

## Civil Society and the Struggle for Food Sovereignty in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Indonesia is a portrait of irony. Despite its tropical climate, abundant rainfall and fertile soil, it is one of the biggest food-importing countries. This reality urges many Civil Society Organizations (CSO) to fight for the so called “food sovereignty”. We found that although they have been promoted food sovereignty at least for 17 years (since post-authoritarian era of Soeharto), still the issue merely part of the rhetoric of Indonesian government. By conducting in-depth interviews with 5 CSOs and doing literature research, we found the power of big food corporations over the government is bigger than the CSOs’ influence and the CSOs still have not developed a detailed, concrete, scalable and accredited proposal yet to be submitted to all level of agricultural programme executors, mainly the local governments.

**Key words:** Food security, food sovereignty, land reform, civil society organizations, Indonesia

### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agricultural country with fertile soil; it was one of the world's fifth largest states producers of rice, sugar, tea, tobacco, vanilla, spinach, pineapple, rubber, coconut, palm kernel, palm oil, coffee, greens, cocoa bean, cloves and cassava (FAO, 2015). Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), this country had to meet 65% of its food needs through imports. It is because the agricultural products contributing greatly to the skyrocketing agricultural exports are plantation crops, not food. The producers are agro-corporations, not small-scale farmers. In the first semester of 2015, this country spent US \$3.5 billion only for rice, corn, soybean, wheat, flour, sugar, raw sugar and salt (Detik Finance, 2015).

The following Table 1 is showing the export-import values of some foodstuffs in Indonesia through 2014 (the latest official data published online by the Ministry of Agriculture). It is seen that all the imported foodstuffs can be planted in Indonesia because they are exported too.

The reason for importing the foodstuffs usually is the lackness of domestic supply. But, what happens in Indonesia is not that simple. The government still allows the imported foodstuffs come to the market even when the local farmers are harvesting. As a result, the market price falls and causes losses to the local farmers because their cost of production is above the selling price. The dependency to imported food makes this country vulnerable to international price shocks (Jhamtani, 2008). The price of imported food is not always low for quite

Table 1: Export-import values of foodstuffs in Indonesia

| Commodities   | Value (US \$000) |           |            |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|------------|
|               | Export           | Import    | Balance    |
| Wheat, meslin | 206,174          | 7,658,856 | -7,452,681 |
| Rice          | 49,932           | 2,509,682 | -2,465,750 |
| Soybean       | 44,210           | 3,367,977 | -3,323,767 |
| Corn          | 10,047           | 854,044   | -837,997   |
| Casava        | 35,985           | 160,491   | -124,506   |
| Ground Nut    | 15,527           | 287,683   | -272,156   |
| Sweet potato  | 8,371            | 40        | 8,331      |
| Potato        | 6,089            | 82,812    | -76,724    |
| Shallot       | 2,978            | 28,309    | -25,331    |
| Garlic        | 3,342            | 364,879   | -361,536   |
| Onion         | 2,076            | 48,390    | -46,314    |
| Chilli pepper | 25,662           | 30,981    | -5,319     |
| Manggo        | 1,801            | 582       | 1,218      |
| Orange        | 1,040            | 202,399   | -201,360   |
| Grapes        | 1,563            | 159,939   | -201,938   |

Center for data dan information (pusdatin) ministry of Agriculture, 2015

dependent on the fluctuation of the rate US Dollars. Global food-prices trend shows that it will continue to rise until 120-180% in 2030. The World Bank stated that the drastic increase in food prices in 2011 have led lives of 44 million people fell below the poverty line (World Bank, 2013).

According to Indonesian Statistic (March 2015), food is the highest contributor to inflation in Indonesia. The high food price decreases the purchasing power of the people and increases the inflation rate. Between September 2014 and March 2015, the poverty rate rose by 4,03% and the most affected class is rural people, mostly peasant (Indonesian Statistic, March 2015, quoted by Kompas, 2015). This situation significantly triggers the reduction in the number of farmers. Consequently, there is a vicious circle: the government has to import the

foodstuffs since the domestic production is not sufficient; nevertheless, the imported food causes the farmers poorer and forces them to stop farming.

In the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2014), the government had done many efforts to boost food production but it failed since during his reign, the percentage of imported food continued to rise. Total amount of imported foodstuffs in Indonesia (includes rice, wheat, sugar, soybeans, corn, milk, fruits, vegetables, beef, salt, potatoes, cooking oil, etc.) has increase to 60.03% ini 2014 compared to 2014.

During this period, many civil society organizations had criticized the government's food policy and even arranged mass protests in the streets of Jakarta They offered 'food sovereignty' concept as the way to solve the food insecurity problem in Indonesia butthe administration, however, did not give any satisfactory responses (According to Indonesian Statistic, on average, there are 500,000 of a farmers in Indonesia who quit farming every years between 2003-2013. In those period, the number of Indonesian farmers declined from 31-26 million (Detik Finance, 2013).

The 2014 presidential election provided a new democratic experience for Indonesians. Public participation in this election was very intense. The victory of President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo was supported by the activities of civil society that was very massive and spontaneous, especially through the internet. Many civil society organizations (hereinafter abbreviated "CSOs") institutions formed various types of coalitions to convey their concerns to Mr. Jokowi, not least the coalition of civil society organizations that fight for food sovereignty. They formed "Seknas Tani Jokowi" (National Secretariate of Farmers for Jokowi Presidency) in Jakarta, on May 27, 2014 (two months before the presidential election). In a relatively short time, farmer organizations in many provinces in Indonesia also declared 'Seknas Tani Jokowi' to encourage farmers to vote for this so-called pro-farmers candidate. The initiator of this movement, Henry Saragih (the chief of a prominent CSO "Serikat Petani Indonesia" and a life-time fighter for food sovereignty) was very optimistic.

"Jokowi has nine priority agendas called Nawa Cita (one of them is) for achieving food sovereignty, namely agrarian reform by distributing land for farmers and farm workers (land reform). There are 9 million ha of land that will be distributed, so it will escalate the access of land for small-scale farmers from average 0.3-2 ha. He will also open 1 million hectares dry farming area in the outside of Java and Bali Island," said Saragih explaining the reason why farmers should vote for Jokowi.

In his campaign, Jokowi has promised to control the importation of foodstuffs, purge the food-mafia, protect the food agriculture, accelerate the implementation of food sovereignty and establish 1,000 "seed-sovereignty" villages by 2019 (Kompas, 2016). All these promises are the same issues that have been voiced for a dozen years by the CSOs.

Now, 2 years after the reign of Jokowi, how far the concept of food sovereignty as promised in his election campaign has been implemented. This study seeks to answer this question through interviews with the CSOs activists who have been fighting for the implementation of food sovereignty in Indonesia.

This study advances two major propositions. First, the CSOs' power is still inferior in the face of the elites, big food corporations and international financial institutions that promote 'food security' instead of 'food sovereignty'. These big food corporations and financial institutions endorse the structural adjustment programmes and free trade policies which are much related to food security (Gimenez and Peabody, 2008). Indonesia is still highly dependent on those international financial institutions and relies on big food corporations' investments to boost its economic growth; the consequence of which it is prone to power subordination.

Second, despite the success of CSOs in advocating food sovereignty into the agenda of the national government, they do not have any legal tool to ensure its implementations. So, whatever included in the Nawa Cita, the business remains "back to the old days". It is happening because the framework of food sovereignty is still evolving and the proponents of this concept have not developed policy proposals yet.

The researchers believe that the elucidation of their efforts to endorse food sovereignty, their success in incorporating the issue of food sovereignty into the campaign agenda of Jokowi, as well as the challenges they face in guarding the fulfillment of this promise will give contribution to food policy studies, especially in Asian developing countries. The findings in this paper are primarily based on in-depth interviews with food sovereignty activists of 5 CSOs in Jakarta.

## **TWO CONTENDING CONCEPTS: FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY**

The definition of food security was first declared in the World Food Conference that was held in Rome in 1974 following the global food crisis occurring in the early 1970's. It was stated, "Food security is availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic food stuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and

to offset fluctuations in production and prices.” In response to global food crisis in 1980's, the definition was expanded and linked to three specific goals: adequacy of food supplies, stability in food supplies and markets and security of access to supplies (FAO, 1997). The FAO in the document published in 2008 explained that “food availability addresses the ‘supply side’ of food security and is determined by the level of food production, stock levels and net trade”.

In 1996 the World Food Summit was held in Rome, developing the definition as follows: “Food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” Further, the Summit stated, “We agree that trade is a key element in achieving food security. We agree to pursue food trade and overall trade policies that will encourage our producers and consumers to utilize available resources in an economically sound and sustainable manner” (FAO, 2008).

Both documents show that food security is closely associated with the world's food trade system. Accordingly, the effort to achieve the food security in developing countries is directed towards integration with the global trading system, for example through the planting of export-oriented crops as well as the introduction of the banking system to the farmers for agricultural finance. In other words, food security is seen as a condition that can be achieved by opening the markets and liberating the agricultural sector so that the food shortages in a country can be met by imports from other surplus countries.

The concept of food security is endorsed by many international organizations under the UN, such as FAO, WFP, IFAD, WTO, World Bank and the IMF. For example, when the IMF gave loans to Indonesia following the Asian financial crisis, the government had the obligation to implement Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), such as the removal of subsidies on agriculture and fuels, integrating the agricultural sector into international market and economic deregulation. Such policies give negative effects towards food security in Indonesia and it also happens in other developing countries in Africa. African countries was self-sufficient in food production, but now became net food importers. Akinliye wrote that “economic deregulation in Nigeria has in a very short time brought about a reduction in household income levels” and this condition declines the people's ability to access the food and causes food insecurity in Nigeria.

However, food availability is not always correlated with the reduction in world hunger. There is a gap between food availability and capability to access the

food. FAO (2015) show that global agricultural production had exceeded the population growth so that the average of food availability per capita had increased. But, in 2015, FAO reported that based on the latest estimate, about 795 million people remain undernourished globally.

These conditions have been predicted by La Via Campesina, an international peasant-led farmer federation, a coalition of CSOs from 150 rural social movements from over 70 countries in the world, the member of which consists of farmers, peoples without land, rural women, rural youth, indigenous people and agricultural workers. Since its creation in 1993, it is predicted that the food system based on food security concept is a market-based approach that merely gives big profit to food corporations because, supported by huge funds and high technology, they are capable of producing large-scale foods and exporting them to the rest of the world. La Via Campesina introduced the concept of food sovereignty for the first time in the World Food Summit in 1996.

The international food trade is now dominated by transnational corporations (TNCs) such as Monsanto, ADM, Bunge, Cargill and Dreyfus. ADM, Bunge, Cargill and Dreyfus known as ABCD control about 75-90% of the trade of grains (wheat, corn, etc.) in the world (The Guardian, June 2, 2011). As a result, the price of the food consumed by the Third World people becomes dependent on the conditions of food producing countries. For example, in 2008, the drought in the US and Europe created a skyrocketing food price in many food importing countries.

The concept of food sovereignty is an alternative for food security. While food security emphasizes the ability of the state to supply food for the citizens, in any way, from anywhere, food sovereignty promotes the country's ability to produce its own food. Food sovereignty concept provides a number of recommendations as follows:

- Agricultural production should focus on local production for local consumption
- Smallholder farmers and landless people should be afforded better access to land, water, seeds and livestock
- Farmers should be protected from patents on seeds, livestock breeds and genes
- Common resources such as water should be considered public goods that are distributed equitably
- Land reform in which land distribution is equitable
- Smallholder farmers are allowed to decide what they consume and how and by whom what they consume is produced

- Countries have right to protect themselves from under-priced agricultural and food imports, as well as the elimination of all forms of dumping
- Farmers and specifically female farmers, need more avenues to participate in local agricultural policy decision-making

**The struggle for food sovereignty:** President of Indonesia in the period of 2004-2015, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, did use “food sovereignty” term in his presidential election campaign; nevertheless the concept used by his administration was, in fact, food security. This was reflected in the Food Act No.7 of 1996 that adapts the FAO definition of food security, yet uses the Indonesian term of “ketahanan pangan” (which literally means “food resilience” in English). In 2012, thanks to the advocacy of CSOs, Indonesian Parliament finally passed the Food Act No. 18 of 2012, that combines four concepts at once: food security (as reflected by the term ‘ketahanan pangan’ or ‘food resilience’), food sovereignty, food safety and food independency. The use of the two paradigmatically contrary terms (food security and food sovereignty) obviously raises questions:

The inclusion of the term ‘food sovereignty’ into the law is the result of the CSOs advocacy to the government over the years. It could be considered as a great success of CSOs struggle to put a new paradigm to the official agenda of the government. To be realistic, however, there were so many interests and the legislature was forced to accommodate them by using the four terms at once (Interview, People Coalition of Food Sovereignty (KRKP) activist, September 23, 2014)

However, the implementation of this Act required a Presidential Decree, Government Regulations and Local Regulations. By the end of his term, President Yudhoyono had not issued the Presidential Decree. Instead, on April 23, 2014, Mr. Yudhoyono inconsistently issued Presidential Decree Number 39 of 2014 on foreign investment, stating that some of business sectors, including agricultural sector was opened for foreign capital ownership until 95%. It states that agricultural sector is one of business sectors opened for 35-95% foreign capital ownership. Many CSOs consider this decree as a setback in efforts to achieve food sovereignty (interview, Bina Desa activist, August 10, 2014).

During the 10 years of Mr. Yudhoyono’s administration, CSOs had made many efforts to advocate food sovereignty to the central government while strengthening the capacity of small-scale farmers. The

following section is the description of what have been done by CSOs during the Presiden Yudhoyono’s term and its continuities in Jokowi's first year, based on in-depth interviews with 5 CSOs. The selection of CSO was conducted randomly based on the news appearing in the media in 2014-2015. Each CSO defines its own objectives but all has relation with the struggle for food sovereignty (Table 2). All informants support food sovereignty, but there are differences in the perception of the link between food sovereignty and political economy.

There are four main concerns of food sovereignty concept, i.e., agrarian reform, endorsing small-scale agriculture and fighting against food estate, promoting natural farming (agroecology) and struggling against food-trade liberalization. We will address two of these four issues.

**Agrarian reform:** The food sovereignty defenders argue that inability of local agriculture to provide sufficient food for themselves and the community is due to the lack of land that they own. According to KPA (2013), the population number of smallholder farmers (farmer with 0.25 ha of land) in Indonesia reached 54.5% from the total farmer households. This is much smaller than the land area allocated or used for a large-scale (corporate) agriculture which is about 60% of the total agricultural land, i.e., 36 million ha (Bernstein and Dianto, 2014). In Java, the centre of rice and vegetable production in Indonesia, the largest concentration of land tenure is dominated by large industrial plantations and forest industry.

The main effort done by CSOs in this issue is advocacy. CSOs consider the only solution to this problem is land reform or the distribution of state-owned land for small-scale farmers. Indonesia has stipulated a law on land reform since 1960 (Undang-Undang Pokok Agraria No. 5/1960) which laid the foundations for the preparation of the land distribution based on justice. This law was drafted in the era of President Sukarno and was not implemented by the authoritarian successor, President Soeharto. The political conditions in the period of the New Order (1965-1998) were so repressive and militaristic that it did not provide much opportunity for civil society to demand for the implementation of the law. During this period, many cases of land grabbing by the state and corporations had occurred.

In the post-Soeharto era or after the democratic transition in 1998, the atmosphere of democracy was open widely, so that CSOs can move more aggressively to strive for the land reform. They formed a coalition of dozens of CSOs to endorse the adoption of the land reform issue in the Decree of the Highest Representatives Assembly. They made the draft for the decree and

Table 2: The short description of profile and activities of each interviewed CSOs

| Name of CSO (in alphabetical order)   | Profile   | Main Activities  |
|---|---|--|
| Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria-Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA)                         | KPA is a consortium; the members are 173 civil society organizations. It was founded on September 24, 1994 in Jakarta. Its area of activity is throughout Indonesia. <a href="http://www.kpa.or.id">http://www.kpa.or.id</a>                                    | Fighting for agrarian reform through advocacy and education  |
| Bina Desa Sadajiwa Foundation (Bina Desa = fostering the village)                     | Bina Desa is a national NGO, founded in 1973. Its area of activity is throughout Indonesia, the headquarter is in Jakarta. <a href="http://binadesa.co">http://binadesa.co</a>  | Endorsing and educating the small-scale farmers to do ecofarming with the community-based organizing method undertaking ecofarming education; organizing political education for farmers so they know their rights and how to fight for these rights; advocating the farmers |
| Serikat Petani Indonesia-Indonesian farmers union (SPI)                               | SPI was formed on July, 1998, in North Sumatra. Since 2003, it has become a national NGO and the head quarter has moved to Jakarta. Its area of activity is throughout Indonesia <a href="http://www.spi.or.id">http://www.spi.or.id</a>                        | KRKP is intended as a medium for sharing experiences and cooperation for mutual and support and synergizing the various efforts made by each participant in order to fight for food sovereignty  |
| Koalisi Rakyat untuk Kedaulatan Pangan-people's coalition for food sovereignty (KRKP) | KRKP is a coalition of farmer organizations and NGOs. It was formed in February 2003 in Bogor. Its area of activity is throughout Indonesia and the headquarter is in Bogor (West Java) <a href="http://kedaulatanpangan.net/">http://kedaulatanpangan.net/</a> | KRKP is intended as a medium for sharing experiences and cooperation for mutual and support and synergizing the various efforts made by each participant in order to fight for food sovereignty  |
| Farmer Initiatives for Ecological Literacy and Democracy (Field Indonesia)            | FIELD was founded in 2001 by the alumni of FAO technical-assistance-team programmes <a href="http://field-indonesia.or.id">http://field-indonesia.or.id</a>   | Establishing the Farmer Field School (FFS) which educates farmers to do ecofarming and independently cultivate and the seeds   |

delivered it to the houses of the members of Highest Representative Assembly one by one, lobbied them and involved the mass media to raise this issue to the public (interview, KPA activist, August 19, 2014). This effort was successful with the release of the Decree of the Highest Representatives Assembly “Ketetapan MPR No. IX/2001”. The success story was the result of strong collaboration between CSOs in the urban areas with their good advocacy capability and strength of the peasants in the rural areas.

Nevertheless, the execution of the decree was another story. There was no political will of the president to implement the establishment of the National Committee for Agrarian Reform (KNPA) and the National Committee for Agrarian Conflict Resolution (KNUPKA) as mandated by the decree. But at least, this process had managed to bring land reform as a serious discussion topic between the civil society and government representatives.

In the first direct presidential elections in Indonesia, CSOs also succeeded in pushing the presidential candidates Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono-Jusuf Kalla to include agrarian reform agenda in their campaign promises. Agrarian reform was also mentioned as one way of reducing poverty in the Development Planning of President Yudhoyono. This adoption of agrarian reform agenda by the president indicated the success of the CSOs' advocacy since the 1980s, at least to raise the awareness of president candidates that the issue is a critical one.

The implementation of the campaign promise, however, was disappointing. During the 10 years of Mr. Yudhoyono's reign (2004-2014), agrarian reform promise was not fulfilled. In fact, the agrarian conflicts increased during his term. There were 1,391 conflicts in all parts of

Indonesia with 5,711,396 ha area of conflicts. These conflicts had made more than 926,700 heads of families encounter agrarian injustice. This amount largely increased from the period 1970-2000 when there were 1,753 cases of agrarian conflicts.

Many of the agrarian conflicts arised because the government issued the permit for national and foreign corporations to utilize the land which is initially lived by indigenous people. For example, in the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE), an ambitious project targeting to transform Merauke as a national rice-barn, 2 million ha of land were given to many corporations. The problem was that the land used in this project was mostly forest, a home and food sources for the indigenous people, the Malind, who still lived in traditional ways by hunting and gathering food from the nature. Although, the initial intention of the government was to make Merauke as a rice-barn, the corporation only planted 60,000 ha (2.8% of the total area) with food crops. The rest was planted with large-scale monoculture crops such as rubber, palm oil and sugar cane (Ito *et al.*, 2014). Another instance is the fact that oil palm plantations in Indonesia is currently about 10 million hectares, half of it (5,1 million ha) owned by 25 corporate groups while around 14 millions ha of paddy fields are farmed by 28 million people.

During the 2014 election campaign, CSOs also managed to put forward the agenda of agrarian reform in the Jokowi's “vision and mission” (Nawa Cita). After the victory of Mr. Jokowi, the CSOs were engaged to provide interpretation of the Nawa Cita in the form of work programmes of land reform. On September 23-24, 2014 they held a National Conference for Agrarian reform to compile the proposal, attended by CSO activists from all over the country.

“We believe that the people who are entitled to interpret this issue are people who have struggled, assessed and networked in agrarian reform issue for decades, so that the interpretation will not deviate” (Interview, KPA activist, August 19, 2014).

**Endorsing agroecology:** Since 1970s, Indonesia has adopted Green Revolution farming technique developed by the Rockefeller Foundation. This conventional farming uses company-made seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Suharto regime imposed the technique widely, even by using military forces. As a result, in 1985-1988 and in 1990, rice production increased so rapidly that Indonesia achieved self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, the conventional farming gradually deteriorated soil fertility as the effect of the use of chemical inputs. Thus farmers were forced to add chemical fertilizers and pesticides; hence raising the cost of production. In addition, the imposition of monoculture plantings throughout Indonesia by Soeharto regime made the Indonesians experienced a homogenization of food patterns that relied heavily on rice. Since, the farmers were forced by the authoritarian government to use specified seeds (high-yielding varieties, produced by corporation), their traditional knowledge about cultivating traditional local varieties of crops also disappeared and resulted in the regression of the country’s biodiversity (Shiva, 1991; Oriordan and Kleemann, 2002)

The CSOs argued that conventional farming is not sustainable and harming the ecosystem. Encountering the problem, they educate and assist farmers to switch from conventional farming to agro-ecological farming. For example, FIELD’s main programme is conducting a field school for farmers to study the agroecology. The school encourages farmers to find answers of their farming problems by themselves (through research and observation) and transfers the knowledge to cultivate local seeds. The constraints faced by the CSOs in encouraging farmers to switch to agroecology can be categorized into two parts: cultural problem and lack of political will of the governments. Because conventional farming systems have been used in Indonesia since the 1970’s through massive indoctrination by the Soeharto regime, it has become a part of the culture. Most farmers see that making organic fertilizer and natural pesticide is a difficult thing to do. On the contrary, buying fertilizers or chemical pesticides is considered more practical. Moreover, the government distribute subsidized package of fertilizer, seeds and pesticides periodically (Interview, FIELD activist, September 21, 2014).

Transforming into ecological farming systems requires independence of seed. Traditionally, farmers save seeds for planting in the next season as well as having the ability to breed them (to produce superior seeds). But, in 1992 the government officially banned the farmers to breed the seed. Under Law No. 12/1992 on Plant Cultivation System, breeding the seed is considered unlawful. It is an obligation for the farmers to use the seeds produced by corporations.

Most of seeds of staple food and vegetables in Indonesia are produced by transnational corporations such as East-West Seed, Monsanto, DuPont, Syngenta and Bayern. They control 90% of domestic seeds market (agrofarm.co.id). In 1992 the government officially banned the farmers to breed the seed. Under Law No. 12/1992 on Plant Cultivation System, breeding the seed is considered unlawful. In 2005, six farmers in East Java were put on trial on charges of Bisi Corporation, a partner of Monsanto and sentenced to prison. Their mistakes were breeding their own seeds and selling them to other farmers. By 2012, at least 12 farmers were sentenced for this kind of ‘mistakes’ (lensaindonesia.com). This criminalization of the farmers encouraged the coalition of CSOs to file a judicial review of Law 12/1992 to the Mahkamah Konstitusi (Constitutional Court) on September 27, 2012. In 2013, the Court held that the small-scale farmers are free to breed the seed independently without asking permission from the government.

#### **THE CAUSES OF THE FAILURE OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY PROJECT**

The 6 months have passed since Mr. Jokowi presided over the country and the ‘transformative’ CSOs started to criticize him openly in public discussions and press releases:

“Food sovereignty is converted into self-sufficiency (‘swasembada’), whereas in the Food Act there is no single word of ‘swasembada’. Big food corporations do allow the government to write ‘food sovereignty’ on study but the seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, marketing, production, all are in the hands of national and international corporations,” said Henry Saragih (who initiated ‘Seknas Tani Jokowi’) in a public discussion (Jakarta, April 28, 2015)

While President Jokowi in his Development Plan stated a project of establishing 1000 sovereign-of-seed villages, in December 2015 the Minister of Agriculture

gave his approval of the commercialization of Monsanto's transgenic corn NK603 RR. The CSOs immediately released press statements rejecting this program. Their reason is that the seed is herbicide-resistant and its safety has not been guaranteed. Besides, it is protected by intellectual property right so the farmers will be dependent on the seed supply from Monsanto ([sawitwatch.or.id](http://sawitwatch.or.id)).

Professor Dwi Andreas Santosa from the prominent Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) also questioned the minister, stating that instead of using transgenic seeds, the government should use the seeds produced by local farmer. Santosa referred to Karanganyar farmers who grow corn using IF8 seeds (IF: Indonesian Farmer) and acquiring a harvest up to 13.76 tons per hectare (Kompas, January 14, 2016).

In December 29, 2015, Santosa also wrote an article in the most prominent newspaper in Indonesia, Kompas, entitled "One Year of Food Sovereignty". He stated that one of important pillars of food sovereignty, namely agroecology, is not yet a national policy of agricultural development. Despite the tremendous rise in agricultural and food budget by 71% (87.5% in synthetic fertilizer subsidy and 112% in the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture), the utilization of the budget keeps the country away from the direction of food sovereignty. The budget was spent to support programmes related to industrial agriculture and food estate which is precisely opposing the concept of agroecology.

In the issue of land reform, the CSOs also criticized that in the first year of his administration, Mr. Jokowi has not given the agrarian reform a priority yet. Over the past year, the government has not released any laws regulating the agrarian reform. According to the KPA's report, throughout 2015 there were at least 252 agrarian conflicts with 400,430 hectares area of conflict. These conflicts involved at least 108,714 families, killed 5 people, injured 39 people (shot by authorities), persecuted 124 people and criminalized 278 people ([koran-sindo.com](http://koran-sindo.com)).

Where is the root of the discrepancies between the CSOs and the government. These are the answers in the perspectives of the CSOs:

There are many conflicts of interest. We are pushing for the implementation of food sovereignty but there are others who are pushing other things opposing to food sovereignty. They have more power. We will continue to make critical engagement with the government. The struggle is going on" (Interview, Bina Desa activist, September 14, 2015)

"If we take a look at how Mr. Jokowi chooses pro-free-market individuals as the trade minister and agriculture minister and how he pushes infrastructure projects to boost the economy growth, we can conclude that he is not pursuing policies that make small farmers as the subjects of food production..." (Interview, KPA activist January 13, 2016).

"The movements of CSOs are not simultaneous yet. At first, the spirit was how to fight for the food sovereignty to become a part of the ideology of the government in a legal context. That's why we pushed the inclusion of food sovereignty into Food Acts or other acts related to this, also in Nawa Cita. Nevertheless, we have not developed the operational concept for the implementation in ministerial and local government level. What is now happening is the deviation of implementation at those two levels; they retranslated food sovereignty back to 'productionism' (Productionist view refers to the conventional farming method that puts farmers as a means of production; that is they are simply told to farm and use the subsidized seeds, fertilizers and pesticides made by the corporations. On the contrary, food sovereignty concept sees farmers as actors; they should be given adequate soil and the freedom to use seeds suitable for their land, to cultivate their own seeds and to apply organic fertilizer and pesticide) (Interview, KRKP activist, January 13, 2016).

Here, Bina Desa and KPA activists figured out that it is a matter of conflict interest while KRKP activist confessed that the CSOs have their share in this failure. The first two statements about conflict interest is in accordance with the facts that Mr. Jokowi's policy is still pro-corporation. The administration is continuing food estate programmes involving state-owned enterprises and private corporations and is advancing cooperation with 7 big transnational corporations namely Bayer Cropscience, Indofood, Sinar Mas, McKinsey, Nestle Indonesia, Sygenta and Unilever. Another policy is the 'contract farming system'. The contract is offered by Monsanto, Cargill and Bank Rakyat Indonesia to corn farmers: farmers will receive materials (seed, fertilizer, etc.) from the corporations and credit loan from the Bank; however the farmers are obliged to sell their entire products to the corporations.

The third statements showed the reality that confirmed the statement of Windfuhr and Jonsen about the necessity of developing concrete proposal and "to publicize and advocate for the definition that they have agreed and to gain support for it not only inside civil

society but also among governments.” When they have a detail, concrete and scalable indicators, they can extend them to the president, ministries and most importantly to the local governments since they are the main executors of the agricultural programmes of the Ministry of Agriculture.

### CONCLUSION

This study has figured out that the implementation of food sovereignty in Indonesia is still a matter of political rhetoric. The researchers argued that when there is a conflict of interest between the big powers (elites, corporations, international financial institutions) which are more pro-food security and while CSOs endorse food sovereignty, the CSOs do not have much strength to advance their voice. That is why even though ‘food sovereignty’ is stated in Nawa Cita, the implementation is very dependent on the big powers around the president. This is indicated by the cooperation between government and big food corporations on projects as opposed to food sovereignty.

This study also argued that even though in rhetoric the government endorses food sovereignty, its paradigm is still food security. That is why their translations of the concept are still not in line with the CSOs’ view. This is part of the ineffectiveness of the CSOs themselves since they have not developed a detail, concrete, scalable and acknowledged proposal yet to be submitted to all level of agricultural programme executors, mainly the local governments.

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