

## Policy Recommendations

Based on the policy analysis and research findings obtained by Women Research Institute pertaining to women's participation in forest concession in Siak District and Pelalawan District, Women Research Institute proposes the following recommendations:

- ◆ Policy on forest concession has to specifically mention women in community involvement.
- ◆ Policy on forest concession has to implement affirmative policy by providing a minimum quota of 30% for women's representation.
- ◆ Policy on forest concession has to be equipped with detailed procedure of community involvement, both men and women.
- ◆ Community involvement that employs representation system has to be done transparently and accompanied with procedure of consultation with the community in appointing the representatives.
- ◆ Policy on forest concession has to give sanction to government authorities and companies which do not involve community, particularly women, as mandated in the existing regulation.

## End notes

- <sup>1</sup> Focus Group Discussion held by Women Research Institute on "Gender and Forest Concession", Pelalawan District, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014.
- <sup>2</sup> Article 2 point (g) of Law No. 7/2012, "The handling of social conflict reflects gender equality."
- <sup>3</sup> Article 47, 48, 49 Law No. 7/2012, "Elements of Community in the Social Conflict Handling Task Force at the district/city, provincial and national levels has to pay attention to women's representation which is 30% at the least."
- <sup>4</sup> Result of the research conducted by Women Research Institute on division of labour in Sungai Berbari Village of Siak District indicated that women's participation in forest management shared balance percentage with men's, which was 44% and 47%.

## Policy on Women's Participation in Forest Concession

Women's involvement in forest concession is still very low. Based on a research conducted by Women Research Institute in Siak District and Pelalawan District in Riau Province, women's participation in decision making process of forest concession was not yet taken into account even though they played a significant role in managing the land. The government has not yet paid particular attention towards women's involvement as reflected in policies on forest concession which do not provide enough room for women's participation.

### Women's Participation in Forest Concession

In general, women's participation in forest concession, such as in spatial planning and the Environmental Impact Analysis, is still very low. Meetings which discuss the defining of land borders and the Environmental Impact Analysis were attended more by men as community representatives. If there was an opportunity for women to attend such meetings, their number was usually small and they tended to be passive in both the discussion and decision making. In Teluk Binjai Village of Pelalawan District, the community has allocated 10%<sup>1</sup> quota of women's involvement of the total participants of village meetings.

There were four factors that caused low women's participation. First, a perspective in the community which was believed that women's role was in domestic sphere and, therefore, it was not necessary to involve women in activities that concern public affairs. Second, lacking awareness of women's involvement and participation among women as they spent almost their entire time taking care of household chores. Third, ownership and control over resources, such as land, laid more in the hands of men and it made women's participation was not seriously taken into account. Fourth, the existing various policies regulating forest concession have not yet encouraged women's participation.

### Policy Brief

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WRI is a research institute that employs feminist methodology and analysis by placing women and men in a fair and equal position

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Photo: Riau Women Working Group

## Policies on Women's Participation

The mandate of public participation in forest concession has been mentioned in 20 regulations which comprised 17 regulations at the national level, one at Pelalawan District level and two at Siak District level. No regulation mandating women's participation was found at the provincial level. The existing regulations concern issues of forestry, plantation, spatial planning, the Environmental Impact Analysis and the environment and conflicts.

Most policies are usually gender neutral without specifically mentioning men's and women's participation. The words used in general are "community involvement". Although the word "community" generally represents both men and women, the research conducted by Women Research Institute in Siak District and Pelalawan District shows that in reality people tended to involve only men.

Among the 20 regulations on forest concession mandating public participation, there was only one regulation that specifically requires women's parti-

icipation, namely Law No.7/2012 on Social Conflict Handling. According to the law, conflicts that often happen due to forest concession need to be handled under the principle of gender equality.<sup>2</sup> It means that both men and women should be given equal right to participate. The principle of gender equality in handling social conflict reflected in the involvement of men and women in the efforts of conflict resolution.

Other than mentioning community involvement in general, Law No. 7/2012 also regulates the forming of Social Conflict Resolution Task Force as one of the efforts to overcome social conflicts. Furthermore, the law requires women's participation in Social Conflict Resolution Task Force as much as 30% at the least of the total members.<sup>3</sup> It is expected that women take part in overcoming social problems happening in their environment, particularly social conflicts.

The mandate of Law No. 7/2012 to involve women in social conflict handling is not necessarily applicable in its practice. According to the findings found by

Diagram 1.  
Regulation on Forest Concession Mandating Public Participation

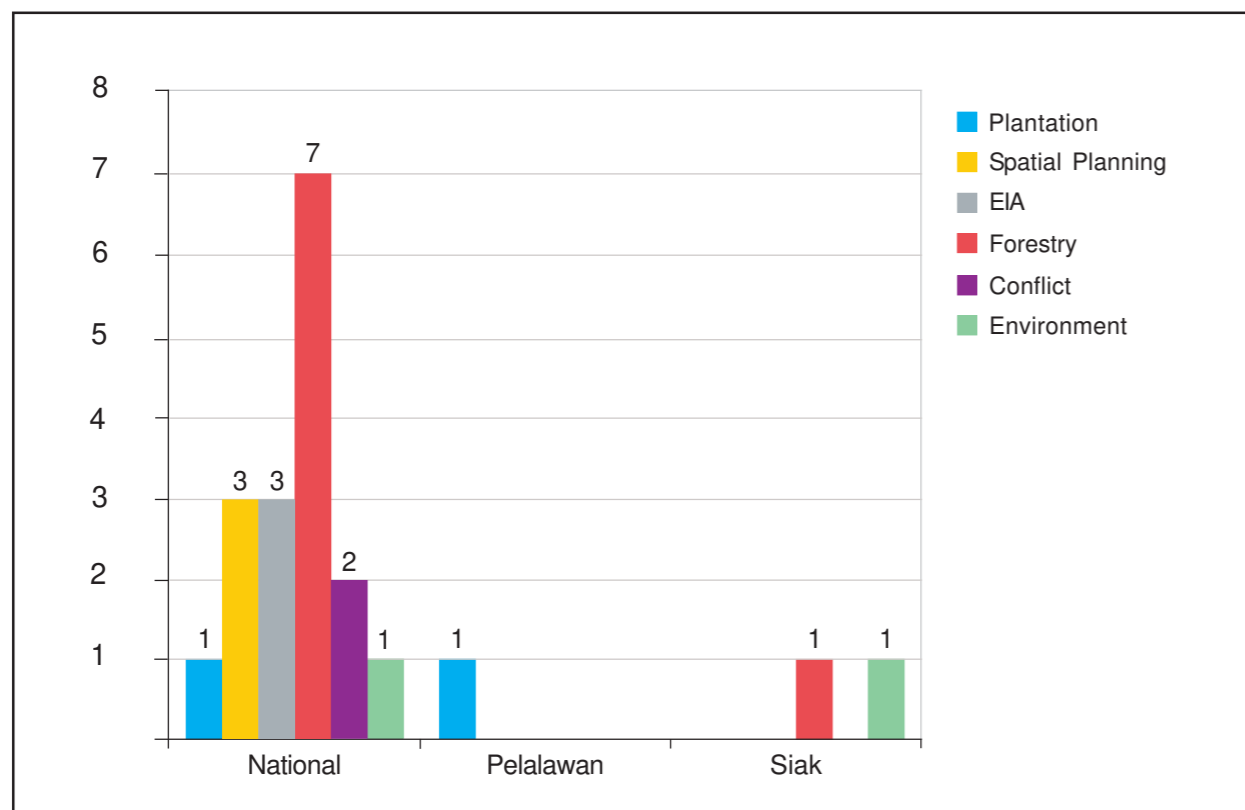


Photo: Perkumpulan Bunga Bangsa

Mentioning "women" in policies on forest concession becomes significant to ensure women's participation.

Women Research Institute in its research in Siak District and Pelalawan District, the efforts to handle social conflicts were done more by men than women. Women's involvement in handling social conflicts occurs only in informal efforts initiated by their community instead of formal efforts instructed by the government, such as negotiation and mediation.

However, this law deserves appreciation as the only law that encourages women's participation. It needs similar policies to increase women's involvement in forest concession. Mentioning "women" in policies on forest concession becomes significant to ensure women's participation. Therefore, women's aspiration that has not been seen can be accommodated in the efforts of resolving various issues of forest concession.

### Why is Women's participation in Forest Concession Important?

The result of the research conducted in Siak and Pelalawan indicated that forest concession issues did not only involve men but also women. Women were also actively involved in managing forest and land in a fairly balanced share."<sup>4</sup>

The narrowing farming land and river which was polluted had caused limited sources of food for the community. Women were the groups that were directly affected because they were positioned as the ones who were responsible for fulfilling the need of foods of the family. They had to take responsibility for fulfilling the need of foods of the family by cultivated ginger, corn and rice.

Other than doing household chores women were also fully involved in cleaning oil palm plantation, fertilizing, applying pesticide, picking oil palm fruits, and sapping rubber trees. In managing corn garden, women were active in all stages of cultivation, including planting, harvesting, threshing and selling.

Women also became initiators in resolving problems pertaining to forest concession. In Sungai Berbari Village of Siak District, women organized a demonstration by blocking the road helped by the local people as the companies did not keep their promise to water the roads which generated dust that harmed the health of the community members. The action eventually had made the company fulfil the community's demand.