Acknowledging the use right of women crab collectors over customary land use changes: A case study in Merauke, Papua-Indonesia.

BY:

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Merauke contributes 25% of total mangrove in Papua and Mangrove in Papua contributes to 40% of Mangrove forest in Indonesia → 10% of mangrove in Indonesia are in Merauke

Coastal community depends on resources in mangrove forests

Especially Women feed the family from resources from mangrove forest

Rapid Changes of Land use, including mangrove forest, over development in Merauke
The terrestrial area: 14.67% of total Papua Province land is the largest area of district in Papua Province.

- 20 sub districts and 168 villages
- Population: 216,585 people (112,194 males and 104,391 females) (BPS Merauke 2016)
- 9.08% of productive age are unemployed (BPS Merauke 2016).
- 11.10% of total population live below poverty line (BPS Merauke 2016).
- Around 9.86% of total population live without electricity, 54.04% of total population have no access to drinking water (WFP 2015).
- Economic growth: 7.04% (BPS Merauke 2016).
- Expenditure per capita per month in rural area Merauke is Rp 768,586 (about US$52)
Mangroves in Merauke

- The area of primary mangrove and wetland forests in Merauke is slowly decreasing from 1990, 2000 and 2010.
- This conversion has changed primary mangrove forest and wetland forest, from being net sinks to net sources of carbon.
- The decreasing areas of primary mangrove and wetland forest from 2000 to 2010 contributes to 47,299,610.34 ton CO2 e.
- Mangrove forest are mostly used by women, gathering craft material, bag noken, food, fishing grounds and washing areas along the river.

Source: Prasetyo et al 2012
Women in General in Merauke

- 48% of total population in Merauke (BPS Merauke 2016)
- The participation of women in education
  - basic education is about the same with male participation
  - Senior high school is 47% while male participation is at 53% (AIPD 2014).
- The literacy rate:
  - Women: 85.14%
  - men is 97.64%. (AIPD 2014).
- 50% of women experience domestic violence (AIPD 2014) – an issue that has yet to be strategically solved.
- Responsible to food security of the family
Women crab collectors: Who?

- Ethnic: Asmat & Mappi
- 10 people of Asmat and 10 people of Mappi were identified as crab collectors
- Where are their houses? Maro and Samkai, Merauke
- Gathered crabs in mangrove forest for selling and food
Methods

- In depth interview with:
  - four women crab collectors
  - Sellers
  - Customary leaders in Merauke district, Indonesia
- Observation
- Collected in 2017 and early 2018
Practices in Collecting crab

- Equipment: iron stick, axe, sacks
- Material to pack the crab: banana tree sheaths, ropes from trees
- Distance to crab collection:
  - How to go there: on foot (asmat 2-3 hours, Mappi 4-5 hours), rent a pick up car, rent a boat
  - Cost of pick up car rent: Rp 200,000/people/trip
  - Duration of crab collection: 3 nights
- No payment to land owner
- These women have access and can benefit of mangrove forests but no ownership
Sell to traders
Send to Jakarta/Surabaya
Sell by the road/market
Consumers in Merauke
Crab location

Source: Seanet, 2017
Economic benefits:

- Source of income and food
- Abundant and bigger size during rainy season and high tide but difficult to access
- Mappi: around 10 big size and smaller size a lot: total 40 crabs/trip
- Asmat: 20 crabs and mostly small size, sold at Rp 15,000/kg
- Sold to collectors: big size: Rp 30,000-50,000/crab
- Sold by the road
- What is the money for:
  - Buying rice
  - Drinking water
  - Transportation
  - Children needs
Improving practices through Seanet project intervention:

Using trap instead of iron stick

Experienced benefits with new practice:
- No broken claws
- Only bigger size trapped
- Crab lives longer
- Better price
- No need to dig
- Less dirty
- No need to bring cloth changes
Concern:
- The area of crab collection is far from home
- Trap should be left and collect again after several hours
- If they have to go forth and back again, then, increase cost
- Who would watch the trap from being stolen/destroyed?
- The area of crab doesn’t belong to us so we can’t leave our belonging on the land, including the trap.
- The main concern is we go further and further to catch crab.
Concern:

- 10 km of mangrove forest along the Kamahedoga
- 20 ha had changed to private sea port, boat anchored,
- more hectares for government offices
- replanted mangroves, destroyed due to the owners of the communal land sold the land to a fishing trader to build a seaport
Challenges

- Livelihood security is an issue
- The crab collector has no ownership over the land, mangrove forests.
- The crab collectors, Asmat and Mappi people, have access and benefit rights
- *Hak ulayat* belongs to Marind People
- No discussion when the entitled right owner over the communal land (*hak ulayat*) transfer the land use
Women & Customary system in Marind, Merauke

- There are 5 big ethnics in Merauke:
  - Marind
  - Mayu
  - Mandobo
  - Mappi
  - Asmat
- Marind is the majority of holding the communal rights over the land
- Mappi and Asmat have no communal rights over the land in Merauke
- Mappi and Asmat have “hak anim” rights to access and benefit from the resources

- 3 important things in Customary institution:
  - The customary leader
  - The leader of the customary institution
  - The leader of sub ethnics, marga.
- Women position is the wife of customary leader
- Women’s roles are:
  - To support domestic matters of customary leader
  - Provide inputs to customary leader
- Women have no position in the customary governance,
- Women are excluded from decision making process
**Conclusion**

- Mangrove and wet land forests are important source of food for Asmat and Mappi People
- Tenure loss would increase the likelihood of food insecurity and poverty among these marginalized communities
- Having “hak anim” doesn’t secure the livelihoods of crab collectors
- No place for use right in the discussion of land transferred, no discussion, no prior informed concern, not involved in the decision making process, no compensation
- Who will protect the use and benefit rights over the collective property?
- Governance bodies that do not include the use rights of women will be ineffective as not all users are taken into consideration.
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