



## INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: Siti Nurbaya

Interviewer: Itumeleng Makgetla

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MAKGETLA: My name is Itumeleng Makgetla. It's the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, 2010. I'm in Jakarta, Indonesia, with Doctor Siti Nurbaya, who played an important role in implementing Indonesia's decentralization policy as the secretary general of the Ministry of Home Affairs from February 2001 to May 2005. First, I'd like to thank you very much for joining us and agreeing to share your thoughts and memories with us.

NURBAYA: *Thank you.*

MAKGETLA: Can we begin with your giving us a brief overview of your career and a description of how you came to be involved in this huge effort at the Ministry of Home Affairs?

NURBAYA: *Thank you, Itumeleng. I worked as a government officer since 1979, and I worked as a planner, on a Development Planning Board. I served the provincial government of Lampung; in the southern tip of Sumatera, not so far from Jakarta. And I worked for almost 20 years in the regional development planning board, and then I was asked by Minister Hartono to be posted in Jakarta in May 1998. It was exactly just two or three days before the reform. I was inaugurated on Friday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, and then on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup>, I started working and then Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> was exactly the day when we had riots and demonstrations which indicated the start of reform in Indonesia. At that time, I was appointed as chief of the Planning Bureau of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In a difficult situation, I worked very closely with the Secretary General and the Minister.*

*After that, I worked with the old regime until May 20<sup>th</sup>, when President Suharto came down and then our minister was changed from Minister Hartono to Minister Syarwan Hamid. So we were having a very hard time, because of the turbulent situation. And I was appointed as a secretary general in February 2001. Then I worked for the whole of the implementation of the decentralization agenda at the first stage and then on May 2005 I shifted. I left the position of Secretary General of Home Affairs and then I served as Secretary General of this state institution, which we call the House of Regional Representatives. It is the upper house of the Parliament (also called the DPD).*

MAKGETLA: Yes.

NURBAYA: *So I am lucky, I believe, as a bureaucrat because I have been posted in the executive branch and I moved to the legislative branch. As a bureaucrat, I believe this is a very good fortune for me.*

MAKGETLA: Well, this is really vast experience, and it's going to be difficult to ask questions because I'll have so many. But perhaps we can start with when you first came to Jakarta in 1998. What were the challenges of the day? You said this reform process began just days after you arrived. What did you see as the work that needed to be done?

NURBAYA: *Actually the Ministry of Home Affairs function is not only about the ministry itself but it is also supervising all of the provinces, districts and sub-districts and controlling all of the local governments in the archipelagos of Indonesia. So in my position on the planning bureau, which covers the whole of the ministry's program, I had to keep a good record and monitor all of the provinces. At that time, I was wondering what the effects would be, what things would influence to*

*the regional government in this situation. And it was actually also very dynamic in the province, and the government was having a hard time. The situation in the Parliament and also in the community was constantly changing. There were riots and anarchy and such.*

*At that time, I attempted to figure out which country in the world was free from riots and demonstrations, and I learned from the Internet it was New Zealand. I also tried to see what would happen with all of the governors after the retirement of Suharto. I was thinking more than half of our governors could possibly lose their positions. So I tried to learn about such things.*

*I also wrote a letter to the local governments inquiring about what happened with their regulations, because the decentralization happened so fast. We had collected the data by that time, and found that there were about 95,000 local regulations produced from 1990 to 1998. I only asked about the number of regulations in that specific five- to eight-year period so we could figure out how to manage the system. And it's not only the Home Affairs Ministry which was involved in that. The Ministry of Finance was also involved, as they were working on the budget system. These changes meant that a lot more money was being sent to the local governments.*

*The Ministry of Administrative Reforms was also one of the actors in the decentralization agenda. We were discussing how to proceed with the civil servants. We had a lot of civil servants in the central region and not enough in the other regions. We calculated that Home Affairs was controlling about 1.8 million civil servants. We saw that maybe we should put more civil servants in the other regions instead of keeping them all in Jakarta.*

*In 1999, the local government decentralization law, called Law Number 22 of the year of 1999, was passed. Prior to that, we had established laws regarding politics, elections, and political parties. So there were specific laws about the format of Parliament which established a General Assembly (MPR), and a Lower House (DPR), for example. Regional representatives were appointed, but the institution of DPD did not come until later, with the amending of the constitution in 2001.*

*So the relevant political laws were changed. My duty at the time was to determine how we could best manage the election in April 1999, which was later shifted to June. As chief of the Planning Bureau, it was my duty to provide the planning for the budget and the election. There were big changes in the election format. The new election had a completely new format, aimed at free and fair elections and establishing transparency and such. Bappenas was coordinating overseas cooperation which supported the election in 1999.*

MAKGETLA: To Bappenas (The National Development Planning Agency) ?

NURBAYA: *To Bappenas, to Indonesia. And it should go through Bappenas for the government.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *So Bappenas has established a team there, and there are two sub-teams. The first sub-team dealt with the policy of the election reform, and the second sub-*

*team was in charge of planning the election budget. And I was appointed by Bappenas to be the chief for this sub-team for the budget plan, which we called Team B. So we would sit together and discuss. We had a lot of discussion with UNDP (United Nations Development Program), and I believe they gave us a lot of examples for how to run these elections. We spoke about honesty and free elections, which is different from how the previous election was run in our country. And I learned from the Ghana election. I tried to adopt the plan and make some adjustments for Indonesia, to make changes from our previous system.*

MAKGETLA: Can you describe maybe some of the key points from the Ghana example that you thought were helpful?

NURBAYA: *Not really, I just saw the general format and the expectations of the UNDP.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *So I just briefly reviewed the document, because we have our own regulations, so I was only interested in the certain UNDP format that was followed. There were explicit principles, actions, and budgetary considerations.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *But I kept the Ghana case in mind. And then we developed the budget planning and we ended up spending about 1.02 trillion rupiahs, which is about 1 billion U.S. dollars.*

MAKGETLA: OK. That's a lot.

NURBAYA: *One billion U.S. dollars came out of our state budget, and then we had about 94 billion rupiahs, which is about 94 million U.S. dollars provided by foreign countries through UNDP. That was more or less the budget at that time.*

*We managed the election in 1999, and we got the new Parliament in place after June and then we started discussions in the General Assembly and we amended the constitution. The process was begun in 1999 and then in November of that year, we choose our new president. In the course of four or five years, we had about five different presidents. It was a very difficult time for Indonesia.*

*In May 1998, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie was president, and he made a lot of progress. Under him, we achieved freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and released political prisoners from jail. I think that was very significant for promoting democracy.*

*And then in December 1999 we had a new president, Abdurahman Wahid, who abolished the Social and Communication Ministry. In the Ministry of Home Affairs, we had just launched the era of decentralization. In May 1999 the law on regional development was passed. They called it Law 22. The law had to be implemented within two years of its issuance. So we started preparing the way, and then under the new president, Home Affairs was split into two separate ministries. One was Ministry of Home Affairs headed by our Minister Surjadi Soedirja, and the other was called the Ministry of Regional Autonomy, led by Professor Ryaas Rasyid.*

MAKGETLA: Yes.

NURBAYA: *So the minister for Regional Autonomy was Professor Ryaas Rasyid. He requested that I be his secretary general, but our head minister at that time, Surjadi Soedirdja, refused this request. So I ended up working for both ministries for about seven months.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *Beginning in November 1999, I worked for the two ministries for about seven months. Ryaas was also in our office as Director General of our ministry, so we had two ministers in the same building. I didn't mind that much, but I did sometimes find it difficult to work for both ministries. I had to represent both ministries in the coordination meetings, which required me to present the complete agendas of the two ministries. Later on in August 2001, the Ministry of Regional Autonomy was integrated again into the Home Affairs Ministry. At that time, due to impeachment of DPR, President Abdurahman Wahid was replaced and Megawati Soekarnoputri was inaugurated as our new President.*

*So things were far from harmonious regarding the lawmaking and regulation processes, as changes in administration has a significant impact on many areas of governance. Home Affairs was concentrating on national building while the Ministry of Regional Autonomy was pursuing their own agenda.*

*It was challenging because all the regions in Indonesia were being directed by these two ministers. And there was a long-established pattern of the regional governments consulting us significantly more often than they consulted any of the other ministries.*

*We established a local government association, which was supported by both ministries. This technique I learned when I was in Canada in November 1998.*

*This local government association included all the local governors, and they were pretty aggressive and active. The provincial parliament also established an association.*

MAKGETLA: When did that happen?

NURBAYA: *During 2000.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *Actually from 2000 to 2001. In the ceremonial procedures of the establishment, there were always two ministers there. Moreover, in informing the regions of the policy, we also worked with the Minister of Finance, so we were together for a while.*

*The Ministry of Finance was involved to deal with the fiscal issues at hand. In 2000, we decided to shift the fiscal year which ran from April to March, instead to running from January to December. The state budget arrangement thus began on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2001. That was actually the start of the regional autonomy implementation. In 2000, it was decided that a presidential speech was to be*

*given at the ceremony for the presidential presentation on the state budget plan for the year 2001.*

*In past years, we had two separate ceremonies, one for the president to present his speech at the national parliament and the other to reveal the state budget plan for the coming year. Since 2000, we have been having just one session for both the President's speech to the nation and the budget plan.*

*Currently we have yet to make the appropriate adjustment for this arrangement in Parliament. Since October 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, we have had an additional parliamentary chamber in accordance with the October 2011 constitutional amendment. Based on Law 27 of 2009, we have another new arrangement for the delivery of the speech of President in 2010.*

MAKGETLA: Really?

NURBAYA: *Yes, so this afternoon I will have to accompany our speaker to talk to the other speaker next door to discuss the practicality and effectiveness of this arrangement. It was officially done 10 years ago, but the details and the technical matters still remain. So that is the situation.*

*Even back then I could see the weaknesses. After the issuance of the regional government law on May 1999, I admit that progress was slow in providing technical regulations and information on all the details of the arrangement. In August 2001 a new president, Megawati (Sukarnoputri), replaced Gus Dur. At that time, I was already in charge as Secretary General for the Home Affairs Ministry. As I mentioned before, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Regional Autonomy were re-integrated.*

MAKGETLA: Why was that done?

NURBAYA: *That was just a new policy from the new president. I told our minister we should concentrate on this implementation aspect. Actually, in 2000 before the new president came, we had a CGI (Consultative Group on Indonesia) meeting in Tokyo and we were pushing to discuss all the details of implementation to formulate a plan. The meeting was supported by the World Bank and CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). We talked mostly about the implementation plan and staging.*

MAKGETLA: What does CGI stand for?

NURBAYA: *Consultative Group for Indonesia.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *In Tokyo, October 2000.*

MAKGETLA: OK that's what I wanted.

NURBAYA: *Yes, the CGI meeting was held in Tokyo in October 2000. That was actually a turning point that we had to provide the implementation plan for the decentralization process.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *At that time I was not yet officially appointed as secretary general, but I went with the minister to Tokyo, and we explained the implementation plan for decentralization. We had a plan with an initiation, installment, consolidation and stabilization phase. The year of 2000 we considered the initiation stage. Then the next two years, 2001 and 2002, we called the installment period. 2003 and 2004 was the consolidation period, and by the year 2007 we expected to be in the stabilization period. That was more or less the plan.*

*Afterwards there were some conflicts in the region because of problems with the regional law of 1999. There are some difficulties in communication between the central government and the local governments. We decided to change the law in 2004, as our plan for implementation was not working well.*

*In the Parliament, as I mentioned, they also made a constitutional amendment. The new constitution increased the power of the regions. MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) decided in 2001 that regions could develop their own regulations and could make adaptations to the central government rules. So you can imagine the difficulties that we were facing after two or three years.*

*We considered the new law another regional law, but it was not Number 22 anymore. As of the year 2004, it was called Number 32. This changed mainly for operational reasons. Law Number 22 from 1999 was not really working well, so we changed it. The new law did not change the spirit of the decentralization.*

*There were good reasons to change it, and Parliament approved of the change, as it called for the direct election of the governors, head of districts and city mayor.*

MAKGETLA: OK, well I would like to ask you more about these things, but that's a really excellent overview of a lot of the factors at play and some of the tensions and the changes. Can we start off with firstly, you know in '98 when you came in, how clear was the vision of what decentralization would be? Where was the change coming from and the vision that would later become the reality, which is to take power to the second level?

NURBAYA: *Well it was actually quite clear because we had already run a trial for all provinces in Indonesia. In 1995, Home Affairs gave every province a task. I was in the region as a planner at that time, and they took one district from one province to be tested as a regional autonomy format. We had already run the test for the 28 provinces and we had good guidance. From 1987 to 1992, the minister Rudini, occasionally inquired about decentralization, but he focused more on the districts. He mentioned the concept of decentralization and said that there would eventually be no more Parliament in the province, which of course some people didn't like. But after 1992, Minister Rudini was replaced by Yogi Memet, since we have five-year terms for the ministers.*

*We actually got some complaints from the region about the lack of decentralization because they saw that Law Number 5 from 1974 touches on decentralization, but there were no one regulations derived from this law. So there had already been many complaints from the regions.*

MAKGETLA: OK. So there had been this momentum. Can I ask you a bit more about this test in '95, when you said that one district from each province was to have autonomy? What did that mean as a pilot? So were they given the opportunity to develop regulations, did they have deliver, did they have different functions and responsibilities? How was this test structured?

NURBAYA: *The test began with the ministry deciding to run an experiment on regional autonomy. They requested that the districts give information about what services they provide, what resources they have, and broadly what they do. But it was not just about the chance to write regulations. Every year since April 1995 the province reported to the ministry about the district. In my province at that time, the district of Central Lampung was elected as a pilot. The ministry collected and analyzed the data from all the selected provinces. They collected information on the district authorities, the requirements for self local government arrangement, etc. We discussed the findings in 1996 and 1997.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *The test was about collecting data, gathering information, and evaluating what the regions could do on their own. The pilot run was not really about providing instructions to the regional governments. The central government had to produce the guidance.*

MAKGETLA: OK, OK.

NURBAYA: *That was the situation at that time.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *Unfortunately, beginning in July 1997, the economy took a bad turn and the situation became very turbulent. Normally we have regular central-local government meetings in the first or second week of February, every year. In 1998 the central government was having difficulties. I was still in the province by that time. Demonstrations and riots already started here and there, in reaction to Suharto.*

MAKGETLA: OK. So there had been some people like the former minister who was pushing for people to consider decentralization, there had been this test. But at the same time, it seems it would be quite difficult to get everybody to agree to give up power as part of the decentralization?

NURBAYA: Yes.

MAKGETLA: Were there groups that opposed it, who spoke out against decentralization and what were their concerns?

NURBAYA: *Sorry, sorry.*

MAKGETLA: Were there groups that resisted decentralization?

NURBAYA: *Can you explain a bit more?*



MAKGETLA: Individuals, ministries, or was there anyone who opposed the idea?

NURBAYA: *No, not formally and not openly, because at the time we were not able to speak freely. So I just heard murmurings from my province about "How is it possible that this local parliament will be abolished? And what's going to happen with this?" and things like that. People could not speak openly.*

MAKGETLA: Sure.

NURBAYA: *But I believe at that time there were critical opinion leaders, and some of them started something they called 50 petition, which you may have heard of. They called it a democratic forum. Abdurrahman Wahid was there as part of the forum. There are some resistant voices, but none were very strong because of the repressive government system at that time. But there was definitely some opposition. It included people like Sri Bintang Pamungkas, Amin Rais and others.*

MAKGETLA: OK, OK. And so when we go forward to the period after the law had been past, 22 of 1999?

NURBAYA: Yes, yes.

MAKGETLA: And you began to think about implementation. Can you describe to me the steps that that meant? You know, because it must have covered various areas from transferring assets and civil servants to new organizations. Can you describe to me the agenda?

NURBAYA: *Yes, we worked together with the Ministry of Administrative Reform, which we call MENPAN. And they decided, according to the terms of the Presidential decree of 1999, that they would be the primary coordinator for the implementation.*

MAKGETLA: Was that under Minister of Home Affairs?

NURBAYA: *We were only part of this implementation, we realized that. It was decided that the implementation should occur in accordance with the new arrangement in the central government. There was a new format for local finance transfers, so that was dealt with by the Minister of Finance. The organizational aspects were under the authority of the Ministry of Administrative Reform (MENPAN).*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *The civil servants transfer was also under the authority of the Ministry of Administrative Reform. Local regulation was under our authority in the Ministry of Home Affairs. So the whole process was coordinated by MENPAN under Ryaas Rasyid, who was appointed as the Minister of this ministry by President Abdurrahman Wahid.*

MAKGETLA: OK and so this Ministry of Administrative Reform gave the Ministry of Home Affairs its specific responsibilities as part of this big project? What were those specific responsibilities?

NURBAYA: *We were in charge of assets transfers. Under the law, about six coverage areas were assigned to the central government, including monetary, foreign affairs,*

*religion, security, and judicial matters. We defined exactly what would still belong to the central government, and then we started systematically progressed through the ministries, deciding which assets and administrative tasks should be handed down to the provincial governments. The whole process took maybe two or three years.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *By 2004 we had finalized those matters, and in 2005 there were some remaining problems concerning the guest house in the region and control of the vocational training unit. So in the end it actually took more than three years.*

MAKGETLA: OK, OK.

NURBAYA: *We had to make a completely new arrangement and provide guidance and organization in the provinces. Still, we have to check on how well things are organized, and we are constantly regulating that.*

MAKGETLA: Can you explain more what you mean by that?

NURBAYA: *For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs. For a long time there were structures in place to execute the ministry's policy on inspection, social life, and politics. The authority was in Jakarta, but there was deconcentration. The regions received guidance from Jakarta to carry out the mission of the ministry. Under the new law, central authority was transferred to the local government. Because of this, discussions emerged about whether or not the social politic was relevant anymore. It was an important point, and we had a lot of discussions about the appropriateness of certain social and political institutions in the local government. And then we the structures had to remain in place to contribute to national building.*

MAKGETLA: OK. What had social politics done before? I'm not familiar with that function?

NURBAYA: *The function was to improve communication with political parties, as well as to provide them with training and budget briefing.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *So the central government was more involved in political activities, but the new laws changed that. It was not just about the Law of 22 but also the Law of 43 of 1999, also called the Law on Civil Servants, which strictly prohibited civil servants from being involved with the political parties. The spirit of the reform movement was really that Home Affairs should stop trying to exercise control over politics, political parties, elections, etc.*

MAKGETLA: OK, OK. You know I've seen a reference to Law 43 of 1999 in the context of the Civil Service Board was resisting some of the changes. Is that, is that actuate initially?

NURBAYA: Yes.

MAKGETLA: Can you describe to me what happened and how the process was managed?

NURBAYA: *You mean the Law 43?*

MAKGETLA: So I understand the Civil Service Board proposed that law to resist this transfer?

NURBAYA: Yes.

MAKGETLA: Can you explain what their thinking was and what happened in that process?

NURBAYA: *You mean the transfer of the civil servants from the central to the local governments?*

MAKGETLA: Yes.

NURBAYA: *The reason may not have been clear, but under the previous system all of the civil servants were managed by the central government. And I'm not so sure what the law itself specified, but before its passing, all postings of officials in Home Affairs above the regional level had to be approved by Jakarta at that time.*

*And when I was secretary general, I was in favor of the idea of obtaining governor's approval for those postings. But as for our country's village administrative units, it's not clear whether they are forms of government or merely voluntary organizations. This is still being debated, but it seems that it will be concluded that they are small governments. Because in Indonesia when you talk about villages, you are not just referring to administrative issues but also to community life and culture. So we are still discussing the topic and eventually hope to produce a specific bill regarding the status village units.*

MAKGETLA: OK.

NURBAYA: *For more information about civil servants, perhaps you can speak to Professor Sofyan Effendi who is very involved with that issue.*

MAKGETLA: OK. So maybe not on this specific law but in general did you encounter resistance from civil servants about the implications of Law 22 of 1999 for them and for what would happen to them?

NURBAYA: *At the time we began considering decentralization, I had spent 20 years in the region, and I could see that our capacity and expertise were improving. I decided to pursue a master's degree in Holland on rural planning and land ecology, as I thought this would help me formulate a regional plan. There were many difficulties we faced in the region, including supplying clean water. I was a planner in the region but I was appointed informally by our governor to be a communicator for officers from Jakarta and the region. Having to deal with the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Health made it hard for me to find an effective solution. So I was very much in favor of the transfers occurring.*

MAKGETLA: To bring it all under one roof of the local government. So you mentioned that the social politics department became nation building?

NURBAYA: Yes.

MAKGETLA: Nation building function?

NURBAYA: *Yes, because our doctrine is the unity of Indonesia. And Indonesia, as you are aware, is very ethnically diverse, so we had to include a provision for the resolution of potential conflicts. To that end we developed the units.*

MAKGETLA: Do you think that unit played that role effectively?

NURBAYA: *Sorry?*

MAKGETLA: Do you think that unit was successful in playing this role?

NURBAYA: *Actually it was not a very formal process. We simply encouraged everyone to avoid conflict, as we disseminated information about the nature and necessity of being unified. Some conflict is inevitable, but it is the role of the government to provide stability.*

MAKGETLA: I mean, the reason I was interested in your mentioning this is because I'm curious to know if the government, if your department or if you are aware of efforts by anyone in the government to do something to ensure that the regions maintain their loyalty to the center. Because you know, one of the threats that people see with decentralization is that you're creating all these little units and they have a very narrow interest and they forget that they are part of this bigger country, this bigger national project.

So was there anything done to try to maintain the orientation toward the nation the center?

NURBAYA: *Yes. That's actually the challenge. Decentralization should be about the interface between the regions and the central government, and the Ministry of Home Affairs should play a major role in overseeing that interface. So that's why during my time in the ministry, I was always in contact with my entire staff to maintain strong communication with the local governments. We could not guarantee that if something happened in the regions they would turn to us for help, so we had to be aware of the importance of maintaining strong relations. This was the purpose of the Association for Secretary General, which I chaired at the time.*

*At that time there were about 36 ministries. As the chair of the body overseeing all of them, I was often discussing these ideas, and I proposed that we could perhaps learn from Poland, which had similar struggles with decentralization. Eventually they returned power to the ruling party, and I didn't want this to happen to Indonesia. So I spoke informally with all the secretary generals of the ministries to remind them to be very careful with this situation.*

*The regions were now given the power to decide whether or not they would involve Jakarta in their activities. The only way to ensure that they wouldn't decided to prohibit the central government from having any influence was to provide them with constant, consistent good guidance on the basis of their interests. I also had to talk to Home Affairs officials to remind them that we had made a promise to the local governments to turn over some power, so we had to go through with it and play our part.*

*When we develop a bill into law, there must be negotiation between the central government and the regions. For example in determining what percentage of revenues would be allocated to the local government, the central government*

*wanted to collect all of the revenues and distribute them to the regions. The local government agreed, but the disagreement came in over what percentage would be allocated, so there was a clear negotiation process that occurred. The important thing is that the region was informed about how the calculation was done.*

*This system is still in place. In Indonesia, the law can change when a significant political situation necessitates that it do so. For example the 1999 law on local revenue and fiscal balance was revised in 2004, and now in 2010 we are preparing another revised version. Fortunately, in my capacity as Secretary General of the House, I am able to remind our committee of the previous promises that have been made to the regions. That's why I believe it's an ongoing situation. It's a continuous challenge.*

MAKGETLA: What you're saying is that sticking to commitments and having transparent negotiations are ways to build the confidence of regional government that Jakarta is serious about?

NURBAYA: *Yes, though currently in Indonesia there are some difficulties because of documentation. I spoke to Rohan, and I told him that if it's about the detail as I believe it is, perhaps it's good to write that "when we have a big change then we should have the capacity to implement and control also the details".*

MAKGETLA: In the initial law?

NURBAYA: *Yes in the initial law, as well as in the implementation, the standards, and the procedures.*

MAKGETLA: I would like to ask just a few more questions, because we are running towards the end of our time. But firstly, can you describe the relationship or the process for developing special autonomy for certain areas like Aceh and Papua in this context, because that's related to decentralization? Is there a separate law? Can you describe this?

NURBAYA: *This happened because of political pressure. It was discussed in the Parliament and in the People's Consultative Assembly meeting in 1999 and in 2000, which argued that the government should give more attention to Aceh and Papua. In my opinion, it's about the pressure that emerges in the political process. The most significant concern is about welfare, specifically regarding distribution and revenue sharing. Aceh and Papua would like to have it even 70 percent, or even 85 percent, like in Aceh. So, that aspect and another aspect is on welfare—beside welfare is about the ethnics. So I think Aceh is more on welfare aspect, and Papua is more on welfare and the ethnics and the right of ethnics and the right for the role of the elites their position, in Jakarta, those kind things.*

MAKGETLA: Were there any concerns that providing Aceh and Papua with separate legislation might encourage them to push for even greater independence?

NURBAYA: *In the Special Autonomy Law, there are some articles that specify that connections are to be maintained. So there are some constraints which could prevent that from happening. But it was inevitable that we implement separate legislation. What matters is how we serve them, how we provide them with*

*guidance, how we help improve their situations and give them a promising future. If you just give money for welfare without building a strong officer presence in the province, for example, then people will still get angry about something like that.*

*Currently I still receive information from the regions, in particular when they are not happy about some regulation issued by central government. Right now they are not happy that Papua Assembly (MRP) was not fully involved in direct-elections for the head of district. I spoke to the special assistant for president Yudhoyono and told him about the current situation in Papua. You have to inform the relevant ministers and be very careful about these situations.*

*My point is that there are some obligations from the central government to the regions and also there are some obligations from the regions to the central government, so during my time as a secretary general I approached things that way. When I felt the governor didn't fulfill his responsibilities, I would call him and request that he do it. For example, when the governor did not show up at a meeting with the ministers, I convinced him that he should come to maintain communication between different branches and areas.*

MAKGETLA: Yes.

NURBAYA: *We should do that. There is some informal communication and persuasion that occurs, which is necessary.*

MAKGETLA: OK, that is very interesting. You mentioned these articles that you think work against sort of creating the possibility of greater—

NURBAYA: *For example for Papua, they asked about the emblem and the celebration aspects and such. So we talked to them also, telling them "The emblem is also for other regions, not only for Papua. If you want to claim that you established it, that's fine." I believe that if we treat them well and fair, things will be okay.*

MAKGETLA: And lastly, you know the promise of decentralization is that you're creating local governments that are closer to the people, that are better able to deliver local service and can provide a more accountable form of government. Do you think that has been the case as a result of these decentralization policies and the implementation of those law? I mean, what evidence do you have that is the case, if you think so?

NURBAYA: *I think we can evaluate this political and administrative-based decentralization. We can look to the handling of the tsunami disaster in Aceh in 2004 and of the Jakarta earthquake in 2005 and the most recent West Sumatra earthquake in 2009. The local government has effectively dealt with these difficult situations. Individual people and NGOs and local government work together. I believe the evidence shows that they have the capacity and ability to accomplish a lot and just report it to the central government. But we continue to observe their performance, and eventually we hope that disaster management will be coordinated under one body in the central government. I think we have to be very careful with these kinds of things.*

*So I think the policy on decentralization is in place, and the evidence of its success is also there. But as recently as yesterday, we are still having discussions with many constitutional law experts about the possibility of explicitly*

*including decentralization policy in detail in the constitution, as it is in the United States and other countries. Maybe in a systematic way, central government should provide better arrangement or better guidance or better perspective for the local government. That's my impression, which I have been able to observe from my position here in the legislative branch of power. I can get also reports from the ministers on many aspects, because DPD members are asked to report during the hearing sessions.*

MAKGETLA: OK, well this has been a very fascinating discussion.

NURBAYA: *Thank you.*

MAKGETLA: And the purpose of this interview is to allow people in other countries, new reformers in similar circumstances, to learn from the challenges that you've encountered. Is there anything that you would like to add that we haven't had a chance to discuss so far?

NURBAYA: *Not really, but I believe that we still need learn more from other countries about democracy and decentralization. We have our own values and culture, but we can still learn about the universal format. That's why I went to the United States last month, and I am currently trying to learn about the parliamentary supporting system in particular. Of course, I could learn from the Internet, but I'm trying to learn more directly, because, as people say, seeing is believing. I learn from many countries such as Thailand and Korea. We even went to Morocco, where I learned how they deal with decentralization.*

MAKGETLA: Very interesting.

NURBAYA: *Morocco has been systematically pursuing the agenda of decentralization every decade. So every 10 years, certain sectoral authorities in the central government are relegated to certain local governments. It is a continuous learning process, and we are always having to learn from other countries' experience.*

MAKGETLA: Well, thank you. I think by sharing your thoughts with us you provided a resource for other people to learn.

NURBAYA: *Thank you.*

MAKGETLA: So thank you very much.