

opportunities have suddenly arisen at the local level. "There is a saying", said one participant, that "when a group of people has not eaten or drunk for a long time, they care little about what the water or food look like, they just eat and drink." Diversity is being threatened. For example, most parts of Kalimantan and Sulawesi, as well as Sumatra, have heterogeneous populations, which in some areas are mixed 50/50. An unfettered return to local rule leaves migrants vulnerable to being treated as second class citizens, obliged to obey rules set by those now reclaiming "their house". The argument was made that decentralization should have stopped at the provincial level, on the basis that only provinces can plan on a sufficiently wide basis.

The argument was made that regional unrest arose primarily because of injustice, including the deterministic approach of central government. An argument can be made for a strong central government, given the diversity of Indonesia. Suharto's main failing was that he used power to centralize, to enforce uniformity and homogeneity and obedience to Jakarta. The principal issue is the quality of government, not the existence of a strong central government *per se* or the structure of the state. Decentralization cannot succeed if issues of injustice are not addressed.

Question asked by participant : "As local governments make new regulations and create new taxes, who is responsible if there should be an appeal against them?"

Decentralization and the Sources of Conflict

Struggles over land and resources (including marine) and other economic opportunities are at the source of many of the current conflicts. But the expression of each conflict is unique to each place and time. How has this arisen historically? After Independence and during Sukarno's era, land struggles in Java and Sumatra resulted in occupation of land in former colonial plantations. In some cases 'local people' have recently reclaimed land that was 'bought and assembled' for modern plantations and other enterprises under the Suharto era, some with foreign involvement and ownership. Even where land is not as scarce as Java, resources, land and opportunities remain important sources of conflict.