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“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

Maintaining and restoring sustainable food systems on indigenous people’s lands through social forestry in Indonesia

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Abstract

Over 1.6 billion people worldwide – or about 20% of the world’s total population in 2023 rely on forest resources for their livelihoods, primarily in securing water, food and fuel. Some 70 million of global population -including many Indigenous communities- even define forests as their home. In line with this, decentralisation of forest management has become the core of a rights-based approach that guarantees community access to forest resources, which has led to the Community-based Forestry (CBF) regimes, particularly in the Global South. CBF has been identified as a way to strengthen the rights of local communities to actively participate and gain multiple social and environmental co-benefits from forest management, such as poverty alleviation and reduced deforestation. In Indonesia, this CBF management mainly known as Social Forestry (SF) scheme. It is defined as a system of sustainable forest management implemented in state forest areas, or forest rights or customary forests implemented by local communities or customary law communities as the main actors to improve their welfare, environmental balance, and social cultural dynamics in the form of village forests, community forests, community plantation forests, customary forests, and forestry partnerships. Through a set of field observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion involving important customary institutions and direct forest users, this research will focuses on studying how indigenous peoples, as one of the vulnerable groups, can take advantage of the SF scheme, in particular to maintain and restoring sustainable food systems on the customary land. This research address how the indigenous people using their local values that have been embedded in their daily life for generations, from the rules to prohibitions in their traditional agriculture to secure the land, air, water, soil and culturally important plant, animal and fungi species that have sustained Indigenous peoples over thousands of years. All parts of this indigenous food systems are inseparable and ideally function in healthy interdependent relationships to transfer energy through the present day agriculture based economy that contribute in strengthening the sustainable food system.

Keywords: Community development, community-based forestry