



Regional Autonomy in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities in Sustainable Development in the *Era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

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Abstract: *Regional Autonomy in Indonesia is a very important part of government governance. Regional Autonomy is a concept that gives freedom and authority to regional governments to manage local resources and interests in accordance with the needs and characteristics of the region. Sustainable development referred to in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires attention to economic, social and environmental aspects simultaneously. In Indonesia, the challenges in achieving sustainable development goals are still very large. opportunities and challenges that arise from the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the regions need to be optimized and addressed as best as possible in a way that is well understood so that sustainable development goals can be achieved effectively.*

Keywords: *Challenges and Opportunities; Regional Autonomy; Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

From then until now, Regional Autonomy is still an interesting and relevant topic to be discussed in Indonesia. Regional autonomy in Indonesia is a very important part of governance. Regional autonomy is the right, authority, and obligation of autonomous regions to regulate and manage their own government affairs and the interests of local communities in accordance with laws and regulations. The implementation of regional autonomy is not only based on legal references, but also as an implementation of the demands of globalization that must be empowered by giving regions a broader, more real and responsible authority, especially in regulating, utilizing and exploring potential sources in their respective regions. (Yulia Devi Ristanti, 2017) The implementation of regional autonomy, which began with Law Number 22 of 1999 and was updated with Law Number 23 of 2014, aims to give greater power to local governments in making decisions related to development in their areas. With this authority, it is hoped that every decision issued by the regions is in accordance with the conditions and needs of their respective regions, so as to

produce various new positive impacts. One of the expected positive impacts is the rapid increase in development.

In addition, in order to ensure that the quality of life remains good for future generations, development must certainly focus on sustainability in accordance with the focus of global development from the 21st Century to the present. In the last two decades, development that solely targets the economy and the negative impacts caused by the economy have prompted the creation of sustainable development that harmonizes aspects, environment, and society. (Karawang universitas, n.d.) Sustainable development is an effort by humans to improve the quality of life by still trying not to go beyond the ecosystem that supports their lives. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were approved by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 as a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (Hari Suriadi 1), Aldri Frinaldi 2), 2024) The goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are broad because they require every country, including Indonesia, that the development carried out not only encourages the economy, but also pays attention to social sustainability and. (Al fadhat, 2023)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of 17 (seventeen) goals covering various aspects of sustainability, ranging from economic, social, to environmental. In this context, the development programs at the regional level greatly affect the achievement of these goals so that regional autonomy plays a very important role. However, in addition to having various opportunities, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level also faces various challenges that need to be identified and addressed, especially in terms of the capacity gap between more developed regions and less developed regions. The various opportunities and challenges that come from the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the regions need to be optimized and overcome as best as possible in a way that is well understood so that the sustainable development goals can be achieved effectively. (Benuf, 2020)

Based on research conducted by Hari Suriadi, Aldri Frinaldi, Lince Magriasti, Lara Indah Yandri in 2024 on Decentralization and Efforts to Increase Regional Autonomy: Towards Sustainable Development in Indonesia, it is concluded that decentralization and regional autonomy are key principles in the sustainable development of a country. By giving powers and responsibilities to local governments, countries can create systems that are more responsive to the needs of local communities, strengthen public participation, and support inclusive and sustainable economic growth. In the context of sustainable development, decentralization and regional autonomy have a very important role in more democratic decision-making and with decentralization it allows local communities to be more actively involved in the decision-making process that affects their lives. This creates the basis for more democratic and inclusive development. In addition, other research was also conducted by Helen Dian Fridayani, Awang Darumurti, Muhammad Eko Atmojo, Nita Aribah Hanif, Vicky Alfitra Perdana on Social, Economic, and Political Dynamics: Challenges of Special Autonomy and Sustainable Development in Indonesia. Decision-making will strengthen the foundations of sustainable development at the local level. With the right balance between these challenges and opportunities, Indonesia can achieve its sustainable development goals by empowering communities and ensuring justice.

Methodology

The discussion of the problems raised in this study is discussed and analyzed using a normative juridical approach, which is a legal research method that examines literature materials or secondary data. Thus, this research method is also often referred to as doctrinal legal research, which is research sourced from secondary data, legal principles, positive legal principles from library materials, laws and regulations, and court decisions. In conducting this research, a literature study was conducted that involved tracing various secondary materials such as laws and regulations, legal archives, previous research results, articles, and other legal data relevant to the problem being studied. (bappenas, 2016)

Result and Discussion

The Relationship Between Regional Autonomy and Economic Development in Indonesia.

Regional Autonomy is a concept that gives freedom and authority to local governments to manage local resources and interests in accordance with the needs and characteristics of the region. This concept aims to encourage active community participation in the decision-making process and resource utilization at the local level. Regional Potential and Diversity: In the implementation of Regional Autonomy, it is necessary to pay attention to the potential and diversity of the region. (Indonesia, 1999)

The purpose of Regional Autonomy is to develop all the economic potential that exists in the region. By giving authority to local governments, it is hoped that they can optimize the economic potential owned by their respective regions. This includes the development of local economic sectors, the use of natural resources, increased investment, and creating a conducive climate for economic growth in the area. Through Regional Autonomy, it is hoped that regions can formulate economic development policies and strategies that are in accordance with their local characteristics and needs, so that they can contribute significantly to the overall national economic development. (Ismal, 2002)

Economic development refers to the process of increasing a country's total income and per capita income, which also pays attention to population growth and changes in the basic economic structure and income equality for the population. Regional autonomy has an important role in economic development, because the good implementation of regional autonomy allows development to be carried out optimally. (Indonesia, 1999)

One of the steps taken by the government in an effort to equalize development in each region is through Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government which gives flexibility to each region to develop its own territory. With these rules, the government in each region implements every law and regulation issued by the central government. As a result, many regions throughout Indonesia are expanding their territories with the aim of bringing services closer to the community. (Wenda, W. L., & Akib, 2015)

Local governments are given broader, clearer, and more responsible authority in the administration of government. This creates a balance in duties, functions, and roles between the central government and local governments. As a result, each region needs to have sufficient income, as well as adequate sources of financing to carry out the responsibility of

implementing local government. Decentralization is one of the strategies used to achieve the country's goals, especially in improving the quality of public services and encouraging more democratic public participation in decision-making.

Decentralization is a complex concept and involves various forms and dimensions, including fiscal, political, administrative, and social and economic development. In general, decentralization consists of several types, including Political Decentralization which is related to the delegation of political authority, Administrative Decentralization which involves the division of administrative duties and responsibilities, Fiscal decentralization which is related to the delegation of financial authority, and Economic Decentralization which involves the delegation of economic or market authority. (Sidik, 2002)

Fiscal decentralization is one of the main components of the concept of decentralization. When local governments carry out their duties effectively and are given freedom in decision-making related to the provision of services in the public sector, they need to be supported with adequate financial resources. These financial resources can come from Regional Original Revenue (PAD), including additional tax revenues, the distribution of tax and non-tax revenues, and loans. In addition, subsidies or assistance from the Central Government can also be an important financial resource for local governments. (*Ibid*, n.d.)

Fiscal decentralization makes a positive contribution to regional economic growth, both in terms of revenue and regional original income. However, the results of the study also show the need to regulate local government expenditure so that it is not used too much for employee and administrative spending. To increase regional revenue, local governments can optimize local sources of revenue through the imposition of new taxes, levies, and management of regionally-owned enterprises. Thus, the regional financial structure can be improved for regional development and the provision of public services, which in turn will encourage economic activities and community welfare. Regional autonomy has a positive effect on economic growth, especially in increasing people's per capita income. A Rustan, 'Fiscal Decentralization and Economic Growth, and Its Relation to Regional Autonomy', Borneo Administrator Journal, 2013.

Through the implementation of Regional Autonomy, local governments have greater ability to manage resources and economic potential in their regions. This can have a positive impact on increasing employment, per capita income, and people's access to better public services. The central government also has a significant role in supporting economic development in the regions through regional autonomy policies, such as the provision of fair allocation of financial balance funds and other support. Thus, Regional Autonomy is an important foundation in economic development in Indonesia, where local governments can manage economic sectors according to the needs and potentials of their regions, while the central government provides the necessary support to accelerate economic growth at the regional level.

Summarize the collected data and the analysis performed on those data relevant to the issue that is to follow. The Result should be clear and concise. It should be written objectively and factually, and without expressing personal opinion. It includes numbers, tables, and figures (e.g., charts and graphs). Number tables and figures consecutively in accordance with their appearance in the text. (Nasution, 2016)

Opportunities and Challenges for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy in the Era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Local governments can innovate, namely all forms of reforms carried out in the context of the implementation of affairs based on the principles contained in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, namely increasing efficiency, improving effectiveness, improving service quality, there is no conflict of interest, oriented to the public interest, carried out openly, and can be accounted for the results not for their own interests.

According to Sumarsono (Director General of Regional Autonomy) emphasized that Regional Autonomy through Law Number 23 of 2014 is expected to be able to increase competitiveness by paying attention to the principles of democracy, governance, adlianc, privileges and specificities as well as regional potential and diversity in the Unitary State system of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). (World Bank, 2021) The responsibility of local governments is emphasized on how to utilize regional wisdom, potential, innovation, and creativity to achieve national goals at the local level which in aggregate will support the achievement of national goals.

Sustainable development in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires simultaneous attention to economic, social, and environmental aspects. In Indonesia, the challenges in achieving the sustainable development goals are still very large. Basically, the Sustainable Development Goals are based on three pillars, including the following:

1. Social Pillar, human development in the social sphere;
2. Economic Pillar, economic development; and
3. Environmental Pillars, including biodiversity.

The three pillars are supported by the foundation of governance institutions. These three pillars and the foundation of the institution are based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals which are outlined in 169 targets, and 241 indicators that influence each other. Each pillar also influences the development of the other pillars in a harmonious, intact, sustainable and sustainable relationship. The benefit of the Sustainable Development Goals approach, which now also contains the Millennium Development Goals goals, is that the results are measurable, so that they can go out of the "abstract abstract concept" to enter the "concrete and real concept", which can then be studied at the level of measure. All are focused on the ultimate goal of alleviating poverty by 2030 when "No One Left Behind".

Some of the main challenges faced in the context of the SDGs include the following:

1. Development inequality between regions.

One of the main challenges in achieving the SDGs in Indonesia is the inequality of development between regions. Despite significant progress in urban areas and Java, many regions, especially outside Java, are still lagging behind in terms of infrastructure, access to education, health, and other public services. (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2023) This inequality has the potential to hinder the achievement of the SDGs goals related to poverty reduction and inequality between countries.

2. Poverty and unemployment.

Although Indonesia has managed to reduce poverty in recent decades, poverty remains a major problem. The dominant informal sector, unequal access to quality education, and challenges in creating inclusive and sustainable employment have led to relatively high levels of unemployment and poverty, especially in certain areas. (BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik), 2023) This poverty hinders the achievement of several SDGs such as poverty reduction, decent work, and quality education.

3. Climate change and environmental damage.

Climate change and environmental damage are major challenges in achieving the SDGs related to environmental sustainability. (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan (KLHK), 2023) Indonesia is one of the countries that is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as floods, droughts, and forest fires. In addition, environmental degradation due to deforestation, unsustainable management of natural resources, and air and water pollution are important issues that must be faced to ensure the sustainability of nature and the quality of life of the community.

4. Uneven quality of education.

Despite efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, access to quality education remains a challenge, especially in remote and underdeveloped areas. Quality education is very important to create human resources who are able to contribute to sustainable development. The lack of adequate educational facilities, the low quality of teaching staff, and the high dropout rate in certain areas hinder the achievement of the SDGs in education. (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2023)

5. Dependence on Natural Resources.

Indonesia's dependence on exports of natural resources such as oil, gas, and agricultural commodities, as well as extensive deforestation for industrial purposes, pose a major challenge to sustainable development. While these sectors contribute significantly to the economy, this dependence has the potential to lead to greater environmental damage and long-term unsustainability. In addition, limited natural resources are also a problem in achieving the SDGs related to responsible consumption and production.

6. Corruption and governance.

Corruption and poor governance are one of the biggest obstacles to achieving the SDGs in Indonesia. Misuse of public budgets, non-transparent policies, and lack of accountability in the use of development funds can hamper sustainable development efforts. It also contributes to social and economic inequality and undermines public trust in government institutions.

7. Limited infrastructure that supports sustainable development.

Inadequate infrastructure in some regions of Indonesia hinders the realization of the SDGs that focus on sustainable infrastructure. Many regions still lack access to basic infrastructure such as roads, clean water, sanitation, and energy that can support a decent life and increase economic productivity. Sustainable and environmentally friendly infrastructure development is still a big job for Indonesia.

The challenges in sustainable development in Indonesia are complex and require joint efforts between the government, the private sector, and the community to address the problems of inequality, climate change, poverty, and dependence on natural resources. To achieve the SDGs, Indonesia needs to improve the quality of education, improve governance, manage natural resources sustainably, and improve infrastructure that supports sustainable development. Handling these issues will accelerate the achievement of more inclusive and sustainable SDGs goals.

Sustainable development initiated through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offers great opportunities for Indonesia to achieve progress in various sectors. Although Indonesia faces great challenges, opportunities to implement policies that can support more sustainable and inclusive development are still wide open. Some of these opportunities include the following:

1. Sustainable use of natural resources.

Indonesia is rich in natural resources, both in the energy, agriculture, and forestry sectors. Sustainable management of natural resources (Responsible Consumption and Production) is a great opportunity for Indonesia to create a green economy.(UNDP, 2022) In this context, Indonesia can develop more environmentally friendly industries, such as renewable energy (solar, wind, biomass) and sustainable forest management. Success in this management can strengthen economic resilience while maintaining the balance of the ecosystem.

2. Innovation in environmentally friendly technology.

Technological advancements offer great opportunities in sustainable development, especially in the renewable energy, waste management, and transportation sectors. Indonesia has the potential to become a leader in the development and adoption of green technologies, such as electric vehicles, renewable energy generation systems, and community-based waste management technologies. (IEA (International Energy Agency), 2022) This technology not only supports the achievement of SDGs related to climate and clean energy, but can also create new jobs and drive economic growth. (GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), 2023)

3. Development of green economy and ecotourism.

Ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Indonesia and has great potential to support the SDGs related to the economy and environmental sustainability. Ecotourism enables the sustainable use of natural resources by involving local communities in the management and utilization of natural tourism. It also provides an opportunity to introduce a sustainability-based economic model, which creates economic benefits without damaging the environment.

4. Community empowerment in sustainable development.

The SDGs emphasize the importance of community empowerment in the development process, with the aim of reducing inequality and poverty. Community empowerment programs that involve active participation in the planning and management of local resources offer opportunities to create more independent and

resilient communities. This approach can be applied through community capacity building in the fields of education, skills, and access to technology and finance.

5. Sustainable infrastructure.

Infrastructure development that supports sustainability is one of the key aspects in achieving the SDGs, especially related to the provision of inclusive and sustainable infrastructure. Indonesia has a great opportunity to build infrastructure that not only improves connectivity, but is also environmentally friendly, for example the development of efficient public transportation, waste management systems, and renewable energy networks can improve people's quality of life and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

6. Increasing access to quality education.

Inclusive and quality education is a key pillar in sustainable development. Indonesia has a great opportunity to improve access to education, especially in remote and poor areas. Educational programs based on digital technology and e-learning can overcome geographical limitations and improve the quality of education. (kementrian pendidikan dan kebudayaan, 2023) Improving the quality of education will also produce human resources who are more ready to contribute to sustainable economic and social development.

7. Multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving the SDGs.

Achieving the SDGs requires collaboration between the government, the private sector, civil society and the international community. In Indonesia, this collaboration offers opportunities to strengthen partnerships and share resources in realizing sustainable development. The Indonesian government has developed partnership platforms such as the Development Partnership Forum to bring together various stakeholders in planning and implementing sustainable development projects.

8. Sustainable management of Natural Resources.

Indonesia has the potential to develop a sustainable natural resource management model, especially in the agriculture and fisheries sectors. By adopting sustainable agriculture and fisheries practices, such as organic farming, sustainability-based fisheries, and agroforestry systems, Indonesia can reduce negative impacts on the environment and improve food security. This supports the SDGs' goal of ending hunger and preserving marine life ecosystems. (Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan, 2023)

Indonesia has many opportunities to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in sustainable development. Wise use of natural resources, green economy development, improving the quality of education, and developing environmentally friendly infrastructure are some of the great opportunities that can be utilized. Collaboration between various parties and the implementation of policies that focus on sustainability will be the main key in achieving inclusive and sustainable development in Indonesia.

Era Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an effort to realize the growth and development of autonomous regions.

The development of autonomous regions in Indonesia is greatly influenced by national policies that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs provide a global framework that can be used by regions to design and implement inclusive, sustainable, and local needs-based development policies. The SDGs era is an opportunity for autonomous regions to accelerate their growth and development by taking advantage of sustainable development opportunities that focus on balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects.

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets current needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development calls for joint efforts to build an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet. In order for sustainable development to be achieved, it is important to align three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are intertwined and all of them are essential for the well-being of individuals and society.

Sustainable Development (SDGs) are global and universally applicable, taking into account various national realities, different development capacities and levels, and respecting national policies and priorities. These goals and targets do not stand alone from each other, these goals and targets need to be implemented in an integrated manner. The SDGs are the result of a process that is transparent, participatory and inclusive to all stakeholders and the community over three long years. The SDGs have received a lot of support from all walks of life. The decision to implement a process to develop the SDGs was made by UN Member States at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. Implementation methods and means of how to mobilize financial resources to achieve the sustainable development agenda are the main features of the SDGs themselves. In order to achieve the goals of the SDGs, efforts to mobilize a significant amount of resources are needed. The various resources that have existed at this time are sufficient to support the new development agenda.

Resources need to be mobilized both domestically and internationally, including from the public and private sectors. Official development assistance is still needed to support sustainable development financing, especially for less developed countries. The implementation of this agenda can be realized through an updated global partnership framework for sustainable development, with the support of strategic policies and concrete actions as formulated in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action, the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. (bappenas, 2016)

Conclusion

One of the steps taken by the government in an effort to equalize development in each region is through Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government which gives flexibility to each region to develop its own territory. With these rules, the government in each region implements every law and regulation issued by the central government. As

a result, many regions throughout Indonesia are expanding their territories with the aim of bringing services closer to the community.

Opportunities and challenges in the implementation of Regional Autonomy in the Era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the following:

1. Opportunities, including the following:
 - a. Sustainable use of natural resources;
 - b. Innovation in environmentally friendly technology;
 - c. Development of green economy and ecotourism;
 - d. Community empowerment in sustainable development;
 - e. Sustainable infrastructure;
 - f. Increasing access to quality education;
 - g. Multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving the SDGs.
 - h. Sustainable management of Natural Resources.
2. Challenges, including the following:
 - a. Development inequality between regions;
 - b. Poverty and unemployment;
 - c. Climate change and environmental damage;
 - d. Uneven quality of education;
 - e. Dependence on Natural Resources;
 - f. Corruption and governance;
 - g. Limitations of infrastructure that supports sustainable development.

The development of autonomous regions in Indonesia is greatly influenced by national policies that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs provide a global framework that can be used by regions to design and implement inclusive, sustainable, and local needs-based development policies. The SDGs era is an opportunity for autonomous regions to accelerate their growth and development by taking advantage of sustainable development opportunities that focus on balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects.

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