important questions need to be answered or explained because they will provide valuable lessons for other regions looking to improve their own levels of human security. In addition, such explanations are also important for DIY itself to further increase efforts to ensure human security in the region and to respond to unexpected and more complex human security issues in the future.

The Indonesian section of this issue of *Regional Development Dialogue* (RDD) tries to answer such important questions. It consists of three articles which together present the human security conditions in DIY and explain how such conditions can be achieved. The section also lists constraints and challenges to be faced by DIY in maintaining and increasing the level of human security of its people in the future. It argues that although, for now, much progress has been achieved in DIY, the human security problems in the region will grow increasingly complex in the future. Some strengths that are already manifested in the region should be maintained and intensified, while weaknesses should be contained and reduced. This section provides a “good example” for other regions struggling to increase levels of human security for their people. At the same time, however, it is also a critical evaluation for DIY to continue its efforts to increase human security in the future.

The first article is prepared by Kenji Oya and serves as the lead article for the section. It provides an overview of the development achievements made, and challenges faced, by the region in terms of human security and regional development and explains how and why such achievements have been recorded. The article shows that despite geographical constraints, DIY has achieved considerable progress in terms of human security and regional development and lists the factors contributing to such achievements. A major emphasis is that human resources are much more important than natural resources. The article also argues, however, that DIY is facing many new problems and challenges, particularly in relation to people's increasing expectations of improved living conditions and the increasing pressures on the environment resulting from globalization and free trade. Such new and unprecedented problems should be properly addressed, particularly within the context of the trend towards a more decentralized and democratic governance system — which is taking place throughout Indonesia.

The second article is by Anton Sudjarwo, a social activist who founded *Yayasan Dian Desa* (YDD, or the *Dian Desa* Foundation), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) active in the rural areas. In his article, Sudjarwo argues that while further academic debates on human security should be undertaken, it is particularly important that action-oriented programmes are strategically delivered because the poor cannot wait any longer. This article presents valuable experience of work carried out by YDD in helping the poor in rural areas to improve their human security conditions. It explains how NGOs can effectively develop “partnerships” for the benefit of the communities. Particularly important in this article is the emphasis on the fact that local problems and resource endowments need to be clearly understood before any action is undertaken. Through his personal experience of YDD activities, Sudjarwo argues that once local problems and resources are understood, programmes can be initiated in which local inhabitants will enthusiastically participate. In that context, Sudjarwo argues that “cooperation” with local people is the obvious key to success. Although the problems in DIY are not specifically addressed, this article constitutes a valuable contribution to the question of how, in practice, the human security of millions of people in a developing country could be substantially improved and what is the most effective strategy to be adopted by NGOs to assist the poor.

The final article in this section is by Idham Ibtu, the founder of PKPEK, an Indonesian NGO working on small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). In his article, Ibtu explains how PKPEK has been able to help local-rural entrepreneurs to increase their incomes by assisting them in adding value to their products. He argues that the role of NGOs should be to form linkages between rural entrepreneurs and outside markets. Such an intermediary function is vital since entrepreneurs do not usually have good networks with the outside market. The article documents the range of PKPEK initiatives in helping palm sugar producers in DIY, and outlines the numerous internal and external problems of survival faced by these small, home-based enterprises in the rural areas and the difficulties they face in furthering their development. In many cases, problems can only be solved with outside support from external agencies such as PKPEK, because such problems are embedded within society resulting from the unbalanced power structure. The article is fully in line with Sudjarwo's article in arguing that there are many opportunities and ways in which the poor can be helped. While Sudjarwo's article documented the activities and programmes conducted by YDD, Ibtu's article describes the involvement of NGOs in one particular

segment of the poor population — palm sugar producers or processors. Such documentation provides valuable lessons for other NGOs or voluntary organizations wishing to continue their work in helping the poor.

Each of the three articles presented in this section looks at human security issues in a rather broad context. They do not use human security as a specific term with specific definition and indicators. They all agree, however, to view human security as an important aspect in development paradigms — that development programmes should go beyond mere physical achievements and that development schemes should specifically address the welfare of human beings. Further, the three articles also stress that human resources are somewhat more important than natural and capital resources. Therefore, any development programme related to human security issues should appropriately address human resource components. In this context, as each article has argued, it is only by strengthening so-called “social capital”<sup>3/</sup> that human security problems in the region can be addressed.

The term social capital itself is very vague and requires more explanation. However, in the case of DIY, the term is traditionally used to describe social and economic networks among individuals facilitated by local community groups. The basic value of such networks is embodied in the Javanese concept of social solidarity known as *gotong royong*,<sup>4/</sup> viz., sharing burdens. This concept is simple, but it needs commitment, a conducive social structure, and community leadership to operationalize. In the face of increased uncertainties and conflicts resulting from globalization, free trade, and the aftermath of the Asian economic crisis, strengthening social capital seems to be the appropriate response to addressing human security issues. In this context, it is useful to examine how social capital is conceived and put into practice by the people in Yogyakarta as a means to address human security problems.

Each of the three articles in the Indonesian section of this issue of *RDD* is accompanied by appropriate commentaries from qualified personnel who attempt to highlight salient issues and/or draw useful lessons from each of them.

## NOTES

- 1/ The man-land ratio is extremely high, ranging from 1,400 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in the irrigated rice farming areas such as in Sleman and Bantul to 740 and 500 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in the predominantly upland areas such as Gunung Kidul and Kulon Progo, respectively. With a total population of 3,213,502 in 1997 and an area of 3,185.81 km<sup>2</sup>, the average population density in DIY is about 1,009 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. The gross population density of DIY is four times higher than that of the Bicol Region, Philippines and eight times higher than that of Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand (see table 1). It would be interesting to examine the implications of gross population densities on the regional population absorptive capacities.

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF POPULATION DENSITIES IN THE THREE CASE STUDY REGIONS

|                                      | Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) | Population (year)  | Population Density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> ) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|---|
| DIY, Indonesia                       | 3,185                   | 3,213,502 (1997)   | 1,009   |
| Java, Indonesia                      | 132,186                 | 114,733,486 (1995) | 868   |
| Bicol Region, Philippines            | 17,632                  | 4,324,307 (1995)   | 245   |
| Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand | 20,494                  | 2,510,839 (1997)   | 123   |

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- 2/ More detailed indicators of human security are provided in the first article of this section of *RDD*. In general, it can be said that the human security conditions in DIY are better than those in other areas in Indonesia. From data available so far, the province appears to have recorded a better performance when compared with the two other case study regions, particularly in terms of coping with the ever-mounting population pressure on land, transforming the regional economic structure, and creating a social system to ensure fair distribution of income.
  - 3/ There are many definitions of social capital, but the one proposed by Caroline O. N. Moser is simple but clear and covers many aspects. She defines social capital as "...the trust, reciprocal arrangements, and social networks linking people in the community". See Caroline O. N. Moser, "Confronting Crisis: A Summary of Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability in Four Poor Urban Communities" (ESD Monographs Series; no. 7) (1996).
  - 4/ More explanation on the concept and practice of *gotong royong* can be gleaned from J. R. Bowen, "On the Political Construction of Tradition: *Gotong Royong* in Indonesia," *Journal of Asian Studies* 45 (3):545-61. Bowen briefly defines *gotong royong* as "sharing burdens".