Today (29/01), the European Union (EU) and the United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC) launched a joint project to assist Indonesian and other Asian cities’ efforts to protect their citizens and assets from the impacts of climate change. The project will collaborate with European leading institutions as well as partners across Asia and the Pacific region.

The Climate Resilience and Inclusive Cities (CRIC) Project is a long-term initiative that will enable cities with ambitious commitments to go beyond business-as-usual in responding to the severe and evolving climate-related events. The project is placing particular focus on the most vulnerable populations in disaster-prone areas. This is to ensure its inclusive impacts and help mitigate social and economic inequalities. The new Project is in line with the EU’s continued efforts to promote prosperity, peace and sustainable development worldwide. More recently, the European Commission's European Green Deal highlighted the EU's priority for sustainable green transition that is just and socially fair, within the region and beyond.

The project’s launching ceremony was graced by Dr. Ruanda Sugahardiman, Director General of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, and Mr. Hans Farnhammer on behalf of H.E. Vincent Piket, the EU Ambassador to Indonesia. It was attended by more than 80 representatives from 20 local governments in Indonesia, Ministries, national and local development agencies, partner organisations, academic institutions and the media.

H.E. Vincent Piket, EU Ambassador to Indonesia in relation to the launching stated that "cities are the main contributor of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, mainly from energy use for cooking, cooling, industry, transport, and heating, which contribute to 70 percent of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Strong adaptation and mitigation efforts are required to withstand the negative impacts of
climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions." In addition, cities are exposed to a high degree of cumulative climate-related risks. The address also pointed out that "people living in urban areas are increasingly at risk of natural disasters and the impacts of climate-induced slow-onset events, which presents a concentration of risk because the locations contributing most to economic development are simultaneously the most at risk. Yet, if managed well, resilient, inclusive and resource-efficient cities could become drivers in transforming our cities into a climate resilient and low-carbon economy, contributing to both local liveability and global sustainability."

With the EU's funding of EUR 3.2 million (approximately IDR 49 billion), the project will for the next five years seek to tackle the multi-dimensional challenges faced by cities and local governments in improving climate resilience. The main activities of the CRIC project aims to improve the institutional, financial and administrative capacities of cities and local authorities (LAs) through peer-to-peer learning and exchange of knowledge, development of local action plans for climate resilient and inclusive cities, and organisation of communication and capacity building trainings.

A wide range of tools will be used, including research, capacity building, advocacy campaigns, creation of knowledge hub, and triangular cooperation between Europe, Southeast Asia and South Asia.

Emphasising the importance of the CRIC project, Mrs. Suharti, Deputy Governor of Jakarta for Civil Registry and Settlements, stated that the project will support Jakarta’s effort to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, especially to “make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” Moreover, Jakarta city administration is trying to integrate sustainability and resilience into all elements of urban management – in managing water, waste, mobility as well as consumption and production processes that take place in the city. “We, Jakarta Capital City Government, highly value this kind of knowledge sharing and open dialogue to tailor a project and to enrich our perspective on important climate resilience challenges that are faced by the cities in Indonesia, particularly Jakarta. And we commit to placing inclusivity at the centre of policy-making. Not only making sure that those most vulnerable to the impacts are benefiting from our collective actions, but to actually put them as the subjects from whom we could all learn about more sustainable ways of living,” the Deputy Governor added.

In her remarks during the opening ceremony, UCLG ASPAC Secretary-General Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi stressed that “as the impacts of climate change become more intense and frequent, we need to accelerate our work to help cities and local governments withstand the effects and protect citizens from future shocks and stresses. The local political leadership, networks and expertise that we pool together under this project will play a critical role in achieving the project’s aim to promote climate resilience and inclusive cities.” She also added that the most affected ones in climate calamities were women and children. Therefore, cities must re-double their efforts by making good collaboration as climate change is real.”

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