

UGM Observer: Regional Election Must Prioritize Health

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In the middle of the pandemic, it seems that the government will continue to hold simultaneous regional elections for 2020. Although some critics appeared, the government seems to remain in its decision not to cancel it anymore after being delayed in September 2020.

Dr. Wawan Mas'udi, as a teaching staff and Vice Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at the UGM Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, believes that the government or election organizers should first re-evaluate the stages of the regional elections, which are planned to be held on December 9, 2020. The evaluation is not just about an administrative one, but it must also evaluate how obedient the regional election process is to health protocols.

"Because this regional election happens in the Covid-19 Pandemic era, the main consideration should be focused on health as the priority. Accordingly, there needs to be a comprehensive evaluation of various parties from the steps that have been carried out. Measures how risky it is if it proceeds, or in fact, it will result in a new cluster for the spread of Covid-19," he said, at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM on Thursday (17/9).

Wawan said after the evaluation results are coming out, then the next steps will be determined. If the evaluation results are obvious, it can be continued with behavior tightening, especially for



candidates and success teams to ensure health measures. In contrast, if the evaluation results show that the risk of a pandemic is very high, the regional election process can be postponed again for the next time.

Besides that, said Wawan, it could also be made with a cluster model. This cluster model is based on the different severity of Covid-19 transmission. There are areas with red zones, yellow zones, green zones, and orange zones.

"Based on its severity grouping, the regional elections can be categorized, which regional clusters should be postponed, and which regional clusters ca. The impact is true and cannot be synchronous. However, this is an emergency," Wawan said.

Wawan assessed that the registration process, which has recently been going on, is cause for concern. Many parties ignore health protocols, both by candidates and success teams.


The neglect within pre-election preparation is very clear, for example, against the prohibition not to carry out processions in the registration process, but the fact is that in many regions using processions. When there is a need not to allow the mass gathering, the success team is still ignorant of its appeal.

"This means that there are several basic protocols that were violated by the candidates. Unfortunately, the sanctions are not sufficiently strong. When there is a violation, it is only discussed in the media and social media, and then finished. There should be some shock therapy carried out by the KPU, such as a written warning or a fine from the Covid-19 Task Force, and so on," he added.

Wawan emphasized that the existence of violations should not only be discussed, but there must be actions or explicit sanctions against the violators. Especially if you look at the regional election stages process so far, clusters of transmission have been found, both those were infecting KPU officers, KPU commissioners at the central and regional levels, candidates, and others.

"What is the point? Yes, we are required to think. If people always say that health prerequisites are needed, this is similar to this region. Political events must also prioritize health," he said.

According to Wawan, if health is a top priority, then there should be a regional election's postponement. However, the delay must be accompanied by precise measurements.



The KPU, as the organizer of the regional election, must make some parameters. These parameters can be used to evaluate the process of the regional election process.

"With parameters, it can be evaluated depending on the particular score to decide whether it will be postponed or will be continued with certain qualifications or requirements or the possibility of using clusters. Unfortunately, these parameters have not been made by the KPU. So far, only the discourse is postponed or continued," he explained.

Wawan added that the parameters in question were not political, but risk parameters for health. Because, according to him, during the Covid-19 pandemic, what kind of conditions do you want if you fail to overcome the pandemic? Yes, perhaps everything one has been through will be nothing.

Hence, he continued, the Covid-19 pandemic must be seriously concerned, and it is time for the regional election process to consider the risks that might occur properly. Because, if you observe the mass media lately, the behavior of the people is getting freer, and the transmission of Covid-19 is getting more powerful, which has resulted in tremendous casualties, from high-ranking officials to the public.

"Ideally, the election is using the application or the idea of e-voting as before. But it takes a lot of prerequisites, technical prerequisites related to technology, knowledge, and "education" of the community on how to use it and its accountability. This e-voting idea has also not been examined, even though such a system needs to be tested first. We don't have a pilot project yet, although yesterday we tried it in the village head election by e-voting in several places. However, it was only completed as a project, not as a pilot project to develop an electoral system that utilizes advanced technology. That is the problem," he concluded.


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