

To Reduce Food Imports, Government Urged to Enhance Transmigration


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Rural development model in the form of transmigration will be put into concept for Indonesian rural development. The transmigration that was started during the New Order has created 1,100 independent villages, 383 district capitals, and 104 regency capitals. "We will adopt the model of transmigration for rural development, not for moving people out, but for community empowerment instead," said Minister of Rural and Underdeveloped Region Development and Transmigration, Eko Putro Sanjoyo, in a Focus Group Discussion themed *Transmigration, Awakening Agricultural Industrialisation from the Outskirts*, held in Hotel Eeastparc Yogyakarta, on Friday (30/9).

According to the Minister, the success of transmigration community in forming cooperatives would be duplicated by 74,000 villages in the country, especially that the number of villages in the country will increase up to 74,954. As high as 80 percent of this population lives on agriculture sector. But the commodities are not in big scale without post-harvest processing facilities. "During harvest season, prices of commodities from poor villages will drop as they have no post-harvest facilities.

The government will encourage the post-harvest processing facilities on condition that the village has a big scale commodity. "A village has to focus, one village one product. We cannot provide facilities for a village with only one ton of corn commodity, for example, but we may be able to provide the facilities if they can produce up to 1,000 tonnes," he said.



Former Minister of Transmigration and Forest Settlement, Siswono Yudo Husodo, saw the transmigration policy had decreased due to the decreasing number of people that transmigrate. He said the New Order programme was done to increase food production. “Not surprisingly, we now import foods, because foods have taken a great deal of the foreign exchange due to the lack on our part on transmigration policy,” he said. Siswono explained the size of lands cultivated by farmers for food production only reached 8.5 million hectare. Now, the total population has exceeded 250 millions, making food production far below requirement.

Expert from University of Indonesia, Prof. Sri Edi Swasono, said transmigration policy was to form national mutualism or inter-region mutualism. He suggested the concern to move people out from the overpopulated regions should not be made the starting point for transmigration policy. He recommended transmigration corresponds directly to the spirit to developing the region. “Regions should make their own specific development planning whilst transmigration accommodates and supports the specific needs of that region,” he said.

UGM Vice-Rector for Research and Community Service, Prof Dr Suratman, M.Sc, highlighted the importance of enhancing transmigration policy as theres is still development disparity between regions. UGM, according to Suratman, plans to do community service for transmigration areas. “It is planned that as many as 40 state universities will participate in this project,” he said.

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