

CHAPTER 13

THE LIMITS OF INDONESIAN CSOs IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

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INTRODUCTION

The political change, which occurred after self-resignation of President Soeharto on the 21st of May 1998, finally released all burdening spheres in the political setting for CSO's activities in the New Order. As in the experience of other countries that emerge in political transition towards democracy after authoritarian regime was overthrown, CSOs in Indonesia have also been growing rapidly.

The period of post-New Order may sometimes be called 'the rise of civil society.' Following the downfall of New Order regime, SMERU estimates that there are nearly 20,000 CSOs (also known as Non-Governmental Organizations) across Indonesia working in the field of development, advocacy and empowerment, and litigation (SMERU, 2000). Ten years later, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) uncovers that there are more than 100,000 CSOs (non-membership based CSO or NGOs and membership based CSOs) in Indonesia by April 2010. However, only 10% of them are formally registered in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Berita Depdagri, 20 April 2010). The Ministry of Home Affairs published that there were 9,000 registered CSOs by the year of 2010 which are specifically belonged to membership based-CSOs (*organisasi kemasyarakatan, Ormas*) (Kompas.com, 30 August 2010).

This growing number of CSOs consists of informal and formal organizations that are also spanned from community and national scales. These organizations are engaged in several activities varying from practical daily necessity services to some attempts in influencing state policy. CSOs have various areas of work and sometimes are characterized with its overlapping in nature. Following the downfall of the New Order, CSOs have

also shifted in their leading issues. In concurrence with the transitional process towards democracy, and donor agencies' policy in providing assistance, CSOs, particularly those which are oriented to advocacy, have begun to work with issues on good (democratic) governance, election system, reformation, control on development, and other specific political issues.

The more democratic political atmosphere in the post-New Order hypothetically enables to gazette political opportunity for CSO and to send them out to progressively develop democratic governance (DG). As a consequence of its strategic position in developing and consolidating democracy, CSO is actively encouraged to play a key role in nurturing DG. This DG is believed to reach goals for economic development, poverty alleviation and in turn improving the quality of people's life.

Meanwhile, CSO has new emerging role in the changing political landscape. Unfortunately, not all CSOs have resulted to place themselves in the new political landscape. For instance, a number of NGOs remained constantly to be opposing groups against the government, though this role is organized by the media, academician, and other CSOs. Besides that, CSO might have not resulted in changing their structure of organization and creating best-fitted mechanism within organization which are aligned with its role in promoting DG as a way of nurturing democracy. Theoretically, the successful CSOs in performing that role are most likely determined and built on with institutional capacity as agent of consolidated democracy (Diamonds, 1999). Despite having required institutional capacity, it can not be simply defined that DG is easily achievable. It is noteworthy to emphasize, a high performance of democratic governance usually comes true if there is a synergic relationship and alliance between CSO and the government (Evans, 1996).

This chapter is aimed to assess the capacity of CSO in reinvigorating democratic governance in the post-New Order in Indonesia. In so doing, potentials and the limits of CSO in promoting DG will be identified and analyzed. Departing from this process, this chapter encapsulates some actions proposed for improving the roles of CSO in developing DG in the near future. However, before presenting the analysis, the concepts of democratic governance, civil society, and relationship between civil society and DG will be briefly scrutinized.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 From Good Governance to Democratic Governance

A concept of governance is not a new emerging concept. Its commencement is as old as human history (Weiss, 2000). However, this concept has emanated in intellectual debate since 1980s, though there was a consensus that the concept of governance was generally wider than the concept of government. Various international organizations and experts have their own definitions on governance. For instance, World Bank defines governance as a way to rule a reign of power in managing state-owned economic and social resources, while UNDP asserts it as the implementation of administrative, political, and economic authorities to manage existing problems within a state in all levels (Weiss, 2000).

The interpretation of good governance (GG) is various (Rhodes, 2000; Santiso, 2000) and none of agreed consensus on the form of good governance itself is prevailing. Referring to Leftwich (2000: 118-123), there were three categories and distinct levels of understanding, ranging from the inclusive one to the narrow one, which are systemic level (or regime), political level, and administrative/managerial level.

The first level or inclusive level is that of “systemic or regime level good governance.” On this understanding, GG refers to a political system or socio-economic relation regulated by common rules or in flexible way of a regime. The concept of a democratic capitalistic regime led minimally by a state which has been proposed by the Western leaders at High Level Conference in Houston in 1990, though the understandings on this regime differed.

The more limited and political understanding on GG is so-called “participatory politics” and (sometimes) democratic government. Although this understanding embraced by free-market regime and democratic, on the other hand GG explicitly perceived it as a state that achieves legitimacy and authority. It is also derived from participatory mandate (though not in the framework of democracy), and well-established according to traditionally liberal thought about a robust segmentation of power among executive, legislative, and judicial. This also includes general election, which appreciates freedom of electing legislative members who are authorized to oversee executive power. Hence, this argument is believed by most of Western governments, OECD, and UNDP. Particularly for UNDP, the concept of GG

is part of sustainable development promotion emphasizing on public participation, accountability, and transparency.

World Bank, primarily, proposes third category, which is notably more narrowed down. In the managerial and administrative perspective, GG means openly public service which is accountable, independent, efficient, and in the absence of corruption, as well as dedicated to public interest. Simply, GG is similar to good management in state's development. World Bank emphasizes four primary elements which are also the main areas for public management sector such as government official accountability, legal framework for development, validated and accessible information, and transparency to affirm responsibility, eradicating corruption, and stimulating consultative process between government and private sectors to formulate the public policy.

Nowadays, conceptual discourse has been emerging to point out the understanding on GG in second level of Leftwich's category with terminology of "democratic governance." According to Santiso (2000: 153), the terminology of DG is affectively more appropriate, as it entails two important concepts such as democracy and good governance. The concept of DG shows that democracy and GG are characteristically attributed to one another and inter-dependence. Both of them are two same sides of a coin, which can be counted in one single concept of democratic governance.

The concept of democratic governance, according to Burnell (2000) and Crawford (2000), also reflects a convergence among three agendas and donor agencies' domains. Principally, donor agency' policy can be distinguished into three primary aids and promotions, which are aids for democracy, good governance, and human rights. Democracy and good governance are elastic concepts, stretching from scoped-down understanding to wider one. Human rights are also intertwined with civil right and civil freedom that bounds with democracy and governance.

Brinkerhoff (2000) points out, democratic governance combines the characteristics of political regime which provide civil a right to govern their own entity (democracy) over structure and mechanism applied for managing public-related problems according to the regulations and agreed procedures (governance). He defines democratic governance as "a set of procedures that assures meaningful competition among broad participation in the choice of leaders and policies, and in the allocation of societal resources, and a high degree of civil, political and economic liberties" (Brinkerhoff, 2000: 602).

In the context of efforts for promoting DG, and in referring to the Neo-Tocquevillian school, it is argued that civil society organizations

(CSOs) have a significant contribution to expanding and creating democratic governance institutionalization. This school asserts that CSOs have potential and capability in compelling the development of democratic governance through an establishment of social capital.

1.2 Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations

According to Hyden (1998), contemporary debates on civil society can be categorized into four main perspectives which show obvious differences of focus and its main concerns (see table 13.1). Of these four main perspectives, at least in the United States, associational perspective, or commonly so-called as neo-Tocquevillian, is the most dominant. This article refers to this dominant perspective.

Table 13.1. Contemporary Perspective Debate on Civil Society

| Perspective | The Regime school | The Neo-liberal school | The Association school | The Post-Marxist school |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Focus | How to set up ground rules and more democratic regime | The importance of structural reformation to allow strengthening personal ownership | The importance of autonomous and active associations | The importance of social structures which formed by dominant economic power |
| Core concern | Constitutional issue-legal mechanism restricting risk of authority misuse | Relations between capitalism/market and democracy-structural adjustment policy | Civil society in uplifting democracy | Raising of strong social movement for fundamental changes |
| Proponent's | O'Donnell & Schmitter (1986); Bratton & Van de Walle (1994); Hyden (1992) | Prworski (1990); Mancur Olson (1983) | Diamond (1994); Stepan (1985); Putnam (1993); NGOs | Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens (1992) |
| Philosophical origins | Locke | Thomas Paine | Tocqueville | Hegel, Gramsci |

Source: Hyden1998: 22-27.

At conceptual level, referring to Foley and Edwards (1996), there are actually two more general versions about understanding on civil society (Table 13.2).

Table 13.2. Two Understandings on Civil Society according to Foley and Edwards

| Civil Society I | Civil Society II |
|---|--|
| The ability of associational life in general and the habits of association in particular to foster patterns of civility in the actions of citizens in a democratic polity | A sphere of action that is independent of the state and that is capable of energizing resistance to a tyrannical regime ¹ |
| Proponents: Tocqueville, A. Smith, A. Ferguson, R. Putnam, etc | Proponents: A. Michnik, J. Kuron, and theorists of “re-democratization” in Latin America |

Source: Foley and Edwards 1996: 39.

From the above conceptualizations, CS can be understood as an actor/agent (civil society I) and realm/sphere (civil society II). Hyden (1998) firmly argues that CS is a realm where associations compete to influence in the context of interaction with state or inter-governmental organizations and simultaneously are agents for themselves. This article refers to two understandings on CS, though in some parts it emphasizes its understanding heavily on CS as actor/agent.

Referring to the understanding on CS as actor or agent, therefore, the most appropriate terminology used is civil society organization (CSO). Hyden (1998) distinguishes between CSO in minimal and maximal understandings. In his first understanding, CSO only covers those who are politically and civically preserving and struggling for democratic norms. Economic and productive associations are commonly not engaged in this understanding. They tend to be placed as part of economic society. In the second understanding, CSOs are all organizations or associations that exist out of state sector. They include neighboring organizations, ranging from local to membership-based organizations that are nationally oriented.

Built on Diamond’s argument (1999), CSO is an organization or association lying out of the state, characteristically presented with its freedom and independence. CSOs usually are organizations, possessing secondary character rather than primary one. CSOs cover a group of organization, either formal or informal, which might be categorized as follows:

- a. Economic character: productive and commercial networks and associations;

¹ On the same tone, Diamond (1999: 221) defines civil society as “the realm or organized social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-reliant, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.”

- b. Cultural character: religious, ethnical, communal institution and other institutions which retain their rights, values, beliefs, and collective symbols;
- c. Informational and educational character: organizations which are oriented on production and dissemination of (either for profit oriented or otherwise) knowledge, ideas, news, and public information;
- d. In relations to interest: associations which struggle for empowering and or retaining functional and material interest in purpose for its members, such as labor association, professional groups, and etc;
- e. In relations to development process: organizations which extract resources and individual talents to recover infrastructure, institutions, and improvement in community wellbeing
- f. Issue-oriented: movement to protect environment, agricultural reformation, customer protection, women's rights, minority ethnics, tribal group, group of people with disability, and other victims of discrimination and power misuse;
- g. Civic orientation: non-partisans group which struggle for reconstructing political system and leveling it more democratic, such as associations who work for human rights, voters mobilization and education, election observers, corruption revealing actions, and
- h. In relations to the ideological marketplace, information flow and ideas embracing group who evaluates and delivers critics to the state, it consists of independent mass-media and wider areas rather than cultural and autonomous activity such as university, think-tanks, theatre group, and etc. (Diamond, 1999: 239-249).

CSO can be distinguished from other groups in the society according to these five characteristics. Firstly, CSO allows expanding activities which are related to public-oriented purposes rather than private ones. CSO is accessible to people and open for public deliberation. This makes a distinguished characteristic of CSO from parochial society which is notably exclusive and tends to be more secret.

Secondly, CSO relates to the state in various ways, but do not reinforce their efforts to overleap the control towards certain position within a state. CSO also does not attempt to reinforce their efforts to govern the polity as a whole. What CSO really accomplishes are commonly relevant to the state such as policy changes, institutional reformation, state accountability, and so forth.

Thirdly, CSO struggles for pluralism and diversity. CSO averts a tendency to turn into fundamentalist religious groups, militaristic movements, and chauvinistic ethnics. Also, CSO does not attempt to reinforce their efforts to monopolize political and functional domains in the society.

Fourthly, CSO does not attempt to represent sequence of interests as a whole of individual or a certain community. Moreover, CSO represents the group's interests covering various aspects from certain specific interest.

Fifthly, CSO is also different from democratic phenomenon, which has been in advance stage of organization evolution, in which Putnam (1993) highlights it as 'civic community' (Putnam *et al.*, 1993). Civic community can be narrower and wider than the concept of civil society. It can be explained so as it covers all associations which remain out of a state, and narrowly so-called because it only includes structured associations in horizontal spectrum that involves several bonds. These bonds are characteristically mutual, cooperative, symmetric, and trustworthy to one another. In contrast, Putnam does not include many associations which are truly more active in politically reformatting or advocating human rights in the context of civil society category. Therefore, in order to avert tautology, which homogenizes civil society with some democratic extents, civil society must be obviously clarified into understanding that enables to distinguish it from general and wider areas of independent associational livelihood (Diamond, 1999: 226).

It is necessity to note that not all of CSOs demonstrate equal potentials to develop democratic good governance or general democracy. CSO is able to actualize its potential whenever it can meet all of criteria as follows. Firstly, internally CSOs have democratic structure, for instance it is symbolized with membership recruitment which is open and shown equality within organization, etc. Secondly, CSOs demonstrate a high level institutionalization including autonomy, capability of adaptation, coherence, and complexity. Thirdly, within its structure it possesses "civicness" that covers tolerance, trust, cooperative, and so forth. Fourthly, CSO always respects and expansively develops pluralism. Fifthly, CSO has civic density or widely support from the people (Diamond, 1999: 227-233; Hadenius and Ugglå, 1996: 1624-25). Moreover, this type of civil society is characterized by pluralistic (number, volume, and variety) interest, which is organized, and oriented to democracy (struggles for citizenship values) and empower political participation (a use of active civic rights and obligation and new leadership formation) (Biekart, 1999: 35).

A strong tendency prevails, particularly among foreign donor agencies that solid and vibrant CSO is represented by NGO. Even more, NGO is assigned to key agent in every democratization process. The fundamental argument is, when NGO is part of CS, they strengthen CS through its activities which in return support democratic process (Mercer, 2002: 10-12).

1.3 Developing Democratic Governance: Constructing Social Capital

This article posits arguments that although a strong and solid CSO has been established, it does not mean DG can be automatically created. Putnam's study (1993) in Northern Italy and other studies confirm that CS has positive contribution to enabling democratic governance through creation of social capital. It envisions that a solid CS requires social capital to work. In the context of relations between CS and DG, social capital is an intervening variable mediating both things. Hence, this section elaborates efforts to foster DG by nurturing social capital, which is extensively promoted by international development agencies.

If CS refers to a certain area where people desire to accomplish their own collective interest, therefore, social capital refers to embedding extent that bonds up people to be association of a social network and institution, social norm (for instance, cooperation) and values or social attributes (specifically trust). Shortly, social capital is a convenient pathway for making societies work (Edwards, 1999).

This article argues that the efforts for promoting democratic governance can generally succeed in certain political situation where governments provide an enabling policy environment for fostering partnerships between the two sectors. In other words, the promotion of democratic governance has a great possibility of becoming successful where a healthy relationship between governments and CSOs take place (Suharko, 2003).

A synergistic partnership becomes possible when both CSOs and governments look to complementary rather than competing contributions. Evans (1996) argues that a "state-society synergy" approach can be developed for enhancing the sustained development. Synergy usually combines complementarity with "embeddedness" and is most easily fostered in societies characterized by egalitarian social structures and robust, coherent state bureaucracies. Complementary is mutually supportive relation; meanwhile "embeddedness" is a tie that links citizens and public officials. A synergy becomes developed where active government and mobilized community cooperate. It is argued that even in unfavorable conditions, mutually

reinforcing relations in the form of “state-society synergy” that involves governments and NGOs are constructive (Evans, 1996; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000).

Synergy of CSO and government is constructive. In this regard, Evans (1996: 1129) puts:

Even when the social and political context is inauspicious context, creative cultural and organizational innovations can still produce results. Sometimes building synergy depends on transforming established world-views. Sometimes it involves introducing innovative “soft technology” at the organizational level. Sometimes it involves simply rethinking the nature of the problem that a government agency is trying to address. Any of these strategies can make synergy constructable.

After reaching a point of understanding about context above, we can make a concluding remark. The promotion of DG is possibly coming true in two conditions. Firstly, DG can be nurtured if CSO has internally and institutionally democratic structure and practice. Secondly, healthy and synergistic relations between CSO and government is fundamentally based on and framed by social capital components such as trust, reciprocal norms, cooperation, networks, and alliances to accomplish collective goals.

2. CSO IN INDONESIA

As in many countries, Indonesian CSOs take various forms of organization, areas of working or issues, and activities as well as interest. The simplest way to map the diversity of CSOs are based on membership parameters. Membership basis becomes important parameter because the existence of its character in one organization will influence the structure and organizational mechanism, responsible delivery, mode of service, and so forth. According to this, Indonesian CSOs can be categorized into two folds: membership and non-membership based-CSOs (Suharko 2003). However, it is also important to notice that each of the categories has its own characteristics. It implies that those areas of working are more varied, ranging from recreationally oriented to political one, from local existing organization to national one. In fact, some of them expand networks up to the international level where its scope of work could cover one single specific issue and diverse issues at once.

2.1 Non-membership Based CSO

This category consists of various types, which each of them has their own characteristics and determine their orientation as well as goal by themselves.

- a) CSOs demonstrating specific issue and development or can be so-called Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This NGO generally involves actively in various developmental issues, such as grass-root community development, policy advocacy, environment, strengthening civil society, empowering governance, and other activities to support self-reliance in community. NGO's scope of work may include environmental advocacy, organization for legal advisory, training institution, customer association, or other foundation-which have developmental orientation.

They perform with basic values and same goals oriented to promote justice and sustainable development, though they have different background, vision, form of organization and different practice. Most of domestic and overseas NGO working in Indonesia have legal body, that is established as foundation. This type of CSO exists largely across Indonesia, particularly in some cities such as Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Medan, Aceh, Pontianak, Ujung Pandang, and so forth. Nevertheless, in general, some decent and experienced NGOs commonly are headquartered in Jakarta. Aside of it, some organizational networks and NGO coalitions locate their secretariat and main activities in Jakarta.

- b) Organization on Social Welfare Service is a common terminology referring to it as a social organization. Then, the scope of work as well as the decision of its legal body are determined in accordance with the Acts on Social Welfare Activity No.6/1974 (recently updated as Acts on Social Welfare No.11/2009). Social organizations, in general, run their activity focusing on social welfare according to the regulations enacted by Department of Social Affairs. Social welfare problems coverage includes various categories, such as neglected children, people with disability, senior citizens, beggars, street walkers, street children, ex-prisoners, and so forth. Those social organizations focus its activities on social services for marginal groups, aid assistance, medical recovery, and social rehabilitation. Some of the social organizations have also extended their work beyond the confinement of social service, but activity which is in conjunction with policy

advocacy. This last mentioned social organizations are mainly distinguished through its typical activities such as providing assistance to street children and indigeneous community which are the so-called isolated groups.

Social organization is formed as foundations, association or other organizations established by the citizen under social welfare sector. The Department of Social Affairs has formulated two level divisions of organizations for organizing social organization, they are BK3S (*Badan Koordinasi Kegiatan Kesejahteraan Sosial* -Social Welfare Activity Coordinating Board) in the regional level, and DNIKS (*Dewan Nasional untuk Kesejahteraan Sosial*-National Council for Indonesian Social Welfare) in the national level.

- c) Charity organization provides aids for NGO, social organization, individual, and a particular family in need and also social groups. Religious charity organizations focusing on charity activities develop more progressively and able to collect larger amount of fund, such as the *Dompot Dua'fa*, Humanity Funds from *Kompas* Newspaper, etc. This type of organization has also developed into environmental sector such as *Dana Mitra Lingkungan*- DML (Funding Partnership for Environment) and *Yayasan Keanekaragaman Hayati* (*Biodiversity Foundation*). Corporate and also business actors have contributed to develop these organizations by allocating their gained profits and channel it via scholarship scheme, disaster financial assistance, etc.
- d) Semi-governmental organizations in the Indonesian government context, particularly in New Order regime, are established semi-governmental organizations to implement various developmental programs. Most of these organizations are formed in local level and used for administrative functionalities and public service dedicated to restricted community. Those who can be categorized into semi-governmental organization are such PKK (*Perkumpulan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*-Family Welfare Association), LKMD (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa*-Institution of Community Resilience) and other boards formed by other governmental bodies.
- e) Semi-business organizations care for social problems and have social community organizations that operate functional support and service to people in need in the community. Another motivation-which is often hidden, is organization formed to accommodate labor's aspirations or as a tool to build magnificent image of the company. Semi-business organizations are represented by foundations which notably

established by state and private-owned companies such as YMM (*Yayasan Mitra Mandiri* - Self-Reliance Partnership Foundation, established by United Way International) and YDBA (*Yayasan Dana Bhakti Astra*-Astra Owned Financial Charity Foundation-established by Astra company), etc. (Hadiz, 1999).

2.2 Membership Based CSO

A predicate, which is often embedded in this type of organization, is a “mass organization” or community organization and both of them are often-times abbreviated as “Ormas”. This organization mainly serves its member’s interest and needs. However, many mass organizations simultaneously provide services to the public and people.

Mass organization has its own variety. Generally, mass organization can be divided into organizations, which connect to business such as KADIN (*Kamar Dagang dan Industri*-Chamber of Commerce Indonesia), HIPMI (*Himpunan Pengusaha Muda Indonesia*-Young Entrepreneurs Association of Indonesia), and other business associations and organizations which are established and developed by government such as KNPI (*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia*-Indonesian Youth National Committee), SPSI (*Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*-Indonesian Labors Association), HKTI (*Himpunan Kerukunan Tani Indonesia*-Indonesian Farmers Association) as well as community organization which is autonomously developed by people in the community. The last type of organization covers cooperation among the youth and student organization, professionals, academicians, citizens, religion-based organizations, and cultural and recreational organizations.

Religion-based organization such as the NU (*Nahdatul Ulama*), Muhammadiyah, PGI (*Persatuan Gereja Indonesia*-Indonesian Church Union) and KWI (*Konferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia*-Indonesian Church Assembly Conference) particularly undertake functions out of their main basic orientation in religious teaching dissemination. Facilitated by their goals and missions to implement the religious principles in daily life. Those organizations formulate and execute several programs for resolving people’s problem in life, such as poverty, social discrepancy, and so forth. They commonly established organizations and foundations to provide education services, health, and other developmental sectors. By establishing several foundations, Muhammadiyah, for instance, has various educational institutions, starting from kindergarten to university level and also operates many hospitals and polyclinics for medication.

Futhermore, these religious organizations establish mediating NGOs (LSAF, 1999; Eldridge, 1995). For instance, Lakpesdam NU (*Lembaga Kajian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia*-Institute for Human and Resource Empowerment), YKS-Paramita (*Yayasan Kepedulian Sosial*-Social Care Foundation), LOPS (*Lembaga Oikumene Pengembangan Swadaya*- Institute for *Oikumene* Self-Reliance Empowerment), and LPPS (*Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengembangan Sosial*-Institute for Research and Social Development) are development-oriented organizations established by NU (*Nahdatul Ulama*), Walubi (*Perwalian Umat Budha Indonesia*-Indonesian Buddhist Society Assembly), PGI, and KWI, respectively. They are structurally part of religion-based organizations. Apart of it, there are also NGOs oriented towards development and specific issues, which are culturally associated with religion-based organizations. P3M (*Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat*-Association for Islamic Boarding House Empowerment and Society) and LKiS (*Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial*-Institute for Social and Islamic Discourse) are commonly entailed with NU, whilst *Yayasan Bina Swadaya* (Self-Reliance Empowerment Foundation) and YSS (*Yayasan Sosial Soegyopranoto*- Soegyopranoto's Social Foundation) are strongly networked with Catholic churches (Ibrahim, 1992).

The development and diversity of CSOs, as elaborated above, have potentials to engage in any efforts for DG at any level. Mostly, various CSOs categorized by Diamond (1999) are capable of actively demonstrating their performance in Indonesia. Without any intention to overestimate in pointing out certain NGO community, CSOs have shown active involvement in compelling reformation process for democratic governance in Indonesia since in the New Order (Eldridge 1995; Riker 1998) and also in the post-New Order (Suharko 2003). Even more, amongst many categories of CSO, NGO is the most active CS component in speaking up against authoritarian political regime of New Order (Uhlin, 1997).

3. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CSO IN THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

To understand further about the strengths and weaknesses of Indonesia's CSO in promoting DG in the post-New Order, this chapter refers to a

conceptual framework developed by CIVICUS² in assessing the states of CSO in many countries in the research project of ‘CIVICUS Global Survey of the State of Civil Society.’ CIVICUS defines Civil Society Diamond (CSD) as a framework of analysis that result into Civil Society Index in each country assessed.

CSD is consist of four dimensions: structure, values, environment, and impact (Heinrich, 2007). Firstly, the dimension of structure examines the actor (CSOs), the characteristics of CSO, the relations among CSOs, and between CSOs inside the civil society arena. Secondly, the dimension of environment explains the variety of external factors, inclusive of socio-cultural, political, and legal factors, as well as the attitudes and behavior of state and private sector actor towards CSOs. All factors influencing or contributing to the stronger development of CSOs or the opposite can also be regarded. Thirdly, the dimension of value addresses the principles and values believed, practiced and promoted by civil society. Fourthly, the dimension of impact assesses the impact CSO has in influencing public policy and empowering citizens (towards democratic governance).

The following part is in accordance to findings of Civil Society Index Report on Indonesia undertaken by YAPPIKA³ (Ibrahim, 2006) and other results from relevant analysis.

3.1 Structure

As put by Diamond (1999), it is only CSO which has internally democratic structure can contribute to DG development. This can be observed from the existing leadership within CSO. Regional Stakeholder Survey (RSS) conducted by YAPPIKA in 2006 showed that the leadership of CSO tends to be dominated by ‘elite’ or the most privileged groups (in terms of economic status and education). Although CSOs have been also very successful in promoting gender equity and mainstreaming, there are few women in managerial and leadership positions within CSOs (Ibrahim, 2006: 32).

Another structural problems arise from financial resources and sustainability. Majority of non-membership based CSOs (such as NGOs working in the advocacy sector, service delivery, community development and

² CIVICUS is an international alliance of civil society organizations dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. For more information about CIVICUS, see : www.civicus.org.

³ YAPPIKA is an Indonesian NGO selected by CIVICUS to play the role of National Coordinating Organization (NCO) that assesses the state of civil society in Indonesia.

watchdog organizations) face seriously this problem. This type of CSO is dependent on foreign funding sources. At the other side, membership based CSOs, such as religious organization, labour unions, professional organizations, etc., gain their funding from membership fees and bussines related activities (Ibrahim, 2006: 38).

In relation to human resources, it is reported that although most of Indonesian CSOs have their staff number (permanent and part-time staff), they do not have adequate human resources to achieve their goals. Some factors trigger this problem: 1) human resource regeneration, 2) geographical conditions that affect capacity building process, and 3) dependency on foreign fundings (Ibrahim, 2006: 39).

In general CSOs face limited financial and human resources. Most CSOs do not have yet adequate self-supporting and sustainable resources. They lack the ability to attract, mobilize and maintain the resources. This is a main reason that CSOs, especially NGOs, are dependent on foreign aid. Financial assistance from the government and the private sector amount to only a small sum (Ibrahim, 2006: 39).

Lack of internal structure, to some extent, is compensated by growing network between CSOs. It is reported that information exchange between CSOs runs intensively. They make use of various media such as newsletters, website, mailing lists and other new media for sharing and exchanging information.

Indonesian CSOs have established cooperation through various forms: network, alliance, consortium, forum, etc., for certain issues. INFID (International NGO Forum for Indonesia Development) is one of the most important coalition between Indonesian and international NGOs for conducting advocacy against the impacts of international development policies influencing Indonesia. For issues on environment and natural resources, CSOs have established some collaborative efforts, such as Forest Watch Indonesia, Social Forestry Communication Forum, Alliance of Indonesia Indigenous Community, etc.

Several NGOs have actively participated in international link and forum. WALHI, for instance, is a member of the Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), an International Climate Change Action Network (ICAN). Several NGOs working on the agricultural sector have become members of International Federation on Organic Agriculture Movement, an Asia Pacific Pesticide Action Network (Ibrahim, 2006: 36).

In regard to influence on public policy making process, NGOs have actively developed various coalition at the national level. They are advocacy

networks for the eradication of violence against women, coalition for the legal enforcement, coalition for the freedom of information, working group for law on the state defence, etc. They will establish such coalition if there is a strategic issue that needs collaborative effort.

However, international linkages of CSOs and cooperation between CSOs (specifically NGOs) are still dominated by CSOs based in Jakarta and a number of other major cities (Ibrahim, 2006: 36). At some major cities such as Yogyakarta, Makasar, Aceh and Medan, NGOs have established provincial NGO forum for sharing information and increasing their political leverage to the local government. The number of CSOs involved in international linkage and cooperation is small compared to the number of CSOs in Indonesia which is in thousands.

3.2 Value

In regard to the dimension of value, some surveys find different results. Regional consultation initiated by YAPPIKA in 2002 showed that CSOs generally have done quite well in practicing democracy in their organizations. This can be observed from its selected leaders, their efforts in developing democratic management system, and involving members in decision making process and activities. This tendency is confirmed by RSS 2006 that majority of respondents stated that CSO chairpersons are selected by CSO's members.

However, on the other hand, an assessment conducted by a donor institution found that several CSOs do not strictly separate their organizational structures between the board and the executive. Leadership in several CSOs is also dominated by one person who is usually the founder and the leader of the CSO for a very long period. In this context, CSO's staffs and members are less involved in decision making process. This tendency is confirmed by LP3ES's survey in 2005 that a significant number of NGOs have not strictly defined bodies assigned to determine organizational directions and policies and those implementing them, particularly between board and executive (Ibrahim, 2006: 60).

It can be concluded that, in general, CSOs always claim and feel that they adopt democratic values within their organizations, but some assessments show that they do not seriously transform the democratic values into practices of democratic governance in their organizations.

In relation to issue of transparency, few Indonesian CSOs make financial information and report to the public. Budgets and sources of funds

should be publicly informed and can be easily accessed by the public, but such information is not usually available. The lack of transparency is the weakest extent in the body of Indonesian CSOs. Hence, it is not surprising that some CSOs are also suspected of corruptive practices in operating their activities.

Another problem that links to CSO is associated with accountability. Accountability is a mechanism where each individual and organization report to authorized body and are responsible for their acts taken. An effective accountability requires well-defined goals, openness in decision making, transparent reports about resource allocation and its achievement, as well as concrete mechanism for assessment to find out who is responsible for the performance. In general, it has two-fold forms, that is short term functional accountability (report on resource usage and short run impacts) and strategic accountability (report on impacts of NGO's activities on other organizations and wider scale of working entities) (Edwards and Hulme, 1995: 9).

NGOs possess multiple accountabilities. Firstly, downward accountability, which is performed for its partners, targeted groups, and constituents. Secondly, the upward accountability in which it has to be responsible in showing its performance to the founders, donors, and government. In legal perspectives, majority of NGOs have no membership basis and are only responsible to the trustee, but morally when it comes to participative values and empowerment, NGO is supposedly to have reliable responsibility to its constituents particularly advocated groups and contributors.

Some experts clearly presented that most of NGOs would pay attentions to upward accountability rather than downward accountability. This issue becomes serious especially for most of Indonesia's NGO with legal status as foundation. Legally, a foundation is only responsible to its founding members and not to the constituents whom have been largely claimed to be group represented.

In the context of Indonesia, in addition to above, it is necessary to look up into upward accountability. The NGO becomes more dependent because they rely on foreign donors. Concerning to this, Ibrahim (2006: 6) puts, particularly in its relations to accountability, that majority of the NGOs are more characterized into "demand-driven," where it has much dependence to donor's requests. For instance, financial audit is performed and becomes obligatory when the donors ask them to do so.

Aside from it, this situation causes less NGOs to be able to set up better short, mid, and long term plan (Ibrahim, 2010:5). In addition, reliance to foreign donors and scarcity of domestic financial resource lead them to

competing situation among NGOs. In the eyes of NGO community, friendship and social bonding-based relations have well-developed which lead flows of aids from foreign donors to going into the account of a number of established and major NGOs who have prominent figures and members linked to foreign donors.

Furthermore, when associating these NGOs to performance, the accountability of NGO is not robust and problematic. Unlike the government sector that should undertake general election and business sector which enlists their profits, there is no clear defined bottom lines of those released reports on various activities (Edwards, 2000; Fowler 1997; Uphoff, 1993). Until recently, there have been emerging debates about assessment indicators to evaluate NGO performance. Indicators of organizational performance are inadequate to be formulated and are not available. Since inexistence of absolute standards, evaluation on NGO performance is merely a matter of judgment and interpretation (Edwards and Hulme, 1995:11).

There is a gap between CSO activities that promote these values and the practice of these values within their organizations. CSOs are active in promoting democracy, but many CSOs do not practice democratic values and principal democratic governance in their own organizations. CSOs are busy in promoting transparency in state agencies and in the private sector, but they do not themselves practice transparency. Only few CSOs regularly provide information to public, and publish financial reports, annual reports, etc. (Ibrahim, 2006: 72).

3.3 Environment

Some weaknesses related to the issue of value can constrain the existence of social capital, particularly when connecting with generalized social trust, co-existence norms, and required reciprocity whenever they involve in actions to promote DG. Generally, non-membership based NGOs (advocacy NGOs) and labour unions suffer from a lack of public trust. These CSOs are usually very active in carrying out policy advocacy activities to promote democratic governance. People who have less experience of being engaged in NGOs and labour unions usually established their associations in urban areas. Meanwhile, membership based NGOs, especially faith based organizations, such as Nahdatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, church based-organizations and the like, that are not so active in conducting policy advocacy, have enjoyed a high public trust from the people (Ibrahim, 2006: 80).

Generally, the political context in the post-New Order is democratic, proven by the general election in Indonesia carried out every five years and had been fairly organized and resulted in flawless political leadership. In concurrence with local autonomy, all governors and majors are directly elected. The state guarantees the implementation of civil and political rights (such as rights to delivering opinion, being involved in organization, etc.), information rights and freedom of press. It enables all citizens to have freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of establishing new association such as CSOs, political parties, and other forms of organization for gaining collective goals. All of these have led a situation to enabling a sound political competition and resurfaced peaceful political succession.

Nevertheless, the political context in the post-New Order remains symbolized with serious weaknesses of the Rule of Law. The practice of Rule of Law is ubiquitously flawed because it is observable from the trustless behavior of the citizens towards justice and the court. In this case, the courts are seen as independence-lost institutions and are overloaded with serious corruption within its structures. The citizens also witness that equal treatment before the law has not yet practiced seriously. Despite the consistent efforts to eradicate corruption through KPK (*Commission for Corruption Eradication*), the practices of corruption are rampant, widely spreading, and hard to cease. Such persisting situation causes widespread of skepticism about Rule of Law and Law Enforcement in Indonesia.

Although political context and system of post New Order is principally democratic, the legal policy does not fully support CSO activities.

Firstly, Acts of No.8/1985 requires all religious and civic organizations to preserve the *Pancasila* (five principles) of state ideology as the basis of their organizations in order to be the guidelines for their existence and conserve their moral function. In achieving this goal, it is necessary to eliminate a tendency to excessively control by stipulating CSOs embrace *Pancasila* as state ideology and also as main foundations for organizational operations, obligation to register their organization, establish a patron organization. To ensure a smooth practice, the government must keep them under surveillance and control, provide approvals to obtain foreign aids, and a temporary notice or even dissolve the structure of organization if situation allows.

That determination has become a controversy among all acts formulated in the post-reformation era. For instance, since 1999 an obligation in placing *Pancasila* as a fundamental conscription for establishment of organization has been no longer applicable. The dissolving action undergone by the

government is also much overwhelming because it is not in parallel with right authority of government and in contravention of spirit of legal justice. Given this situation, although the government has right to legally dissolve any NGOs, post-New Order never did it.

Secondly, Acts on establishment of a foundation, which is notably the legal basis of CSO, gives suffering concerning the ambiguity between social non-profit orientation and profit-business orientation. Government then applies Acts of No.16/2001 (that later revised to be Acts of No. 28/2004) to the establishment of foundation, which is the first Acts specifically regulating the operations of foundation. This regulation is actually awaited by particular groups who are discomfort with the clarity and the identity of foundation as legal body. On its simple understanding, a foundation refers to a certain form of organization which concerns on social goals, with particular idealism, non-membership, and has no orientation in earning profits. However, reading through this Acts, the basic character of foundation is not fully put in its chapters. In reality, the last draft of this Acts are results from the groups having particular interests who compromised to treat foundations as pro-profit entities and groups with particular interest who wanted to turn foundation into pure non-profit organization. This controversy and compromise occur as this Acts is intended politically to regulate many foundations that veil their main motivation as business entity.⁴

That Acts also governs majority of the NGOs formed as foundation. Although part of groups in NGO perceived the importance of Acts on foundation, some of them convey a feeling of burden as this Acts expands opportunity for the government to control them, like what New Order has undertaken to them. As enacted in Chapter 11 of this Acts, a foundation will only receive legal status after the Minister of Law and Human Rights and its Regional Office have already legalized it. NGOs deem this chapter as a chance for the government in controlling their existence (Tempo, 23 July 2001; Forum Keadilan, July 15, 2001).

Thirdly, taxation system is uncondusive to support the CSO activities. The tax system in Indonesia does not make a clear demarcation between not-for-profit organizations (foundation) and business entities. No tax exemptions exist for not-for-profit organizations working solely for the

⁴ The formulation of this Acts, for some of the groups, is due to forcible demand of IMF and as conditional part of loan. However, no doubt that this Acts restricts and/or controls this type of business practice operated by ex-president Soeharto's cronies (Forum Keadilan , July 15 2001; Tempo, July 23, 2001).

public good. These happened as implications of unclearly defined concept of non-profit works in CSO's routine practices. A number of CSOs have undergone advocacy to implement tax exemptions for non-profit sectors and tax deduction for individuals as well as foundations that grant aids to social, humanitarian, and religious activities, but the government is not yet able to revamp existing tax regulation. Shortly, tax regulation is inadequate for enabling CSO activities (Ibrahim, 2006: 52).

In regard to the issue of CSO and governmental relations, democratization process in the post New Order, to some extent, has changed relations between government and CSOs. On the one side, government sees that CSOs are no longer an opposing power. The government tends to let away CSO grow with its own various interests, issues, and activities. Eventually, the government has undergone a benign neglect to CSOs through doing nothing in terms of guiding, coordinating, and sufficiently facilitating the CSOs which are notably important assets in developing democratic governance. On the other side, CSOs perceived that they are able to run activities and functions freely and independently from government intervention (Ibrahim, 2006: 53).

However, in the conduit of development activities, the government and CSO relations continue to be marked by mutual suspicion and confrontation. RSS 2006 conducted by YAPPIKA shows that the government tends to intervene in CSO activities. In doing advocacy activities, especially in lobbying government and other state bodies, CSOs also tend to use confrontational tactics. This is indicated by CSO activities in influencing decision making process at the parliament and the government ministries. The RSS also shows that dialogue between government and CSOs is still limited (Ibrahim, 2006: 54).

Although there is a wide space of NGO and government's collaborative relations, distrust on both sides becomes an obstacle to genuine collaboration in development activities. Cooperation between the government and CSOs remain limited. NGO-government partnership is still difficult to set up as a country grand strategy in poverty reduction. State-society synergy, as suggested by Evans (1996) is still rare in development activities (Suharko, 2008: 54).

The weakness of CSO also arises from relations with community or target groups. This also happens to most non-membership based CSO (particularly NGOs). As asserted by Edwards (2000: 21), NGO has rights to legal-ly voicing their aspirations, but not voting. NGOs are not representatives of

citizens, but they can speak up on behalf of the citizens or those who are being claimed to be advocated.

Unclear roles of NGO in being representative for advocacy has invited cynical views on the NGO performance, particularly those who work on advocacy. Limited or unavailability of public consultancy by NGO with constituents and those who are claimed to be represented groups, are main serious representation problems.

For instance, a study explored by Fox and Brown (1998) on the advocacy of megaproject commissioned by World Bank, unveiled that in some cases, transnational coalition approach as a way of operating NGO's projects did not represent their constituents (poor people, victims of environmental catastrophe), but rather to exhibit their own interests. In Indonesia's case, Rumansara's study (1998) and Seamus Cleary (1997) on advocacy of Kedung Ombo water containment unfolds that, although NGO represented the interests of marginalized people, they most likely represented their own interest. It may happen, as in Indonesia's context, that majority of NGOs are non-membership based and generally take form of a foundation.

The problems resurface whenever NGO determines their beneficiaries without any consultation process and it is rather based on self-claims that some particular groups or parties are requiring services which they offer. Given this case, NGO seems to be a representative of vested interest of those who are given the services. Action plans are mostly formulated through discussions and consultations with those who would have to be given the services. Furthermore, due to asymmetric relationship between NGO and donors, NGO often prioritizes the interests and desires of donors rather than interests of its partner/targeted groups.

Relation between CSO and private sectors also seems not conducive for the development of CSOs. The political context of post-New Order does not significantly shift relations between private sector and CSOs. Their relations are always in tense condition. On the one side, as showed by RSS 2006, private sector perceives CSO activities with suspicion or indifference. On the other side, most CSOs feel that there is no significant change in the relationship between the private sector and CSOs. For instance, advocating NGOs always argue that corporations continue destroying the environment and natural resources and even marginalizing the local people (Ibrahim, 2006: 56).

However, lately, there is an indication that the private sector and CSO relationship has started to be developed through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. For example, in 1999, several MNCs and national

companies established Indonesia Business Links (IBL) to promote good business behaviors and ethics and partnership in development. Several CSOs put their attention to the issue of CSR (Ibrahim, 2006: 56). Along with the efforts to find various schemes of sustainable financing, CSOs especially NGOs seek to develop NGO-corporate partnership. The establishment of the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium (APPC) is a prominent example of this development. There is an emerging indication that NGOs have become more familiar with financial resources from the corporations (Saidi *et al.*, 2003). Shortly, the relationship between CSOs and corporations is more growing rapidly.

In relation to the practice of CSR, corporations are welcome to cooperate with CSOs. This has encouraged both CSOs and corporations to build collaboration in realizing various programs of CSR. Through collaboration, they will have more chances to compensate for their weaknesses. CSOs provide expertise and experience in running community development. The corporation provides funds for financing and sustaining the development activities. This collaboration will have fruitful implications in efforts to increasing the quality of people life.

3.4 Impacts

All powers and weaknesses embedded in CSOs co-exist in the level of structure, value, and environment have implication on impact factors they reach. It is likely reasonable to perceive that such weaknesses on CSO's body are much more apparent than its strengths. It therefore makes sense that the impacts of CSO's activities is not largely extensive. Given this argument, Indonesia Civil Society Index (CSI) assessment indicates: "significant internal constraints seem to be preventing it from increasing its role in governance and development" (Heinrich, 2007: 199).

Advocacy NGOs, labour unions, social-religious organizations, gender based movement, other specific issue oriented CSOs are active in influencing various public policy. RSS 2006 shows that CSO activities, in voicing human rights issues, are quite well-done. The result gained from human rights issues is much satisfying than that achievements in the issues of social policy and national budgeting policy (Ibrahim, 2006: 74-76).

CSOs are also active to watch and observe most of state institutions such as parliament, police, court, and other government bodies. However, RSS 2006 reports that CSOs are less succesful in playing a role in demanding government accountability. CSO's bargaining position in decision

making process is still low. CSOs also suffer from lack of capacity of lobbying and establishing alliances covering nationwide level (Ibrahim, 2006: 77-78).

The success of CSO in making efforts possible for empowering citizens are also hard to be proven. Many CSOs are involved in providing information on civic education, such as democratic value, pluralism, gender equality, consumer rights, and other civil and political rights, but the success in advocating these issues is difficult to be confirmed because of inadequate resources (Ibrahim, 2006: 81).

Although empowering marginalized people is a claim for the existence of CSO and has become their common problems, it is not easily measured. CSOs seem to be very active throughout the period of empowerment, underpinned by their activities such as proliferating capacity building for farmer organization/association, indigenous community, environmentalist groups, women groups, and other marginal community. Two main reasons asserting this argument are: 1) CSOs are only able to organize local and small-scale activities and 2) lack of CSO ability in reaching the marginalized people in the entire levels of state (Ibrahim, 2006: 82).

As a result, referring to the Indonesia CSI (Civil Society Index) assessment, it shows that CSOs have moderate levels of activity and impact on influencing policy, holding government and the private sector accountable, responding to social concerns, empowering people, and meeting societal needs (Heinrich, 2007: 206). It means that although CSOs have been proliferated in the post New Order (in terms of quantity of CSOs) and has been very active in performing various essential functions in promoting democratic governance, their impacts of activities are limited.

4. ACTIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Potentials owned by various CSO in institutionalizing democratic governance will be more actualized when three main agendas of action are undertaken, as follows:

a. Strengthening CSO Capacity and Governance

Because of some internal problems, CSOs should strengthen organizational capacity and governance. In this regard, Indonesia CSI assessment

provides two key recommendations. Firstly, CSOs must diversify the resource base. There is a strong need, especially for non-membership based NGOs, to increase their domestic resource base through income-generation activities, membership fees, and other local fund raising activities. CSOs should also seek fund from the government and the private sector that do not endanger the independence of CSOs. Secondly, CSOs should increase their accountability. CSO's work needs to better reflect the needs of the people, through stronger citizen participation in CSO's program design and implementation, and a stronger reliance on needs assessments. In this regard, it is also important for CSOs to develop a joint code of ethics among the stakeholders in implementing their programs. Donors should also encourage CSOs to improve their accounting and financial report systems (Heinrich, 2007: 207).

b. Implementation of Self-Regulating Principle for CSOs

Considering the historical dynamics of CSO development in Indonesia, there is a strong tendency that CSOs always stand against government's effort to develop regulation and strict surveillance. They also firmly deliver their burden of all of legal products which characterize a similarity and neglect their heterogeneous entity. It does not mean they dislike or perceive it as unimportant guidelines for organization. Some of them, mainly are from professionals organization, have developed Code of Ethics in compliance to profession and their working sectors. In 2002, 252 NGOs signed the Code of Ethics that mainly governs the issue related to integrity, accountability, transparency, independence, anti violence, gender equality, and financial management (Ibrahim, 2006: 35). It proves, in some level, CSO could self-govern through Code of Ethics they have made. Chance and even a facilitating action for CSO to self-govern also enable it to become their area in developing social capital as a tool of actions and movement for promoting the institutionalization of DG.

c. Enabling Policy for Developing CSOs

As in democratic countries, government should provide conducive policy circumstance, which contributes to the existence and development of CSO sector. CSOs also have independence and organizational autonomy. This condition enables comparative advantage owned by CSOs and governmental bodies can be empowered rather than having them compete to each other. To foster the conducive circumstance, which in turn can prevail any form of truly mutual cooperation, government should not let away the

existence and development of CSO, or in contrast, undertakes a regulative action and strict surveillance.

Regarding this regulation, one important thing is avoiding the overloaded regulation and inefficient administrative requirements, which are hard to be implemented and merely oriented to bureaucratization without any practical profit. What needed then is a facilitative legal framework and supporting policy for CSO. This will enable government to develop coherent and consistent policy for CSO. In this context, the dismissal of Acts No. 8/1985 along with its derivative regulations revision towards Acts on Foundation should be made instantly. More than that, every single effort for constituting new Acts or revising existing Acts should be appropriately made in conjunction with noticing the diversity of CSOs and its constituting process must involve fully the CSO in it.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A discourse and promotion of democratic governance have intensively developed in the post New Order Indonesia. In referring to the Neo-Tocquevillian school, CSOs have potentials and capabilities in compelling the development of democratic governance. Peter Evans emphasizes that the efforts in promoting democratic governance will be successful whenever synergy between government and CSO co-exists. The more robust their relations, the more opportunities can be reached to reinvigorate DG.

The rapid growing number of CSO, diversity of CSO, and their engagement in public activities in Indonesia are primary resource and power for promoting democratic governance. It is built on political context and a guarantee of allowing conducive civil society and sound political rights implementation. However, the weaknesses of CSO are very obvious, shown by lack of financial and human resources, inability in reaching out the entire levels of civil society in national setting, low social trust from the people in CSOs, mutual suspicious relations between CSO and government, weakened bargaining power towards the state in decision-making process, etc. Moreover, the problems and constraints overcame by the CSOs which concerned the socio-cultural and legal contexts, apparently resurface in the time when post-New Order has not actually developed and perpetuated by lack of sufficient policy instruments.

It is also worthwhile to reconsider a persisting notion that CSOs have significant power in promoting democratic governance. A Civil Society

Index Report on Indonesia 2006 clearly confirms that the weaknesses of CSO are much more obvious than the power they have. Potential power in promoting democratic governance seems to be overprescribed and not much of sufficient empirical assessment.

All weaknesses of CSO mentioned above have caused limited achievements as an effort to promote democratic governance. Self-assessment which has been demonstrated by CSO activists through CSI assessment presents that the successful works on policy advocacy and some efforts to influence public policy is hard to reconfirm. Generally, CSO's contributions to promoting democratic governance are limited. In addition to this argument, some efforts of CSO to empower the people are also not sufficiently measured. Such limits of aspects are consequences of weakness embedded in CSOs.

Achievements and impacts of CSOs on promoting democratic governance would have been improving if CSOs are capable of tackling their weakness and optimizing the powers. Three main proposed agenda are: 1) strengthening CSO capacity and governance, 2) implementing self-regulation principle for CSOs to alleviate their weaknesses associated with structure and values, and 3) enabling policy for CSOs to working on problems related to environment. The success of tackling those weaknesses will open pathways for impacts of activities in promoting CSO in the near future.

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