

Indonesia Policy to Encourage Youth to Regenerate Farmers in New Era

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has experienced the greatest economic growth among Southeast Asian countries. The GDP grew by 5.0% in the first half of 2017 and is likely to come in at 5.1% in 2017 and 5.3% in 2018 (Asian Development Bank, 2017). However, agriculture made up 13.7 % of the total Indonesia GDP in 2016 (Global Finance, 2017). With its vast and abundant fertile soils, Indonesia, among tropical countries, has enormous potential to increase its economy from agriculture sectors. Despite its agricultural potential, farming practices in Indonesia remain unproductive. The main issue is human capital, as the agricultural workforce is decreasing. Indonesia conducts some policy and strategies for the youth to increase their incentives of farming.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

According to the 2013 agricultural census, ST2013, the number of agricultural households in Indonesia reported was 26.14 million, which is a 16.32% decrease from the 2003 Agricultural Census (ST2003) which recorded 31.23 million households. The number of agricultural companies reported by ST2013 was 4,165 companies and 5,922 units for other types of agricultural business (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2013).

An aging farming population poses a major threat to the agricultural industry, as the average age of farmers is 45 years and above. The survey results of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) show that the average age of Central Java paddy farmers is 52 years. LIPI survey results also show that children who returned to farmers to continue the family farming business only amounted to about three percent (Utami, 2017).

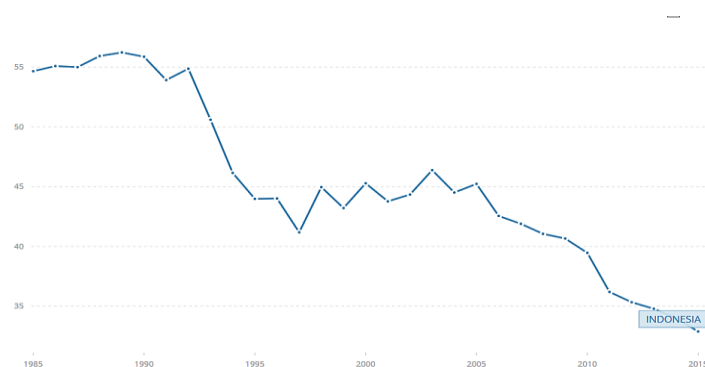


Fig. 1. Employment in agriculture percentage of total employment in Indonesia during 1985-2015 (World Bank Group, 2017).

GOVERNMENT'S ACTION

The Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture focuses on two programs, the Integrated Farmer Empowerment Program (GPPT) and Farmers Regeneration Program (GRP). Directed by the Ministry of Agriculture, both programs have the same mission, to encourage the young generation of today to plunge into the farming industry. While methodology in attracting young farmers varies, a major focus of the programs is to introduce better-implemented technologies into the agricultural process. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture is working with the College of Agricultural Extension (STPP), a high school still within the scope of the Agricultural Human Resources Development (BPPSDMP), and a number of universities to promote professions in agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture selects potential students and trains them for three years to become an entrepreneur engaged in the field of agricultural business in the upstream, downstream or even in cultivation. Such practices help the government achieve its primary mission to regenerate Indonesian farmers and to create employment in agricultural business with professional human resources (BPPSDMP, 2016)

The Ministry of Agriculture's mission is to regenerate farmers' competence, young individuals. The Agricultural Human Resources Development Agency, established in 2017, passed laws including Law 23 the year 2014, Ministerial Regulation No. 40 the year 2016 (Permentan No. 40/2016) and Ministerial Regulation No. 43 the year 2016 (Permentan No. 43/2016). These laws were established for major actions to improve agriculture. First, the Agricultural Extension Center was established as the operational base for extension workers and as data sources to direct attention towards information and technology sources for key actors and business actors. Second, for Agricultural Training, the Ministry created re-enliven cooperation opportunities (such as apprenticeships), exchange programs, and student activities (such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Entrepreneur Program). Third, the Ministry created educational incentives, such as scholarships, to support agricultural education enthusiasts (Permana, 2017). Fourth, the Ministry began to utilize electronic media (TV) to improve public opinion, technology dissemination, and the spark of the interest of younger generations to the agriculture sector. Cyber extensions can be optimized for the dissemination of agricultural information in an effort to address the shortage of extension workers (BPPSDMP, 2017).

The head of BPPSDMP said that the two programs GPPT and GRP are a strategy of Agricultural Human Resources Development agency in supporting the Ministry of Agriculture policy to accelerate self-sufficiency and increase exports through the strengthening of agricultural infrastructure (Tempo, 2017).

GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY ON POLICY

The Ministry of Agriculture has regulated the strengthening and improvement of human resource capacity in agriculture as contained in nine strategies in the Agriculture Ministerial Strategic Plan 2015-2019 (RENSTRA 2015-2019) (Ministry of Agriculture, 2015). Currently, the government is undergoing policy creation to encourage youth in agriculture. The policy strategy includes four aspects, which are to provide youth with access to land, provide market guarantees for youth farmers to manage agriculture, provide education on technology as well as variations of sustainable agricultural cultivation techniques to rural youth, particularly on limited agricultural land, and fourth, provide incentives for the farming profession to attract youth to farm (Utami, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

The conditions in the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture are still in the discussion and study phase on government efforts in order to encourage youth in agriculture. GPPT and GPT have become the main programs of Ministry of Agriculture in 2017. Government regulation of the regeneration of employment in agriculture is still a proposal in the government.

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