

Cooperating with 9 Universities of 5 Countries, UGM Discusses Issues of Global Climate Change


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Climate change is a global issue that becomes the attention of countries in the world. It takes joint commitment and real step on the field to slow down climate change. One of the efforts is the concept of community-based mitigation and adaptation to climate change. It becomes the focus in the Kick Off Conference Erasmus Mundus Programme on *LEAN CC-Linking European, African and Asian Academic Networks on Climate Change* in the MSK building of UGM Center for Population and Policy Studies. The activity that was initiated by Faculty of Geography invites nine universities from five countries, such as the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Ca 'Foscari University of Venice, Soegijapranata Catholic University of Semarang and The University of Witwatersrand South Africa.

Dean of the Faculty of Geography, Prof. Suratman, said the impact of climate change today is the rise in sea water level which causes abrasion. This led to disasters and damages to both infrastructures and culture. "There is even the threat islands getting submerged and this must be anticipated," he said on the sidelines of the conference, Wednesday (16/11).

In the world, changes in weather have caused floods in Thailand and famine in Sudan. He added that countries in Asia, including Indonesia, now have a function to maintain the temperature of the Earth through its tropical forests. Currently, there is the campaign to preserve the forest because reduced forest land would accelerate climate change. "Tropical forests are the buffer of climate change, so these must be maintained," he said.

Climate change also threatens food availability. Currently, there are 7 billion people in the world and it is estimated that when 10 billion people inhabit the earth, conquest for land will happen. He said that this should be considered to create the granary of the world, which is in Indonesia. He continued that to face this problem, long-term plans related to vegetative conservation are required by making urban forests, urban lakes, or not immediately wasting water into the sea. Vehicles use that trigger air pollution should also be reduced.



At this conference a network at the ASEAN level to face climate change will be built. Although currently the world, especially Central Europe, is experiencing economic crisis, Suratman is optimistic that efforts to slow down climate change will continue to be made as long as the commitment is maintained. "It does require commitment and consistency from countries that have high economic power to maintain partnerships with developing countries to support the agenda of the world," he said.

Meanwhile, Danang Sri Hadmoko from the Bureau of International Cooperation, UGM Faculty of Geography, added that this meeting is expected to strengthen partnership in managing the issue of climate change. UGM itself offers the concept of mitigation and adaptation to climate change based on community. He cited Indonesia's coastal communities have the psychological ability to cope with disasters. For example, in the event of flooding, they adapt to it by raising the banks. On the other hand, in foreign countries insurance system is running and replaces all the losses due to disasters. "That's where what we will learn and strengthen cooperation between countries," he said.

UGM itself already has disaster-related activities to build community resilience and vigilance in response to climate change issues through thematic service learning activities.

In the kick-off conference there are five keynote speeches by Deputy Head of National Council on Climate Change, Dr. Armi Susandi, Director of the Center for Climate Change Studies from University of Indonesia, Dr. Jatna Supriatna. There are also Stelio Grafakos from HIS Holland, CEO of Study Portals, Edwin van Rest, Rick Heikoop from the RUAS and Bernhard Barth from UN-Habitat.

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