



United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Programme des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains

INDONESIA

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PRESS RELEASE

Observing Changes in Banda Aceh Urban Planning Press Release UN-HABITAT September 21st 2006

Banda Aceh – On Wednesday, September 20th 2006 .

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme-UN-HABITAT in cooperation with the Engineering Faculty Syiah Kuala University (Unsyiah) conducted a one day seminar and workshop at Unsyiah Campus, Banda Aceh.

Title of the seminar and workshop:

“Master Planning. Learning from Monitoring, Mapping and Research.”

Attendant:

- Chairman of Regional Planning Agency (Bappeda) Banda Aceh, T. Dermawan
- Director Urban Planning and Environment of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency (BRR), Erwin Fahmi
- Local government board
- Representatives of local and international organizations
- Representatives of academic institutions

The seminar aimed to evaluate the lessons which were so far learned concerning urban change and urban planning in Banda Aceh. The main areas of interest were the spatial and social dimensions.

During the past year UN-HABITAT asked various Indonesian research institutions to support housing reconstruction in Aceh and Nias with monitoring and research. The results with respect to Banda Aceh city were reported during the seminar. The discussion focused on the implication for city planning. Contributing research institutions were Syiah Kuala University (Unsyiah), Yayasan Masyarakat Iqra (YMI), Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) and Parahyangan University (UNPAR).

ITB and YMI highlighted in their research that poor people find it difficult to return to Banda Aceh. In the monitoring process Unsyiah found out that people in the city as compared to those who live in rural areas can count on better public services. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of Banda Aceh are much less satisfied with the reconstruction of their neighbourhoods.

Bruno Dercon, Housing Policy Advisor of UN-HABITAT, stressed that the rebuilding of infrastructure alone will not repair the city: “Urban management is poor even in parts that are not affected by the tsunami. It is difficult for poor and vulnerable people to return to the city in dignity. NGOs succeed in encouraging active participation in the rebuilding process. However, beyond the work of these aid programs little progress can be noted in the effort to strengthen local institutions that foster people’s involvement in the reconstruction.”

Dr. Kamal Arief from UNPAR, put the reconstruction into context with urban planning. He demonstrated that the problems of Banda Aceh have not changed in the last 30 years: “It is a water-logged city and a city that was surrounded by a defense zone. Low-lying areas in the heart of the city need constant protection...”

The afternoon workshop analyzed the intermediate assessment of urban planning for four sub-districts (*kecamatan*), namely Kutaraja, Kuta Alam, Syiah Kuala and Meuraxa. UN-HABITAT is in charge of the latter while GTZ works with the other three. Final results are expected by the end of this year. The participants agreed that common goals must be set for the output. Furthermore a coordination procedure must be put in place for the final months’ reporting. The planning work in the *kecamatan*s showed also that it will be a challenge to find agreements on the long-term macro-planning of the city, i.e. on issues of sea protection and extension towards Aceh Besar.