

NTA – Press Clippings on NTT Edition No. 6 20 October 2008

Note: Items from the Jakarta Post in this edition are full copies of the original articles, while items from Kompas are synopses translated by the editor (Denis Fisher).

Because of a warning (generated by Google) that the Kupang Post website remains a possible virus attack site, the editor has been unable to access the KP since mid-August. Efforts to contact the editor of the Kupang Post by email to inform him of the virus issue have so far been unsuccessful.

Any comments or suggestions on this clipping service (and the KP virus issue) are welcome and should be sent to the editor at d-dfisher@homemail.com.au

1. Thousands affected by water shortage in East Nusa Tenggara
2. NTT Deserves Special Attention in regard to Education
3. NTT Among the 10 Provinces Most Struck by Leprosy
4. Water: Needed but still taken for granted
5. Management of Malnutrition: Looking Closely at Rote Ndao's Future
6. Seaweed Production a Source of Livelihood in Rote Ndao
7. UN agencies join to support NTT
8. 45 Wells in Kupang Run Dry
9. East Nusa Tenggara to Develop Corn Production Centres

1 Thousands affected by water shortage in East Nusa Tenggara

The Jakarta Post 20/9/08

A severe water shortage in East Nusa Tenggara threatens the livelihood of thousands with many forced to drink from unhygienic sources as potable water dries up.

In the provincial capital Kupang, well water has turned brackish due to dwindling supplies due to the prolonged drought. Hundreds of residents in West Kupang, Sulamu, and West Fatuleu districts in Kupang regency are also facing water shortages. "We are forced to drink water from the lake which is contaminated with cattle and goat manure," Yustinus Manafe, a resident in Sulamu district, said Friday.

An Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle faction member at the provincial legislature, Karel Yani Mbuik, told reporters in Kupang on Friday that the government had not paid serious attention to the problem. "It has not set aside special funds to resolve the water crisis, despite the fact that water is a basic human need and should be readily available," Mbuik said. According to Mbuik, the water crisis prevails every year, but the government has failed to conduct anticipatory measures. "This shows that the government is not serious about meeting people's needs," he added.

Kupang mayor Daniel Adoe had promised to dig at least 200 wells to meet the needs of 40,000 residents, but none had been completed.

People continue to consume unhygienic water because they cannot afford to buy water from the local tap water company between Rp 75,000 (approximately US\$8.30) and Rp 125,000 per tanker, Mbuik said. The local administration has not taken the steps necessary to overcome the situation faced by a large part of the population every dry season, he said.

In Rote Ndao regency, some 1,000 people in Maubesi, Lida Manu and Lida Besi villages in Central Rote district, have to walk up to five kilometers to fetch water. Local resident Bernard Nalle, 32, said residents from the three villages were severely deprived of clean water. "There is only one public well in our village, but due to the huge number of villages fetching water there, it has dried up. Now, we have to walk for five kilometers to get to the nearest water source," Bernard said. He said the water crisis had affected crops, such as banana, coconut and other side crops. "Shallots and watermelons grown around the well have particularly suffered from the drought."

2 NTT Deserves Special Attention in regard to Education

Kompas 22/9/08

According to the Governor of NTT, Frans Lebu Raya, education in NTT requires special attention from the government because of its backwardness compared to the rest of the nation. Precisely in the area of highest national priority – viz. providing greater access to, and increasing the quality of, education in the first 9 years of school – NTT was behind Indonesia's other 32 provinces. The main reasons for this were a lack of quality teachers and poor educational infrastructure. The teachers issue had to be addressed immediately – more and better teachers were needed. Only 50% of NTT's 50 000 teachers had qualifications equivalent to senior high school. Thus the standard of teaching at the primary and junior high school levels was way below expectations. Nor did NTT students fare well in junior high school national examinations, with their best ever pass rate being 60% and their worst just 46.39% in 2007/08. NTT's low quality of education was also evident from the level of school accreditation which was below par.

3 NTT Among the 10 Provinces Most Struck by Leprosy

Kompas 25/9/08

In a meeting with the editors of the Kupang Post on 25/9, the Executive Director of the Foundation for the Transformation of Leprosy in Indonesia (YLTI), Nuah P Tarigan, said that the annual average number of people suffering from leprosy in NTT was around 300. This placed NTT among the 10 areas most affected by the disease along with East & West Java, Maluku, Papua and South Sulawesi. Figures indicated that there were 110 new leprosy sufferers in NTT in 2007, including 6 children. Tarigan urged relevant people in NTT including the media to work together to overcome this illness.

Tarigan pointed out that leprosy could be treated effectively with Multi Drug Therapy over a 6 or a 12 month period (depending on the type of leprosy involved). Early treatment could ensure a complete recovery (without scars). YLTI had to work with the media to foster an accurate understanding of the disease, as society still tended to regard leprosy as an execration.

YLTI has a number of care groups in NTT, including several in the Kabupaten/City of Kupang as well as in North Central Timor, Belu and East Flores. Tarigan described YLTI's work in NTT as being to raise public awareness of the disease, to be advocates for leprosy sufferers and to empower those cured of the disease.

4 Water: Needed but still taken for granted

Jakarta Post, 30/9/08

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink" is the line taken from *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, published in 1798 by English poet Samuel Coleridge.

The line perfectly describes the reality many villagers living on the island of Flores in East Nusa Tenggara experience on a daily basis. The island is surrounded by a vast expanse of ocean, but local residents don't have enough clean water to fulfil their daily needs.

In the isolated Golo Wuas village -- one of the villages in Elar district, East Manggarai regency, or some eight hours' drive from the regency's capital town of Ruteng -- most women have to wake up before sunrise to ensure they are the first to arrive at the small, drying well located some 100 meters from their homes. Being late means they have to bring home muddy water, or worse still, no water at all. "I usually wake up when my husband and two children are still asleep," said 35-year-old Maria Variden, a housewife from Ndari hamlet in the village, and home to 1,490 residents who are mostly farmers. "I'm very happy if I get to the well before others because it means I can bring home water for my family," she told *The Jakarta Post* recently.

But getting to the well first did not always mean getting water. Maria recalled there were many times there was no water in the well. Faced with this reality, she had to walk further to fetch water at a rice field one kilometer away, which took her on a one-and-a-half hour along a rough road. The water she collected at the rice field was the water from an irrigation canal, which was muddier and yellow compared to that of the water found in the well.

Villagers in other hamlets -- such as in Rea, Watu Kunis and Golo Garanwere -- also facing water shortages are forced to take water from a river nearby, which they also share with their livestock. Maria said the water scarcity meant that many villagers only bathed two or three times a week, and did their laundry once a month; dirty clothes were simply dried and reused and if washed, no detergent was used since it meant the use of more water. Bernadus Mancung, a 64-year-old retired teacher, said many people had fallen ill from consuming unhealthy water. "Water should be boiled before being consumed, but I know that many people drink unboiled water," he said.

But a regular water supply was established in the village a year ago, when a local non-governmental organization, Ayo Indonesia, set up clean drinking water facilities in Langga hamlet that also provided water for five nearby hamlets. "We're happy. Now we can take a bath twice a day, wash our laundry and the children clean up pretty well before going to school," said 30-year-old housewife Wihelmina Mbawas. She said before the

arrival of clean water near their homes, many did not have toilets in their homes. "Now, almost every house has a toilet, although not all of them are permanent," she said.

According to the organization's director, Hurmali Tarsisius, the project began in 2007 and ended in October of the same year. The project is the 12th of similar projects the group has supported. "Now the situation is getting better, people can take a bath and wash, and women, who are traditionally burden with the job of fetching water, can save energy and time," Hurmali told the *Post*. "Many women cried tears of joy when the project was completed. They could not believe they had water right in front of their homes like their friends in the city."

The water scarcity issue is nothing new in the country, which experiences regular droughts during the dry season and suffers annual flooding during the wet season. According to a 2006 UN report, Asia has less fresh water -- 3,920 cubic meters per person -- than any other continents. The report states that when the estimated water reserves from lakes, rivers and ground water are added up, Asia -- home to almost 60 percent of the world's population -- has marginally less water per person than Europe or Africa, one quarter that of North America, nearly one-tenth that of South America and 20 times less than Australia and Pacific Islands.

Brahma Chellaney, a professor of strategic studies at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi, India, said the situation in Asia was so serious that the specter of conflict over water resources demands greater policy attention, both nationally and regionally. With the world's fastest growing economies, Chellaney said, Asia is experiencing the fastest rising demand for water. "The world's most populous nations, China and India, already are water-stressed economies. Their per capita availability of water is threatening to rival the water scarcity in the Middle East," he told participants of a recent seminar on strategic importance of water in Asia, organized by the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, in Nusa Dua, Bali.

He said growing demand for water, as well as climate change and environmental degradation, were creating water scarcity and a cycle of chronic flooding and droughts through depletion of forests and swamps, nature's water storage and absorption cover. "Water consumption in Asia continues to rise rapidly with the spread of intensive farming, water-intensive industries and a growing middle class," he said. "It's time for us to take water issues seriously."

5 Management of Malnutrition: Looking Closely at Rote Ndao's Future

Kompas, 3/10/08

Rauvinus Manehat (50) and his wife Dince (34) of Tondao, Lobalain, Rote Ndao Kabupaten (NTT) are raising their 9 children in a 4m x 5m shack with walls of palm tree branches and an earth floor. For a week now, Rauvinus has been lying on his mattress bed, suffering from fever. Five of his children sit mutely beside him, while Dince nurses their youngest (11 months). In March two of their children (Rehan and Rinita aged 2) fell ill from malnutrition and are still under the observation of the village health post (*posyandu*).

At present 200 young children are suffering from malnutrition, while another 1 207 have inadequate diets. Four have died and the local government has declared a state of alert.

Like hundreds of other children, Rehan and Rinita underwent a week's treatment in the Ba'a District Hospital. They were then allowed to go home with support from the Rote Program of World Vision Indonesia (WVI). According to its manager, Sugiarto, WVI Rote has, up to August 2008, trained people in managing *posyandu* in 36 villages. WVI is also stressing the importance of breast feeding and knowing how to cook healthy food. One problem is the limited number of vegetable and fruit varieties available, partly because of the hot climate and the rocky soil.

Poverty still plagues Rote Ndao, evidenced for example by the lack of employment opportunities. Bureau of Statistics figures for 2004 indicate that the majority of Rote Ndao's 110 055 inhabitants had no permanent work (like Rauvinus). This situation requires assistance from NGOs and serious government attention. For the moment it is WVI, already active in Rote for 15 years, which is also developing the economy (agribusiness, fisheries, cultivation of seaweed, micro financing and revitalisation of an impoverishing way of life).

The objective of WVI's assistance is to guarantee a future for Rote Ndao's children in terms of education and health. Malnutrition statistics portend the disappearance of a generation. The problem must be overcome immediately with programs lasting into the long term.

6 Seaweed Production a Source of Livelihood in Rote Ndao

Kompas 4/10/08

Twenty kms from the capital of Rote Ndao Kabupaten 90 inhabitants of the village of Kuli, formerly exclusively fishermen or farmers, have since 2000 developed a successful seaweed operation. Villagers involved in the venture enumerated to Kompas the advantages of seaweed production: frequent harvests (one every 45 days except in the down months of May, June and July – compared to rice (3-4 months growing period)); a reliable income (a seaweed grower can receive between Rp 1m and Rp 10m per harvest); no need to worry about fertilizer or water, as in the case of farming. In the three down months the villagers do not sit around idly but devote their attention to more traditional activities such as rice cropping.

Since 2007 the Rote program of World Vision Indonesia (WVI), using funds from World Vision Australia, has had a full time person on the ground in Kuli helping the seaweed farmers. *Inter alia*, WVI has taken farmers to other seaweed growing areas to help them learn the trade. They have also provided them with scales which have made transactions with middlemen more amicable. WVI is racing against time a little, as there are still problems to be addressed but its assistance program is due to run out next year. WVI's objective has been to help the seaweed growers become self-supporting.

Although the quality of Rote seaweed is high and well known, the farmers face several problems. One is a deadly fungus which develops on the seaweed for which a solution

has not yet been found. The farmers seek to minimize this problem by harvesting early. Another problem is that the farmers still have to get seedlings from other villages, sometimes from other islands. Despite the problems, the villagers remain steadfast. So long as they have support, they believe they have a future. Here's hoping WVI's assistance continues.

7 UN agencies join to support NTT

The Jakarta Post 9/10/08

A new joint program to support development in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) was launched Wednesday at the National Development Agency (Bappenas) by a group of 10 United Nations agencies.

"This program -- on a very practical level -- brings together what each of the UN organizations can contribute to development and shows how we can maximize our impact by combining our strengths," El-Mostafa Benlamlih, UN Resident Coordinator, said. The signing ceremony was attended by Paskah Suzetta, the state minister of national planning development, NTT Governor Frans Lebu Raya and representatives of Belu district, the key area to receive funding.

Benlamlih said the UN worked at a global level to improve coordination among its various agencies, and the Belu program was one example of this strategy. Paskah said Bappenas fully supported the implementation of the program since it would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the national development program in the area. He said this model of donor coordination was expected to be implemented in other parts of Indonesia through the broader donor community.

The collective initiative includes the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Volunteer (UNV), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The program aims to support the Belu district's development plan by addressing primary school participation, healthy nutrition, maternal mortality, small-scale infrastructure, agricultural production and processing, local economic development, poverty alleviation, governance and crisis prevention. Belu was chosen because of the high incidence of poverty in the district and its challenges advancing the Millennium Development goal, the press statement said.

8 45 Wells in Kupang Run Dry

Kompas 10/10/08

As many as 45 wells in Naimata (Maulafa Kecamatan, City of Kupang) have been dry since July 2008 because of the long dry season. Affected residents perforce have to walk

around 2 kms to collect clean water. According to the lurah (Jap Yesua) this happens every year but no action has been taken to find a permanent solution.

9 East Nusa Tenggara to develop corn production centres

The Jakarta Post 13/10/08

East Nusa Tenggara (NNT) provincial administration plans to build the country's largest corn development center across 11 locations on the islands of Timor, Flores, Sumba and Alor.

"Our output of corn is lower than in other areas in Indonesia although we have massive potential," NTT Governor Frans Lebu Raya told reporters in Kupang on Friday. Frans said the province's agriculture and horticulture agency was already measuring plots in the locations to be used in the project. He said the agency had yet to decide whether it would develop the centres on new plots of land, land owned by farmers, or on neglected plantations. "The development of corn production centres is important to ensure supply for domestic demand and for inter-island trading as well as for export," he said.

Frans, who was elected governor in the recent gubernatorial election, said several investors had expressed interest in buying corn from the province. The NTT Legislative Council has allocated Rp 1.2 billion (US\$122,488) from the provincial budget for the program.

Frans said his administration would soon invite Gorontalo Governor Fadel Muhammad to hold a seminar on how to successfully produce and package corn for export. "We specially invited Gorontalo Governor Fadel Muhammad to make a presentation in Kupang on post-harvest management and on how to develop and market the commodity. It's important that we learn from the province," he said.

Corn can be used to manufacture biofuels, which are alternatives to the higher priced fossil fuels. The price of corn has increased on global markets this year. Frans said the development of the corn production centres was one of NNT's top priorities, along with a husbandry development program and the establishment of fishing and agriculture industry centres.

NTT was once the largest corn producer in the country. Corn development in the regency reached its heyday under the leadership of Governor Ben Mboi between 1978 and 1988 and during the term of his predecessor, El Tari, from 1973 to 1978.

During the period, the province developed a large corn production program called *Nusa Makmur* (prosperous island) and another called *Nusa Hijau* (green island), as well as launching a movement called *Tanam Sekali Lagi Tanam* (plant and then plant again). After the downfall of the authoritarian regime under president Soeharto in 1998, the country's agriculture development programs, including for corn, were largely ignored by subsequent governments.