

World Experts Discuss Urbanization and Development in Asia

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At least 100 experts in the field of regional development, environment, and geography from 19 countries in the world were present at the *13th International Asian Urbanization Conference*. In the conference, which lasted for two days (January 6-7) at the Faculty of Geography, discussed various issues related to the urbanization growth and sustainable development phenomenon in the Asian region.

The conference was organized by the collaboration of Regional Development Study Program, Faculty of Geography, and the Asian Urban Research Association (AURA). The conference was attended by researchers, academics, and students from India, Malaysia, France, Austria, Singapore, Finland, Thailand, Vietnam, Germany, Taiwan, the United States, Cambodia, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Philippines, Portugal, and Romania. The key speakers of this seminar were Prof. Ashok K. Dutt, a founding member of AURA who is also professor emeritus of University of Akron, U.S.A.

Chairman of the Conference Committee, Dr. Rini Rachmawati, S.Si., MT, said that at the conference experts will present and discuss the findings of their research related to urbanization and sustainable development in Asia. Urbanization has become a serious problem faced by many countries in Asian region. Urbanization level is high but not followed by the development of adequate infrastructure, causing a number of problems such as unemployment and housing.

"This has already happened in India, high urbanization that is not accompanied by the provision of

adequate infrastructure," she said, Wednesday (6/1).

In Indonesia, the provision of adequate infrastructure remains a serious problem, especially in few megacities, such as Jakarta and Surabaya, with a high level of urbanization. Villagers come to town to find work, obtain education and a better economy.

According to Dr. Rini, that is a very serious problem that needs to be addressed. Through this conference, the researchers are expected to be able to share their latest research findings that can give insight on appropriate urban development to address the problems of urbanization.

"I hope we can learn from one another about implementation of urban development," she said.

One of the examples shown is related to the concept of regional development undertaken by Singapore. The state government moved the central government to the suburbs. With such a move, they could unravel most of the problems of congestion in the major cities of Singapore.

Furthermore, Rini said, there were 93 papers presented by researchers from 19 countries. They were divided into 16 sub-themes. Some of the sub-themes are rural-urban transformation, urban resilience, and disaster risk management, development of urban areas, urbanization in the era of information and communication technology.

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