INTRODUCTION

Lukman, a farmer in Ujanmas Village, Bengkulu, who was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to manage community forestry in 1999. With a 2-hectare concession area, he made the previously critical land into productive areas. In addition to timber trees, other various types of plantation crops were cultivated to support his livelihood. Annual income generated from forest crops including coffee, candlenuts, areca nuts, and durians reached approximately Rp. 36 millions. This success was not only experienced by Lukman but also by 311 other household involved in managing the 627-hectare community forestry in the Ujanmas village.

Lukman’s case is an example of success stories of community forestry (HKm) program managed by the Ministry of Forestry, started in 1999. Up until 2010 there are approximately 32 locations of successfully managed community forestry management program, covering an area of approximately 17.258 ha and involving 452,615 poor farmers in 18 regencies regencies successfully managed in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects1. In fact, in several locations, the community forestry has restored functions of critical forests into water resources for drinking water, irrigation, and energy. In Ujanmas Village, for instance, the community forestry greatly supports PLTA...
PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

The community forestry was initially defined by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) as "any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity. It embraces a spectrum of situations ranging from woodlots in areas which are short of wood and other forest products for local needs, through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash crops and the processing of forest products at the household, artisan or small industry level to generate income, to the activities of forest dwelling communities. Thus, the community forestry constitutes social, economic, and environmental activities involving a household, (a woman and man) and other residents as a whole. Hence, in its operation, the community forestry comprised of three developmental dimensions important to be performed in meeting the community’s needs. The three dimensions are (a). provision of fuel and other goods important to meet the basic need for energy in rural households (b). provision of food and sustainable environment required for food production for the community and its future generation, and (c). provision of income and employment opportunities for the rural community. With these three dimensions, the community forestry program thus includes wide spectrums of various possible connections between the residents and trees and products from trees as well as including community dependence on forest.

Indonesia, as one of the countries with fairly vast tropical forests, has formally fostered and developed the community forestry since 1994. Although still in a traditional manner, the community forestry has long grown and developed in the community in the form of community forestry (hutan rakyat (people’s forest), hutan adat (indigenous community forests) and others. Meanwhile, a policy on the community forestry formally started in 1999 enacted through the Regulation of the Minister of Forestry No. 677/Menhut-II/1999. Institutionalisation of the community forestry has been made through laws and regulations of dynamic nature. In fact, the name “community forestry” has been amended into “social forestry.” Given that there are four types or schemes of community involvement in forest cultivation, the four types of schemes from the Social Forestry are: Community Forestry (Hutan Kemasyarakatan or HKm), Village Forests (Hutan Desa or HD), Community Crop Forest (Hutan Tanaman Rakyat or HTR), and Private Forests (Hutan Hak), each of which has its respective legal basis, which for instance is the Regulation of the Minister of Forestry Number P.88/Menhut-II/2014 regarding Community Forestry.

In more than 2 decades of practice, there are 3 reasons supporting the positivity of the policy on the community forestry: First, by providing a forest utilisation license for 35 years and using agroforestry technology, the community may obtain sources of fixed revenues from the crops, either quarterly or annually to contribute to poverty reduction figures in rural areas. There are currently around 48.8 million residents living in the vicinity of the forests and 10.2 million of whom are poor. Second, the community forestry has been able to rehabilitate critical lands into productive ones with non-monoculture vegetation so that they contribute in restoring the function of forests for conservation and restraining rates of deforestation in Indonesia averagely around 1.5 million hectare/year. Third, availabilities of access and rights for the community to manage lands through the community forestry have reduced conflicts related to boundary markings, status and rights on lands. Therefore, this has reduced a level of violence between officers of the forestry and the community who

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2 Community Forestry Ten Years in Review, FAO, 1978
3 According to a study by Wartaputra (1990), development of private forests in Java started in 1930 by the colonial government. Later, the

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Indonesia Government in 1950 developed private forests through the “Karang Kiti” program and the afforestation program in early 60s.

Forest Watch Indonesia, Antara News, 15 January 2015
is categorised as forest squatters. There are approximately recorded 32,324 villages in the surrounding forests that are potentially conflicting due to the forests resources.

Although the community forestry has been positively proven in terms of a social aspect, economy, and conservation, its development has been almost insignificant from aspects of the number of locations provided with licenses and the determined coverage areas. Until 2012, the Ministry of Forestry basically targeted 1.2 million hectares of lands managed as the community forestry locations. However, it is a far cry from the reality. Until 2013, there were only 598,761 hectares (49.89%) of lands verified and 187,516 hectares or 15.61% made into the community forestry locations. Even more ironic is the community forestry management and utilisation license issued only for the coverage areas of 58,099 hectares.

The low achievement of the community forestry management and utilisation license shows the government’s half-heartedness in empowering the community around the forests from socio-economic and conservation aspects. People see that a policy on forestry implemented by the government is slipping away from spirit of cooperativeness and justice. Although many laws and regulations from laws, government regulations, and regulations of the Minister of Forestry explicitly state that in order to optimally and fairly gain the forest resources, the people living around the forests must be empowered.

The community is at a dead-end whenever they wishes to participate in a public sphere, a place or forum where people freely discuss and identify problems that happens. Meanwhile, the government’s participation suggests that it only contributes to the buffer zones and does not reach out the structural dimension that becomes the socially conflicted areas with the community. Within the forestry bureaucracy, exist a false assumption that the community will only be satisfied and be more responsible in preserving the forest conservation when they are provided with direct cash assistance in the form of working capital, tools, seeds, etc. This could potentially lead to people starting new businesses outside a forestry sector and

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5 Realisation of HKm, HD and HTR (Source: Directorate General PSKL KLHK, 2015. Source: Directorate General Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, p. 5)
will eventually be independent from forest lands.

Additionally, a delay in providing access to the community in forest management through the community forestry program with a community forestry scheme may be attributable to two problems in the community itself, which are: First, the unsolidness community institution authorised and instrumental in regulating the governance of forest zone utilisation. Thus, when provided with the right of management, the community institution may guarantee that the lands are well managed, poor people with no lands are the beneficiaries, and there is a transfer of function. Second, the underdeveloped community forestry units are managed by economic wise (business wise) in environmental services, processing of non-timber forest products and others. Therefore, there are impacts on labor absorption, increase of income and welfare of households, and rural community. Thus, business products from the community forestry are non-subsistence and cause people to return to squat forests.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

As public assets, values of forests are not merely determined from its environmental and commercial aspects, but must also secure subsistence needs. This means that beneficiaries of forest resources must absolutely be enjoyed by the local community. Thus, community empowerment to people living around the forests through the community forestry or social forestry successfully proven in integrating economic, conservation, and ideology (conflict) problems is the option. Quoting from an American forestry expert, Gifford Pinchot, forests must be managed for the widest beneficiaries for common people’s welfare. The community forestry is not a burden but an asset and backbone for national forestry development.

Existence of the community forestry becomes relevant as part of a climate change mitigation program marked by disasters of floods, landslides, drought, and forest fires. As known, the government is committed to decrease greenhouse effect to 26%. Thus, delay in providing access (certainty in licenses and rights of utilisation) for expansion of the community forestry program will make the forest condition more degraded.

Apart from such, support in the form of reinforcement of the community economy capacity is needed in order to optimise products from the community forestry in the form of either timber or non timber. Such support includes economic facilities and resources in the form of infrastructure, technology, and skills for processing small industry so that value added for the forest products may be achieved. Without such support, there is a concern that the community forestry program may not have an impact on the improvement of the community’s socio-economic welfare.