The 12th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda
Implementation of the Mandate and Programme of Work –
Focused Thematic Discussions and Interactive Dialogues
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Public participation: a tool for development

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Transcript of statement by H.E. Mr. Achsanul Habib,
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Indonesia

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Thank you so much, Mr. Chair, and Merci Beaucoup, Madame Isabelle Durant for your introduction.

Fellow panelists,
Members of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good morning. Let me begin by thanking the Expert Mechanism for holding this thematic discussion on a very crucial topic. It is my great pleasure to address this esteemed session on Indonesia's perspective and experience in public participation as a tool for development.

Our commitment to public participation in development process is unequivocal. We treat public participation not as a box ticking exercise, but as the lifeblood of a fundamental human right, consistent with the spirit of the Declaration on the Right to Development. We place our people at the center, empowering them as co-creators and primary stakeholders rather than passive recipients whose life realities shape our development priorities, resource allocation and implementation.

In short, development in Indonesia is both by and for the people. This principle is given concrete form through our nationwide development planning consultation or in Indonesian language called *Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan,* or in short, *Musrenbang*. It is a legally grounded bottom-up and multi-level participatory development planning system running from the villages and urban neighborhoods through sub districts, districts, cities, provinces, and ultimately at the national level.

Far from an ad hoc consultation, *Musrenbang* is an enduring pillar of our governance architecture. It channels public aspiration from the grassroots into policy proposals, aligns them with medium term and annual development plans, and links them to the development budget. We believe the system strengthens social cohesion, builds trust, and ensures that public policy reflects actual needs of the people.

Colleagues and Distinguished Delegates,

Public participation in Indonesia is guided by three main principles. First, inclusivity. We continuously ensure that the voices of different stakeholders, including women, youth, persons with disabilities, local communities and those living in remote or under-developed regions are heard and duly considered. Second, early engagement. Public participation begins at the stage of problem identification and policy options generations, not merely at the end stage, to validate the final decisions. Third, transparency and accountability. Proposals from people on the ground move through

a traceable process so they can see how their inputs influence policy outcomes. These three principles translate people's aspirations into practice.

Esteemed Participants and Colleagues,

To overcome the practical challenges of scale and geography aim at reaching every citizen across the country, we have pursued targeted innovation. We also promote digital transformation through E-*Musrenbang*, which enables communities to submit proposal online and track their status. We also invest in capacity building by training local facilitators to moderate inclusive dialogues, prevent elite capture, and ensure genuine dialogue. Promoting gender responsive budgeting and planning is also carried out to enable the priorities of women and other people in vulnerable situation are reflected in the final allocations of resources. This approach delivers development that is more legitimate and sustainable, rooted in local contexts, thereby fostering trust and averting social tensions.

Excellencies and Colleagues,

Our experiences in implementing public participation in development suggest some success factors. First, sustained political will. Leadership at the national and national level must champion openness and resist tokenism. Second, inclusive process and robust data. When communities are inclusively engaged from problem identification to priority setting with clear indicators, the decisions are fair that get it and accountable. Finally, participatory monitoring and evaluation. This ensures the public participation becomes meaningful. Decisions are credible and results are measurable. Nevertheless, we also acknowledge the ongoing challenges. The quality of public participation through *Musrenbang* can vary across regions due to differences in capacity, connectivity and resources. Budget constraint necessitates transparent prioritization and multi-year pipelines so that community see progress even when delivery is phase. Meanwhile, the complex coordination across levels of government is addressed by aligning village priorities with district, provincial and national programs to minimize duplication and gaps.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our development planning consultation system is not static. It is a dynamic system of continuous improvement which requires deepening inclusion, improving data quality and integrating feedback into policy and budgets. From the system, we have learned an important lesson. When all stakeholders are involved and they shape priorities from the outset, when proposals are traceable to final policy programs and budget, and when delivery is monitored by the people, development becomes more just, more effective and more trusted.

I will end my remarks here and look forward to engaging further in the interactive discussion.

Thank you.

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