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## Term of References

Regional Discussion "Strengthening Voters Role in Election Amid Pandemic"

### I. Introduction

Elections during pandemic worried many parties, including South Korea, which was considered successful in holding elections amid the pandemic on April 15th. At that time, the election organizers concerned over voter turnout on polling day. To ensure a sense of security from *Coronavirus disease 2019* (Covid-19), the election was held with a strict Covid-19 protocol, which impacted on the swelling of the election costs nearly doubled.

In Singapore, in the July 10th Parliamentary Election, concerns were not only on the voter turnout, but also on the politicization of the budget by the incumbent government, which used the Covid-19 pandemic as a momentum to campaign with the state budget. Evidently, both in Singapore and South Korea, the ruling political party won the election again.

In Myanmar, election in the midst of pandemic concerns human rights activists. The postponement of the settlement of the peace agreement between the Government of Myanmar and Union Panglong is considered potentially exclude the Panglong community from the election, as not recorded in the voter list, not included as the election organizer at the bottom level, and given no socialization and untouched by the political campaigns. Not only the Panglong people, the exclusion of political rights is also feared to occur in indigenous communities who are at odds with the Government of Myanmar. Voting services, election information, and online campaigns are also difficult to access for indigenous peoples who live in areas with network infrastructure that is far from sufficient, especially during the pandemic.

In Indonesia, election organizers are concerned that the 2020 Simultaneous Head Elections in 270 regions will become a new cluster of Covid-19 transmission. To anticipate, following South Korea and Singapore, an additional budget was proposed. Indonesia election management body, KPU, requested an additional budget of 4.77 trillion rupiah for procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), additional equipment at the polling station, as well as the honorarium of the additional polling station workers and supervisors. Regarding with the reduction in the number of voters per polling station, so the number of polling station increases.

For election activists and academics, election amid the pandemic risk reducing voter participation, reducing women's attention about election, being vulnerable to

disability, and increasing money politics. In the first point, if the election organizers cannot convince voters that voting at polling station are guaranteed to be free from Covid-19 transmission, voters will be reluctant to vote. Likewise with election stages before the polling day, if the Covid-19 protocol is not strictly implemented, voters will likely refuse to participate.

In the second point, because the pandemic makes work done from home, women worker's burden increases. From home, working women who are married do not only do her own work, but also do domestic work and teach children who are doing school from home. As a result, women lose the opportunity to participate in election, even do not care about election which is a political moment to voice their needs.

In the third point, election amid pandemic were also considered to reduce disability participation. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), disability is one of the vulnerable groups in the corona virus pandemic. The Indonesian context, the National Socio-Economic Survey shows 72 percent of people with disabilities work in the informal sector. Similar to the formal sector, the informal sector is also affected by the pandemic. The higher cost of living for a disability makes disability more economically vulnerable. Economic difficulties become one of the obstacles to political participation.

Then in the fourth point, voters need to improve economic condition is feared to make voters permissive to money politics, either in cash or logistic. Money politics and the limitations of conducting face-to-face campaign activities are expected to not divert voters attention from candidate's vision and programs who are important to know. Not all voters have enough money to buy internet quota to participate in political campaigns and online election socialization.

As part of efforts to strengthen the role of civil society, civil society organizations, regional organizations and international organizations in supporting the integrity of elections amid pandemic, especially those conducting election observations amid pandemic, the Association for Elections and Democracy or Perludem with the support of the Program The Asia Pacific Regional Support for Elections and Political Transitions (RESPECT) will hold discussion on the topic "Strengthening Voters Role in Election Amid Pandemic". This discussion will discuss the following matters.

1. Condition and position of voters, especially women and people with disabilities, in Indonesia 2020 Simultaneous Head Elections and Myanmar 2020 General Election.
2. Political rights of voters, especially women and people with disabilities, who need attention in pandemic elections.
3. Things need to be considered by voters, especially women and disability voters, during the pandemic election.
4. Strategies to build a bargaining position as voters, especially women and disability, in pandemic election.

## II. Objectives

1. Collecting information about voter condition and position, especially women and people with disabilities, in elections hold during the pandemic.
2. Providing comprehension to voters, especially women and disability voters, regarding issues that must be considered during elections in pandemic.
3. Providing strategies to build a voter bargaining position, especially women and people with disabilities, in elections during the pandemic.

## III. Time

Discussion will be held on Tuesday, August 11th 2020, at 1.30- 3.30 PM (Jakarta & Bangkok Time), or 4.30-6.30 PM (Canberra Time), or 1.00-3.00 PM (Yangon Time), or 2.30- 4.30 PM (Kuala Lumpur & Manila Time), or 3.30-5.30 PM (Dili Time).

## IV. Speakers

- a. Adhy Aman, Senior Programme Manager of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)
- b. Chandanie Watawala, Executive Director of Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
- c. Sai Ye Kyaw Swar Myint, Executive Director of People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE), Myanmar
- d. Khoirunnisa Nur Agustiyati, Deputy Executive Director of Perludem, Indonesia.

## V. Moderator

Maharddhika, Researcher at Perludem

## VI. Participants

Regional discussion participants are the public, especially election observers and journalists, in Asia Pacific countries.

## VII. Discussion Method:

Discussion will be conducted online for 2 hours through Zoom. At the beginning of the discussion, the moderator introduced the speakers, then explained in general about the importance of credible election observation. Thus, the moderator will give speakers 15 minutes each to share their presentation related to their election observation.

After the presentation from the four speakers, moderator will invite the participants to ask questions or share their knowledge and concerns. Then moderator will please all speakers to answer and respond. At the end of the discussion, the moderator gives a conclusion on the narrative that is built during the discussion.

## VIII. Closing

Thus we made this Term of References. Hopefully it can be used as a reference in the discussions that will be held.