



NTA
East Indonesia Aid

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1 15 Indonesians from NTB, NTT and Sulawesi under arrest in Australia

Jakarta Post, 17/3/09

JAKARTA: Since smuggling became rife, hundreds of foreign asylum seekers came to Australia by boat, and up to September 29, 2008, fifteen Indonesians have been arrested and brought to justice in Perth, West Australia, an Indonesian diplomat said Monday. "Right now 15 Indonesians had been arrested for alleged involvement in human trafficking," consul for information, social, and cultural affairs at the Indonesian Consulate in Perth Ricky Suhendar told Antara. The 15 came from Indonesia's eastern provinces like West Nusa Tenggara (NTB), East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and South Sulawesi, he said. The Indonesian Consulate in Perth provided consular and humanitarian assistance to the Indonesians being held at the Hakea Jail in Perth.

2 Special Report: NTT to fall down deeper into crises this year, analyst warns

Jakarta Post, 16/3/09

East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) will likely fall down deeper into crises this year as the government has no action plans and makes no concrete actions to cope with the food crisis hitting the province in the past two years, a social and political analyst warns.

"Not only will the number of school dropouts and child labor be on the rise but that of vulnerable families and the jobless will increase because the food crisis is still looming and economic growth is estimated to reach only 4.5%, down from 6.1% in 2008, amid the global economic downturn and on the eve of the general election," the head of the Centre for Social Studies and Political Reforms at Nusa Cendana University (Undana) in Kupang, Yanuarius Kolibau, told The Jakarta Post here recently. Referring a result of a study conducted by the center recently, he said starvation and malnutrition were still looming because poverty was expected to reach up to 30%, or 1.3 million, this year, up from 27% in 2008, while the unemployment rate was expected to reach 5% compared to last year's 3.7%. He cited poverty as having affected 27% of people living in rural areas and 25% of those in urban areas and so far no actions have been taken to alleviate it.

"The figure of school dropouts will likely rise to 50,000 this year up from 40,000 in 2008, prompting many vulnerable parents to send their children to work," he said, adding that the increase in the education budget would not make a significant contribution to retaining students' attendance in school because the government had yet to take concrete action to increase school feeding funds or develop action plans to empower vulnerable families.

Januarius criticized the government which was focusing on the formation of new regencies across the Nusa Tenggara archipelago, saying the people were in dire need of infrastructure such as road networks to break the isolation of remote areas, irrigation systems to revitalize agriculture and make the people food-secure, and explore the province's maritime resources to provide jobs and improve the people's social welfare.

According to him, the government should enhance and extend the existing cooperation with foreign countries and international agencies such as FAO, UNICEF and ILO to design action plans to cope with the food crisis and unemployment and to empower the vulnerable families to keep children at school.....*(more on other parts of Indonesia)*..

3 Special Report: Govt responds too late to stop child labor

Jakarta Post, 16/3/09

Despite the school operational fund program (BOS) and the increase in the education budget, the government has responded too late to the crucial child labor issue in the country's least-developed province of East Nusa Tenggara.

Kupang municipal authorities admitted to monitoring the influx of migrant child laborers from remote regencies and the emergence of child laborers in the city over the past nine months, but said they could not do much to keep them in school, due to the limited budget allocation.

"The city authorities have monitored the child labor issue and high number of school dropouts in the city since last June, but we are not authorized to prevent anyone, including child workers, from migrating to the city to seek jobs, and we cannot be blamed for it," Enos Ndarapoka, head of the city's manpower and transmigration office, told The Jakarta Post at his office recently. He added hundreds of children had migrated to seek jobs in the city because of financial pressures on their impoverished families in their home villages in remote regencies. The jobs they eventually landed were in the agriculture, trade and domestic work sectors, leaving them underpaid and overworked because of their lack of skills.

Enos also admitted thousands of children in the city and outskirts began working at an early age after being forced to drop out of school because of the food and fuel crisis that hit the province early last year. "Many parents pulled their children from schools and sent them to work to help support the family; this is considered not only a coping strategy, but a last resort to survive the protracted crisis," he said, adding most impoverished families had abandoned any hopes of bettering their children's futures through education.

The results of a study conducted in January by the manpower and transmigration office indicated that child laborers came mostly from impoverished families living in vulnerable areas in the city and outskirts, who earned a living from fishing, farming, selling produce and working as manual laborers, while living costs in the municipality were very high because most consumer goods, mainly basic commodities, were brought in from Java and Sulawesi. Enos also criticized the free education program which he said was only a concept and political jargon rather than actual free education, because despite the financial assistance under the BOS, school committees representing parents and school managements had imposed additional charges on students to finance extracurricular activities and pay the salaries of non-permanent teaching staff. In addition, parents had to purchase children's uniforms, books and shoes, and pay for their transportation to and from school.

He said his office, in cooperation with ILO East and other international agencies, had launched a shelter program to provide special training for school dropouts; but its capacity was limited and so far only 30 children were housed at the shelter, while the number of children dropping out of schools in the city had reached into the hundreds. The city education service lauded the high school attendance rate that reached almost 98 percent in the past five years due to the increase in the education budget and the BOS. "The dropout figure was only 0.18 percent in junior high schools last year, but a small part of elementary school graduates did not continue on to secondary school because of the prolonged crisis hitting the province," said city education office secretary Yaved Leo.

The administration has increased the education budget from Rp 124.5 billion (*A\$16.1m*) in 2007 to Rp 168.7 billion (*A\$21.8m*) 2008 and Rp 162.8 billion (*A\$21.02m*) (still to be revised) in 2009, while the BOS has risen from Rp 13.3 billion (*A\$1.8m*) in 2005 and 2006 to Rp 15 billion (*A\$1.94m*) in 2007, Rp 15.5 billion (*A\$2m*) in 2008 and Rp 16 billion (*A\$2.66m*) in 2009, to cover around 82,000 students at 152 elementary and junior high schools in the city. Yaved said the administration had proposed to the government to double the funding to help impoverished families keep their children in school, but no immediate response was given. "The lack of a response from the government has discouraged remote regency administrations from stopping residents migrating, including children, to seek jobs in the city," he said.

4 Special Report: Crisis sends school-age children to work

Jakarta Post, 16/3/09

The global economic downturn has taken its toll on East Nusa Tenggara, with impoverished families pulling their children from school and sending them to work at a young age to augment the family income. The *Jakarta Post*'s Ridwan Max Sijabat and Yemris Fointuna carried out an investigation into child labor in Kupang municipality from March 5-8, 2009, and filed these three stories on the issue in this special report.

Young, scrawny cart driver Melky Litbani looks pale and resigned to his new circumstances, blaming no one and nothing for the social system that has landed him at the Kasih traditional market in Oepura subdistrict in the city at such a young age. From daybreak at 4 a.m., this state

elementary school dropout from a remote village in Soe, South Central Timor, is always at the market with his rented handcart to help traders and shoppers transport their goods. Wearing a T-shirt and shorts, but no footwear, he works at the market from early in the morning until late at night for a paltry Rp 10,000 (US\$1). He is paid Rp 2,000 each time he carries goods to and from the market, and has to pay Rp 10,000 in daily rental fees to the cart's owner. But his experiences in the past two months have accustomed him to the hard way of life on the streets, and to the rules of the game in the market. After adapting to his new work environment, he hopes to be able, like his peers, to save around Rp 200,000 (A\$25.82) a month that he can send to his family back in his home village. Melky, the youngest son of Petrus Litbani and Laura, a farming family in Soe, ended his education abruptly after his father pulled him out of school and told him to join other youngsters working in the city to seek an additional income to support the family.

Just one of dozens of child laborers plying the same trade at the market, Melky is not alone. The working children are easily spotted and identifiable among the older cart drivers. Salmon Artauro, an ojek driver who manages 12 boy carters in the market, defends the employment of the child laborers he brought to the city with the permission of their parents, saying they had no jobs in their home village. Like Melky, Immanuel Holo, a 9-year-old from an impoverished family in Kodi, Southwest Sumba regency, has to work more than 12 hours a day as a paper courier in front of the luxurious new governor's residence in the city to help support his family back home. Nicknamed Nuel by his fellow paper couriers, he is paid Rp 8,000 (A\$1.03) for every 10 copies he sells, taking home between Rp 16,000 and Rp 20,000 a day. He sends about Rp 100,000 (A\$12.90) of his monthly income to his family, and lives a hard life in the city with his two older brothers in a rented room.

Dropping out of school in the third grade, Nuel came to the city after his parents pulled him out of school. "My father took me out of school because we are a poor family and they could no longer afford my uniforms and school supplies. He asked me to join my older brothers working in the city. I wanted to stay in school, but I have nobody to support me," he tells *The Jakarta Post*. He seems grateful for his new job because of the rare chance it first gave him to put money in his pockets; now he makes just enough to manage to scrape a living and support his extended family back home. He says he has had to adapt to the harsh environment on the streets, which frequently sees him involved in brawls and bickering with fellow couriers.

Before going back home late at night, the child paper couriers join their fellow villagers at a billiards hall in the Kasih traditional market, where they get free access to cigarettes, alcohol and various kinds of gambling.

Petrus Dangatobo, an 11-year-old fifth-grade dropout from Southwest Sumba, came to the city in December 2008 with the similar intention of supporting his family. He still works as a paper courier with an uncertain daily income. He admits he enjoys his new profession making money with the support of fellow villagers working in the city.

With similar backgrounds as migrant child laborers, youths who dropped out of junior high school in the fishing and farming communities of Kelapa Lima, Alak and Maluafa - three of four districts in Kupang municipality - in the second semester of 2008, have joined the job world with their parents at an early age because of severely strained finances. Azaro Lapanasa, 45-year-old fisherman and father of seven school-aged children, said he took three of his children out of junior high school last November to accompany him fishing every night. "My wife and I have no other choice but to take the three children out of school. Education is important, but food is more important for survival," he says.

Hasan Rusli, 45, and his wife Salamah, 44, in the coastal district said they were shocked by the soaring prices of rice, which topped Rp 8,000 per kilogram last August from the previous Rp 3,800, as well as of cooking oil. "During those difficult times, my husband didn't go out fishing because of the high fuel price and the shortage of kerosene. How can we afford to educate our children while we're running short of rice and other basic commodities to survive?" says Salamah, who works with her daughter as roadside fish vendors to help the family pay off debts to loan sharks. The soaring prices of basic commodities - mainly rice - as well as increased fuel costs, high unemployment and the extreme prolonged drought between August and December 2008 have severely impacted vulnerable families in slum areas and outskirts in the municipality. "High food prices, high fuel and transportation costs, debt payments and job losses were four major difficulties last year that forced many parents to take their children out of school and send them to work to support the family," says Maluafa district head Andreas Dominggos. He adds dozens of school-aged children in Maluafa and neighboring districts had to drop out of school and start working because their families could not afford the education during the protracted economic slowdown of the past two years.

5 Commonwealth Life Making Soundings in NTT

Kupang Post 16/3/09 Report by Yosep Sudarso

Kupang: The Australian insurance company, Commonwealth Life, is expanding its network into NTT, according to the company's Denpasar Area Manager, I Made Surya Agung, who was speaking to potential clients in Kupang on 13/3. Surya outlined a number of policies offered by his company which aimed at helping people to manage their finances more effectively, in particular the bright family plan, the bright retirement plan, the bright university plan and the bright future plan.....(more)....

6 Garuda Shortly to Service NTT

Kupang Post, 16/3/09 Report by Frans Krowin

Kupang: Barring the unforeseen, Garuda Indonesia will start a Jakarta-Bali-Kupang service from 1 May 2009, using a 737 plane with seating for 110 passengers. According to Garuda, the move is meant to give a boost to the region's development and is not aimed at putting pressure on other airlines (Citilink and Mandala), as Garuda will be looking to a different client base. The move has been greatly welcomed by local authorities. Garuda last flew to NTT in 1998...(more)..

7 Veco Focuses its Program on NTT

Kupang Post 16/3/09

Labuan Bajo: According to Roger, the regional representative of the Belgian NGO Veco (Vredeseilanden Country Office), speaking at the opening of a Veco Office in Labuan Bajo, Veco is starting to make NTT the focus of its activities in Indonesia. Veco, which had been operating in Indonesia for 15 years, was already active in several *kabupatens* in NTT. In almost every *kabupaten* in Flores as well as in West Manggarai Veco was concentrating of "sustainable agricultural chain development" (SACD). Roger referred the Veco's 2008 effort as being, *inter alia*, "development of appropriate technology innovations including land conservation, plant diversification and rice intensification as well as strengthening the commodity chain and facilitating meetings of the food sufficiency forum"....(more)...

8 The Villagers of Beiposo Fix Water Problem

Kupang Post 16/3/09

Bajawa: After 8 years of relying on rain and nearby streams for drinking water, the villagers of Beiposo (Ngada *Kabupaten*) have taken the initiative to solve their problem. According to one of the villagers, the government installed water pipes in 2000 but they had never carried any water. Complaints to all and sundry about the problem had no effect. So the villagers recently dismantled the pipes and used them to reticulate water from a water source (with reasonable water flow) ½ km from the village. All this was done by the villagers without any government input, with each household contributing Rp2 000 (\$A0.26) to the project....*(more)*...

9 East Manggarai Development Planning Meeting

Kupang Post 16/3/09

Borong: A development planning meeting (*musrenbang*) in Kota Komba *Kecamatan* (East Manggarai *Kabupaten*), comprising representatives of 17 villages amounted to little more than a forum to receive suggestions, as no priority or weighting was given to the various suggestions put forward. According to one participant in the meeting, each village head had submitted five or six development proposals in respect of issues, which had not been attended to over the past few years. Local governments needed to take a professional approach so that ideas brought forward in *musrenbang* could be implemented*(more)*...

10 Central Government to Provide Credit for Cattle Industry in NTT

Kupang Post, 17/3/09 Report by Marsel Ali

Kupang: According to the head of NTT's Livestock Service, Martinus Jawa, when speaking to the *KP* on 16/3, the Central Government stands ready to extend credit to NTT cattle raising ventures on certain conditions and within the parameters of the national program to make Indonesia self-sufficient in beef by 2010. The credit extension program was according particular priority to the production of milking cows. Jawa commented that using such credit would sit well with the NTT Governor's plan to make NTT a haven for livestock. But there were several hurdles to overcome to implement that plan and an integrated approach was required. One problem was that at the moment many cattle of productive age were either being shipped out of NTT to other islands as breeding cattle or being sent to slaughter houses. Another issue was the ever decreasing amount of suitable grazing land. *Kabupatens* needed to bring in regulations designating specific areas as cattle raising land. Jawa noted that only certain high country areas in such *kabupatens* as South Central Timor (TTS), Manggarai and Ngada were suitable for dairying. He called on NTT farmers to submit bids for credit provided they had already been endorsed by the local *camat* and livestock service. The deadline for submission of proposals was the end of March. Only one proposal had so far been received and forwarded to Jakarta....*(more)*...

11 Nutrition Group Works with Government on Nutrition

Kupang Post, 17/3/09 Report by Marsel Ali

Kupang: According to the NTT Coordinator of the Food and Nutrition Security Plan (FNS Plan) group, Agusman Rizal, speaking to *KP* on 16/3, FNS has been working with

the government since 2007 in efforts to improve food and nutritional standards among the people. Rizal said Plan was focusing on educating the people about food security and the nourishment of infants, concentrating on the *kabupatens* of Sikka and Lembata (as models to follow). Plan's approach was two-pronged: first, providing direct guidance to the people: this was already having a good impact, as malnutrition had declined in the model areas. Second, the aim was to educate organizations by way of discussion groups comprising relevant government officials, NGOs and others.

As part of its most recent efforts, Plan had established food security committees at the village level involving a number of players including health workers, midwives, village leaders, religious leaders, group (*kelompok*) leaders and others. The purpose here was that government and other components of the village community could provide input and become linchpins in securing village food supplies. One observer has commented that although Plan activities, e.g. in the *Kecamatan* of East Kupang, have been highly effective, some of Plan's programs have fallen away because the government was too slow in follow up work. This was an issue that needed to be addressed....(*more*)..

12 NTT Government to Establish Weaving School

Kupang Post, 17/3/09

Kupang: Mrs Lusia Adinda Lebu Raya, chair of the NTT Family Welfare Empowerment Team (TP PKK NTT) told a leading Indonesian fabric designer (Oscar Lawalata) on 15/3 that the NTT Government would establish a fabric design school to educate designers of NTT woven fabric in order to improve the quality and marketability of NTT's woven products, thereby increasing the income of NTT's weavers. She noted that, although NTT's woven products were in demand, their limited range of *motifs* made them less than competitive. Lawalata agreed on the latter point and welcomed the proposed design school. He added that the inferior standard of the thread used in NTT reduced the fineness of the final product, making it too thick for use in producing everyday wear, for example. He said that there was so much interest in NTT's woven products beyond NTT that he was now working with the Novato Center in NTT on a pilot project with local weavers to improve the variety and quality of their work. ..(*more*)...

13 Undana Graduates Not To Be Job Seekers

Kupang Post, 17/3/09 Report by Apolonia Dhiu

Kupang: Speaking at the ceremony marking the graduation of 563 University of Cendana (Undana) students on 14/3, the Rector (Frans Umbu Datta) appealed to the graduates not to be job seekers (e.g. by waiting around to become civil servants) but to be rather creators of work for themselves and others. This would be more in accord with Undana's vision of producing graduates with a broad view of the world and with the capacity to create work for themselves. He noted that the majority of graduates (301) had been awarded teaching certificates – a positive indicator of the high degree of interest in teaching. Umbu Datta recalled that Undana had so far produced 31 619 graduates who were spread across Indonesia and abroad. The deputy governor of NTT, in a written speech read by a representative, called on the graduates to prove themselves on the basis of what they had studied and make a contribution to the people of NTT. He suggested that Undana consider introducing courses related to business/entrepreneurship so that graduates of such courses could become involved in business.....(*more*)...

14 Hundreds of Hectares of Maize and Peanut Crops Fail

Kupang Post 20/3/09

Waingapu: Hundreds of hectares of maize and peanut crops around the village of Palakahembi (in the northern coastal area of East Sumba *Kabupaten*) have failed yet again this year, as they have in recent years, because of lack of rain (despite the fact that rain elsewhere in the *kabupaten* has been plentiful this rainy season). Despite the poor rainfall record of the area, farmers always plant their crops in the hope of a good season. The exact extent of the affected area has not yet been measured. A local farmer told *KP* that in the absence of a harvest he was making do with livestock and leftover maize and peanuts...(more)...

15 NTT's exports US\$40.5 in 2008

Kupang Post 20/3/09, report by Marsel Ali

Kupang: The Head of NTT's Trade and Industry Service, Eddy Ismail, told *KP* on 18/3 that up to December 2008 the value of all goods consigned for foreign export through the port of Tenau Kupang was US\$40.5m (of which \$32.2m were oil and gas (*migas*) and 12.79m were non-*migas*). Some of the goods concerned originated from outside NTT but were recorded as exports from NTT. Some other goods originating from NTT (e.g. coffee and cocoa) were regarded as inter-island trade to Surabaya where they were exported from the Port of Tanjung Perak. Non-*migas* exports included manganese to China (also via the port of Kedindi in Reo, Manggarai *Kabupaten*); iron rods for reinforced concrete, asphalt, instant noodles, clothing and dried fish for East Timor; skipjack tuna and pearls for Japan; small prawns for Australia; and live grouper fish for Hong Kong. Ismail noted that the 2008 export figure was much higher than that for 2007 (US\$24.67m), but felt the figure for 2009 would be lower because of the international financial crisis....(more)...

16 218 000 Still Illiterate in NTT

Kupang Post 20/3/09 Report by Apolonia Dhiu

Kupang: According to an official of NTT's Education, Youth and Sports Service (PPO NTT), Marthen Dira Tome, illiterate people aged from 15 to 44 numbered 218 000 up to the beginning of 2009, but the total number of illiterates of all ages (generally living in isolated areas) could be as high as 13% or NTT's population of 4.3m people. The aim was to eradicate illiteracy among the 15-44 age group during 2009, but other age groups would also be included in the effort. At present 124 000 people were being taught how to read and write. In addition the central government had allocated Rp27 billion (±\$A3.5m) for illiteracy eradication in 2009, covering 90 000 people. Thus, taking all that in account, the number of remaining illiterate people in NTT would number in the 30 000's. If the provincial government could cover 5-10 000 or those, it was hoped that *kabupatens* could deal with the remainder through their budgets....(more)...

