



Enhancing the Inter-Governmental Relationships between Kota/Kabupatens and NAD Province: *The Communication Forum of Local Governments And Legislatures of NAD Province (Forum KKA)*



Abstract

The Communication Forum of Local Governments and Legislatures of NAD Province (Forum KKA) aims to share experiences and enhance inter-governmental relations and cooperation between Kotas/Kabupatens and NAD Province, taking into consideration the framework of special autonomy. What is unique about the Forum KKA is that the organization is able to bring the local governments and legislatures of Aceh together to discuss and communicate their common interests with the NAD Provincial Government. The Forum KKA has also become involved in providing capacity building activities for its members.

Background

On December 26, 2004, a tsunami struck on west coast and part of the east coast of Aceh and had a devastating impact. Over 150,000 lives were lost, and close to one million were left homeless. As a result, the economic and local government systems in Aceh was paralyzed for months. However, the tsunami crisis raised an important opportunity for the Government of Indonesia (GoI) and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM/Gerakan Aceh Merdeka) to resolve a long-standing conflict, which in itself had claimed 30,000 lives.

On August 15, 2006, the GOI and GAM agreed to sign a peace agreement, effectively ending the decades-long conflict.

One year after signing this peace agreement, the Law on the Governing of Aceh (LOGA, UU No.11/2006) was enacted. A key objective of the LOGA was to speed up the development of Aceh through enhanced cooperation both between Aceh Province and Kabupatens/Kotas, and among themselves.

The destruction of infrastructure and the loss of local government personnel has necessitated that recovery efforts in Aceh not only address the physical aspects of

reconstruction but also the capacity building of civil servants to enhance systems in local governance. Now that former conflict actors are elected leaders, and decentralization is taking place at the local level within the framework of special autonomy, it is clear that improvements and adjustments in the government relations is needed and necessary.

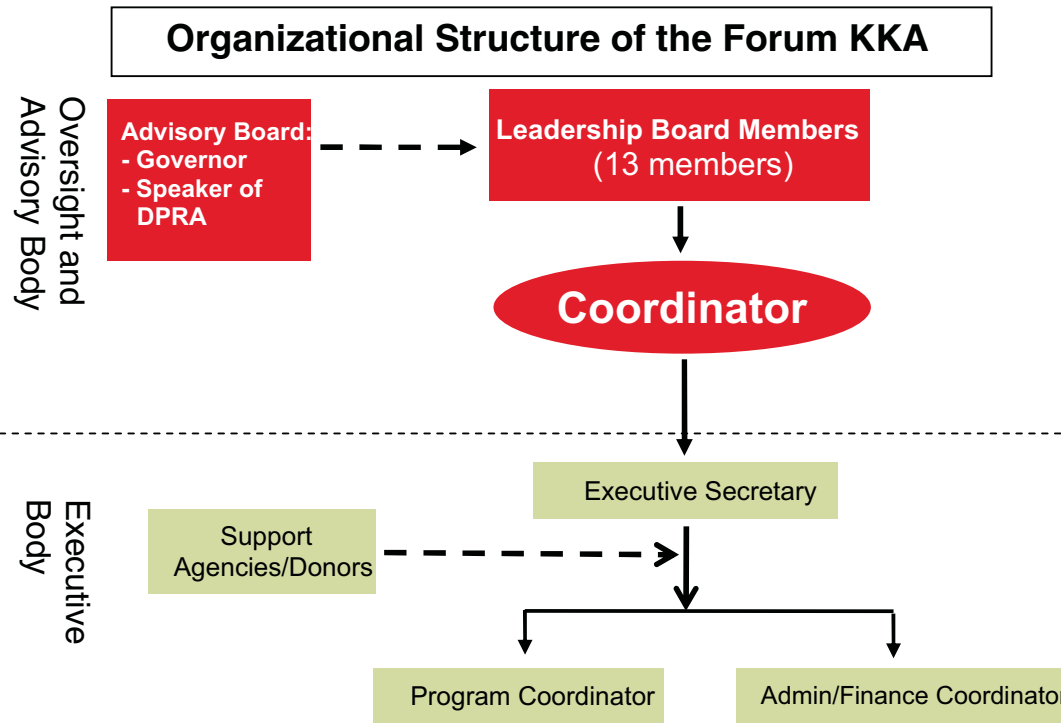
With technical assistance from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) through the Canada/Aceh Local Government Assistance Program (CALGAP) and funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Kotas/Kabupatens in Aceh took the initiative to establish the Forum KKA in order to facilitate greater cooperation amongst themselves and with NAD Province.

Consultations were held to determine the type of organization required to best promote the interests of Aceh districts and cities. The initiators received inputs from Indonesia's four national local government associations (LGAs) -- the Association of Indonesian District Governments (APKASI), the Association of Indonesian Municipalities (APEKSI), the Indonesian District Parliament Association (ADKASI), and the Indonesia Municipal Councils Association (ADEKSI). Positive responses also came from other stakeholders, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Executing Agency for Aceh and Nias (BRR), and the Governance Bureau of NAD Province.

On March 8-9, 2008, Districts and Cities in Aceh and other important stakeholders gathered in Banda Aceh for the Founding Conference of the Communication Forum of Local Governments and Legislatures of NAD Province (Forum Komunikasi Pemerintahan Kabupaten dan Kota se-Provinsi NAD – Forum KKA).

Left: The Vice-Governor Muhammad Nazar, Bupati of Bireun Nurdin Abdul Rahman (the Current Coordinator of Forum KKA), Bupati of Pidie Mirza Ismail, and Bupati of Aceh Tenggara Hassanuddin Beru at the Founding Conference of Forum KKA.





idea was the most advantageous approach to represent their Aceh specific interests in their unique post-conflict and special autonomy context. The consensus reached in the working conference in July 2007 was to establish a NAD Province-based communication forum that could fully represent the Aceh local government idiosyncracies while extending cooperation with the national LGAs.

The political dynamics of Aceh also influenced the formation of the organization. First, there has been a debate on the question of establishing two new provinces in the West Coast and the midlands. In

In its statutes, the Forum KKA stated that the organization intended to support and accelerate the implementation of the Aceh Government Act (Law No. 11/2006) and create space for the sustainability of peace in Aceh. The Forum KKA also pledged to act as a medium for its member districts and cities in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam to carry out advocacy programs in their respective interests to the provincial and central government, to improve internal cooperation among them and to empower its members. The Forum KKA also prioritized facilitating external cooperation with districts and cities outside NAD Province.

order to balance geographic representation, it was agreed that the Board should equally represent the geographic elements (North, East Coast, West Coast, and Centre). Secondly, an agreement was made to balance representation in the Leadership Board to include both types of local governments (cities, or Kotas and districts, or Kabupatens), and both types of governance bodies (executive and legislative) in the membership combination.

Key Forum KKA Initiatives

Since the founding of the Forum KKA, several major initiatives have been undertaken.

Advocacy around the Special Autonomy Fund

One of the priority initiatives of the Forum during this period has been the advocacy of effective transfer modalities for the Special Autonomy Fund and additional Shared Earning Fund (SEF) from the Provincial Government to Aceh Kabupatens/Kotas.

The Forum KKA Secretariat implemented a range of activities related to SAF & SEF. Research was conducted

Towards the establishment of the Forum KKA

The majority of newly elected Bupatis/Mayors following the 2007 local elections in Aceh were not familiar with local government associations and the constructive and facilitative role such associations could play. They were did not fully appreciate the benefits of creating a local government association in Aceh.

The ADKASI and APKASI chapters in Aceh, the joint-secretariat of APEKSI & ADEKSI originally wanted to strengthen their respective representation arms in Aceh. However, the majority of newly elected Bupatis/Mayors did not think that the



FORUM KKA

Forum Komunikasi Pemerintahan Kabupaten dan Kota se-Provinsi NAD





Workshop on Government Procurement Mechanism, mid-December 2008

in selected districts, representing the four regions of Aceh, to understand and compile the perspectives from diversified Forum KKA members. The Forum KKA's Board of Leadership endorsed the findings and recommendations, awareness was raised among Forum members through a series of regional meetings.

The recommendations were then advocated to the Provincial Government. The Forum KKA's Coordinator, members of the Board of Leadership and the Forum's Executive Secretary held meetings with the Governor, Vice-Governor and other provincial government leaders such as the Provincial Secretary, Heads of Provincial Dinas and representatives of the Legislation Bureau of NAD province. This effort has resulted in some critical adjustments in the Governor Regulation no 32 which concerns the implementation of projects funded by the Special Autonomy Fund.

Establishment of a Committee on Local Government Finances

In order to speed up the development of Aceh and harmonize cooperation among different levels of government in Aceh, the Forum KKA formed a Committee on Local Government Finances. The members of the committee include the Bupati (Deputy Bupati), Mayor (Deputy Mayor) and Speaker (Deputy Speaker) of 13 kabupatens/kotas. The purpose of this committee is to discuss the policy of SAF & SEF and to reflect on the views of Forum KKA's members for the adoption of a common SAF & SEF policy to advance advocacy in this area. This committee is supported by a technical team made up of high level local government officers from six districts/cities in Aceh. The main function of this technical team is to assist the Committee on Local Government Finances by providing them technical information on the specific needs of Kabupatens/Kotas on the issues of local government finance.

Member Outreach

The Forum KKA Secretariat also conducted outreach activities with its members in four regions of Aceh to identify their needs and raise awareness on the role the Forum can play to assist and serve them. During these activities, the Secretariat provided

members with tools and methodologies for identifying and prioritizing issues and needs of districts/cities, and helped them better articulate those as points of advocacy with the Provincial Government. In other words, instead of districts or cities sending their respective requests individually to the Province, the Forum KKA has been effective and efficient in "pooling" common Kabupatens/Kotas development challenges and needs together and conveying them to the Provincial Government.

Information Dissemination and Capacity Building

Other initiatives that have been conducted by the Forum KKA in the past year include the dissemination of information and some capacity building.

The Forum KKA has facilitated the exchange of information through various channels, including through the regular publication of its newsletter and bulletin. The newsletter has become a vehicle for the Forum KKA to inform its members on the organization's current, past and future activities. Through this communication product members can also contribute ideas and suggestions.

The Forum KKA Secretariat also engaged in a process to determine how to support its members on issues of government procurement. Following a series of initial consultations, the Secretariat set up a plan to cooperate with BADAN DIKLAT of NAD Province and LKPP office to provide training on government procurement for local government staff.

Achievements

- The Forum KKA has helped develop stronger relationships and improve communication among districts and cities through several initiatives. Voices of Forum KKA's members are better articulated and conveyed to the Provincial Government through the

organization. A strong inter-governmental relationship has now been established between Kotas/Kabupatens in Aceh and the Provincial Government, demonstrated through a series of *tête-à-tête* technical meetings between the provincial government and the Forum KKA. In these meetings, the provincial government has sent its heads of agencies to discuss issues of importance with the Forum KKA Secretariat. The awareness raising activities, Committee meetings, and Technical Team meetings have also built the capacity of Forum KKA members.

- On the advocacy for SAF & SEF, Forum KKA has succeeded in influencing the provincial government to ensure that the management of the implementation of SAF & SEF should be conducted at the District and City level, starting in 2009, and continuing onwards. The Forum KKA has also demonstrated remarkable achievements in enhancing inter-governmental relationships with the province by signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of the SAF & SEF.
- The Secretariat has also established an agreement to cooperate with National LGAs to share best practices on public service delivery within Aceh. Discussions are on-going to determine the role the Forum can play to provide orientations and training to newly elected parliament members after the 2009 election in Aceh.
- The Forum KKA has also planned exchanges with the Ministry of Home Affairs on issues pertaining to the operation of local government associations, the collection of member dues, local government authority over various responsibilities, et cetera.

Success Factors

At the national level, four local government associations already exist and have variable forms for local representation. They are: APKASI, APEKSI, ADKASI & ADEKSI.

Forum KKA is a unique model of local government association for Indonesia. The members of the Forum KKA consist of district and city governments of NAD province as well as their respective legislative bodies. The Board of Leadership of the Forum KKA is composed of 13 members. Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Regents, Deputy Regents and Speakers, or Deputy Speakers are represented. According to the Forum's statute, regents, vice-mayors, and speakers can fill the positions of Coordinator and Deputy Coordinators. The Forum KKA is the first ever local government association in Indonesia that comprises members from districts and cities representing the executive branches and legislatures.

The Forum KKA is the only organization of Kotas/Kabupatens that exists at the provincial level in Indonesia. The Forum KKA felt that bringing these

two elements together as members of the same local government association was imperative because all local governments in Aceh face similar development challenges. It is thought that if the executive branches and legislatures of local governments in Aceh work together on common issues, it will help strengthen the frequently confrontational relationship among legislative and executive branches.

Challenges

The Forum KKA has faced several challenges. While the members of the Leadership Board have the experience and know-how on how to balance their functions and tasks in managing their regular local government affairs, setting up an appropriate organization for the Forum KKA still has been difficult. However, technical assistance provided by CALGAP on these issues has been used to specifically strengthen board members' capacities in these areas.

Lack of adequate human resources to support and follow-up on the activities of the Forum KKA with members has also been seen as a challenge. The function of policy analysis and formulation requires highly qualified and experienced personnel who may be difficult to recruit under the current financial conditions of the Forum. The Forum KKA must recruit top quality personnel to play an effective leadership role in the sector.

Making communication more effective between board members and the Forum KKA local government members is also a work in progress. The Forum continues to do outreach activities to educate members and identify needs so that the organization more accurately represents each regional base in Aceh.

In the long term, the financial sustainability of the Forum KKA will depend on members paying their dues as well as the organization's ability to generate revenues from other sources such as trainings, grants, etc.

One of the external challenges for the Forum KKA is to reconcile the divide between "GAM & GAM-related" elected officials and elected executive and legislative officials with perceived "nationalist" inclinations. The



Leaders of districts and cities in the discussion on the Special Autonomy Fund and Shared Earning Fund.

April 2009 elections for cities and districts' legislatures will likely intensify these tensions, at least during the campaign period.

Further Actual and Potential Benefits of the Forum

Enhanced and Efficient Communication with NAD Province

The Forum KKA constitutes a unique channel for dialogue between cities and districts and NAD Provincial government. Instead of communicating individually with each district and city, the province can now directly communicate with the Forum KKA to discuss development needs common to all.

United Cities and Districts Can Play a Role to Advocate Effective Policy and Programs

Based on their experience and implementation realities, districts and cities can provide valuable input to help develop effective policies, enhancing the synergies among the efforts of both cities/districts and provincial government.

Local Government Associations from Other Countries have Experiences that are Relevant to Indonesia

Other local government associations around the world provide a rich set of experiences relevant to Indonesia and that can inspire the development of new models of

intergovernmental cooperation for city/district, provincial, and national levels of government in Indonesia. The Forum KKA, inspired by international counterparts from Asia and around the world, offers a new paradigm for local government association activities in Indonesia.

Members from Executive and Legislative Branches Have Much in Common

Although the functions of executive and legislative branches differ in nature, both work towards effective local governance and the delivery of quality services to citizens. For the purpose of advocating effective policies and programs for local governments, the complementarities in their perspectives add strength to their positions.

Potential for Replication

There is potential for the Forum KKA model to be replicated in other provinces in Indonesia. As stated in the Autonomy Law (Law No. 32/2004) and the Government Regulation on the Authority of Kabupatens/Kotas (No 38/2007), districts and cities are permitted to develop local government associations in every province. Aceh should be considered a special case in which the post-conflict and post-tsunami environment has provided Kabupaten/Kotas a unique opportunity to organize themselves in an innovative, new organization, in order to better respond to the needs of the citizens of Aceh.

Notes

A. Two main bodies of Forum KKA:

1. Board of Leadership (13 members):
Coordinator & two Deputy Coordinators
2. Secretariat of Forum KKA: Executive Secretary and staffs

B. Abbreviation:

1. CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency)
2. FCM (Federation of Canadian Municipalities)
3. CALGAP (Canada/Aceh Local Government Assistance Program)
4. BRR Aceh – Nias (Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi)/Agency for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction for Aceh and Nias
5. DIKLAT (Pendidikan dan Latihan)/Training and Education
6. LKPP (Lembaga Kebijakan Pengadaan Barang dan Jasa Pemerintah)

C. Four regions base:

1. West-South Coast region: Aceh Jaya, Aceh

Barat, Aceh Barat Daya, Nagan Raya, Aceh Selatan, Aceh Singkil and Simeulu;

2. Central-Southeast region: Aceh Tenggara, Aceh Tengah, Gayo Luwes & Bener Meriah;
3. East-North Region: Aceh Besar, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Bireuen, Aceh Utara, Aceh Timur and Aceh Tamian; and
4. City region: Sabang, Banda Aceh, Lhoksumawe, Langsa & Subulussalam

D. Four National Local Government Associations located in Jakarta:

1. APKASI (Asosiasi Pemerintahan Kabupaten Seluruh Indonesia)/ Association of Indonesian District Governments;
2. APEKSI (Asosiasi Pemerintahan Kota Seluruh Indonesia)/ Association of Indonesian Municipalities;
3. ADKASI (Asosiasi DPRD Kabupaten Seluruh Indonesia)/ Indonesian District Parliament Association (ADKASI), and;
4. ADEKSI (Asosiasi DPRD Kota Seluruh Indonesia)/Indonesian Municipal Councils

Testimonials



"The presence of Forum KKA hopefully can boost the harmonious relationship among legislative and executive so that the development implementation in every districts and cities can be run smoothly." - Mrs. Illiza Sa'aduddin Jamal, Vice-Mayor of Banda Aceh, speech in the SAF & SEF Workshop, June 23, 2008.



"The formation of Forum KKA should benefit, contribute and provide a trickle down effect for the people of Aceh. The challenge of the Forum will be to solve regencies and cities' problems with a realistic program." - Vice-Governor of NAD Province, Mr. M. Nazar, speech in the inauguration of the Forum KKA Secretariat Office, June 24, 2008.



"We hope that the Forum can be as a centre that will be capable of sharing information among members which will facilitate the attainment of common agreement regarding development issues related to Aceh's development." - Mr. Nurdin Abdul Rahman, Bupati of Bireuen, speech in the inauguration of the Forum KKA secretariat office, June 24, 2008.

"From the perspective of effectiveness of advocacy, especially when Forum KKA advocates its members' needs to both Province and National Government, the advocacy will be sound and solid. Because what Forum KKA brings to them is not just voice of one or two districts but it is 23 districts and cities in Aceh. Therefore from now on both provincial and national government cannot neglect the voice Forum KKA which reflects the districts and cities' interests and needs." - Mr. Aidil Fan, Deputy Speaker of Langsa City, interviewed in the Socialization of Forum KKA and Advocacy Program of SAF & SEF, Langsa, August 9, 2008.

"I hope this organization, Forum KKA, can facilitate the interest of districts and cities, especially related to the use of the SAF & SEF funds to the benefit of its members." - Mr. Nasrudin, Regent of Aceh Tengah, during the the Socialization of Forum KKA and Advocacy Program of SAF & SEF, Takengon, September 21, 2008.

"I see this organization can help a lot districts and cities in breaking up the development problems that districts and cities face. For instance, Forum KKA, in the future can be the organization that pools the districts and cities' potential in terms of their natural resources and other economic potency, to be shared to other third parties. Besides that Forum KKA could also be as a resource organization in aiming to improve the capacity of local government staff" - Mr. Sufiansyah, Deputy Speaker of Aceh Besar, during the 3rd of Board Leadership Meeting, Medan, October 26, 2008.

"Forum KKA is the organization of districts and cities in Aceh, represented by Bupati (Deputy Bupati), Walikota (Deputy Walikota) and Speaker (Deputy Speaker). It's aiming to make Aceh better by cooperating and sharing its potential so that the fruits of development can be gained in order to lift up the dignity and prosperity of Aceh people" - Mr. M. Ramli, Regent of Aceh Barat, during the Socialization of Forum KKA and Advocacy Program of SAF & SEF, Melabouh, November 9, 2008.



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This publication was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

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