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CONTRIBUTION FROM

**Mrs. Sitti Nurhajati Daud
Secretary General
of the Indonesian House of Representatives
(Indonesia)**

THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INDONESIAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN THE ERA OF REFORM IN INDONESIA

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LONDON (Londres) : ASGP Joint-Secretary - House of Commons - London SW1A 0AA - UNITED KINGDOM
Paris : Co-Secrétaire de l'ASGP - Assemblée nationale - 126, rue de l'Université 75355 Paris 07 SP - FRANCE

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I. Introduction

The Secretary General of the Indonesian House of Representatives is the head of the Secretariat General which is a supporting system in the execution of the tasks and functions of the Indonesian House of Representatives. The Indonesian Constitution (1945) stipulates three functions of the Indonesian House of Representatives, namely law-making (legislation) function, national budget determination function, and control function.

Entering the era of reform, started in 1998, the Indonesian House of Representatives experienced very dynamic change and development. The change and development was supported by the reform in the fields of laws and constitution (1945) which rendered the Indonesian House of Representatives more powerful authority. Consequently, whereas in the former era the influence of the government upon the Indonesian House of Representatives in practice was very strong (executive heavy), now it tends to be (legislative heavy). However, the Indonesian House of Representatives keeps desiring to establish a balance between the House and the Government, so that the increasing role of the House never ignores proportionality the tasks and responsibilities of each state institutions, both the executive and the legislative.

In the field of legislation, the House's commitment is focused on the efforts to increase the quantity and quality of the laws produced. Likewise in the field of national budget determination, the authority of the Indonesian House is very strong. The House has shown improvement in the execution of the budget function, deeply and critically conducting discussion with the government on National Budget Plan. Even more, the Legislative Assembly has made modification or revision on the National Budget Plan proposed by the government, an act quite unheard-of before.

Whereas in control function, the House supervises the executive on the execution of national budget, the management of state finance, and on government policies. Other authorities are concerning with the appointment of some public officials which has to be first consulted with the House, such as the establishment of the Governing Board of the Bank of Indonesia; the members of the General Election Commission; proposal of Supreme Judge candidates, the Head of Supreme Court; the appointment of Constitutional Judge Candidates and other authorities provided by laws included giving recommendation on the nomination of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador(s), both, foreign ambassador candidates to be assigned in Indonesia and Indonesian ambassador candidates to be assigned abroad.

II. The Role of the Secretary General

A. The Secretary General as the head of the Secretariat General

The Secretariat General of the Indonesian House of Representatives is a government institution in the form of State Institution Secretary-ship Body. The Secretary General in executing his/her tasks and functions is subordinated and directly responsible to the Leaders of the House. The main task which he/she assumes is providing technical, administrative and expertise support as well as services to the Legislative Assembly in carrying out its tasks and authorities.

In such a position and in the course of increasing strong willingness to improve the role and function of the Indonesian House as well as the growing complexity of the problems encountered, the Secretary General must be able to harmoniously go along and support every moves made by the Indonesian House since the success or otherwise of the execution of the tasks shouldered by the House members highly depended on its supporting system. Therefore, the Secretary General, in order that he/she can always improve his/her technical support and services must have expert, reliable, and professional staffs to enable he/she to support and help the House members in carrying out their tasks.

The Secretariat General is led by a Secretary General and a Deputy Secretary General. One of the significant changes in this institution is that since the era of reform, the Secretary General is no longer appointed from among the House members but from among the senior officials in the Secretariat General of the House itself. Ever since until now there have been two Secretaries General coming from the senior staff of the House's Secretariat General (including me), and the interesting thing is that both of them female. From now on, we will always strive to develop the ability of Human Resources so that the staff and senior officials in the Secretariat General can fill in important positions in accordance with the need without having to bring in outside persons. This is intended also so that every member staff of the Secretariat General has some hope of achieving the highest position and career in the Secretariat General in line with their capacity.

B. Forms of Support of the Secretary General

Expertise support rendered by the Secretary General is adjusted with the need for the execution of the House duties in the fields of legislation, determination of national budget, and supervision. Some of important activities which have been done are :

1. Law Draft Supporting Unit

In the field of legislation, the Secretariat General supports both in the process of formulation of national legislation programs and in the activities of drafting and discussing Bills with the Government. Services to legislation function are made by the Law Draft Supporting Unit.

The main task of this Law Draft Supporting Unit is to prepare Bills Draft upon requested of either individual member or Legislative Body, Commission or Group of Commissions. The process of drafting a Bill from the House can also be performed through collaboration with universities.

The product made by the Law Drafting Unit is in the form of Bill Draft for initiative proposal and the results of study of Law Draft proposed by the Government. For the implementation of the task, the Secretariat General is supported by research staffs in various fields, law drafting staff, and to be further supported by one unit to study and analyze Government Bills Draft. The support of the Secretariat General to the performance of legislation function begins by carrying out research and study in the frame of preparing a Bill which is done by the researchers. The research is continued with the preparation of an academic draft and, then the process of drafting a Bill is handled by Law drafters. The researchers and Bill drafters will carry out accompanying task in the discussion with the Government. In case a Bill that comes from the Government, more significant role will be assumed by Bill analyzing staff or unit. The task of the Bill analyzers will be continued up to accompaniment at the time of discussion the Bill with the Government.

Other task relating to the legislation function is the monitoring of the implementation of the laws. The monitoring on the implementation of the laws is focused on whether or not the Government has issued elementary regulation of an Act, and supervise the implementation of laws by sending delegation to regions concerned of the country.

2. Budget Committee Assistant Team

To support the performance of budget determination function, the Secretariat General establishes a Budget Committee Assistance Team. This team consists of the staff of the Budget Committee Secretariat, Economic Researchers, and Planning Staff. The main task of the Assistance Team is to assist the Budget Committee in the discussion of national budget.

3. Administrative and Expertise Support in the Field of Supervision

In the field of supervision, over and above giving technical and administrative services, the Secretariat General provides research staff to assist the Legislative Assembly in each Special Committee and Working Committee when such committee is set up. The Secretariat General staffs also assist the House in the activities of working visits to regions, such as handling travel affair and preparing working visit report. Additionally, to meet the House's needs directly and quickly, each member of the House has an assistant who is paid by the national budget.

4. Handling Complaints and Public Aspirations

One of the important tasks assumed by the Secretariat General is receiving and channeling the public aspirations. Public claims are submitted by letters and delegations that come directly to the office of the Indonesian House of Representatives. The staff of the Secretariat General studies and analyzes the problems and complaints submitted by the public. The results of study and analysis should be submitted to the Leaders of the House or related Committees. The results of the study can be pointed out in the agenda of meeting between the Government and Commissions.

Besides through letters, the public can also air their grievances to the House directly by way of delegation. The public delegation that directly submit their grievances can be, among others, group of students, academicians, teachers, professionals, labors/workers, vendors, societal organizations, and other non-government organizations.

5. Socialization of Indonesian House's Activities and Products

The activities being conducted by the Assembly need to be known by the public so that the public can monitor and supervise. To that end, one of the tasks

of the Secretariat General is conducting socialization of the activities and the products of the House such as socialization of bills or laws. For that purpose, the Secretary General has striven to intensify various news coverage by collaborating with the printing and electronic media, so that the public can directly know various activities of the House both inside and outside of the House's building. Additionally, the Secretariat General periodically publish bulletin as a medium for spreading up the House's activities to the public at large. Printing media coverage is also equipped with electronic media - television station which directly broadcasts the activities of the Assembly. The television media is also equipped with radio broadcast program. As part of the socialization of the House's activities, dialogues are held every months under the topic of "New Indonesia." These dialogues are also attended by the members of the House; however the materials and design of the dialogue is prepared by the staff of the Secretariat General.

6. Political Education Activities

The House's activities undoubtedly are interesting to the public; this is evident from the growing need of the public to visit the House's building. They want to know more closely various activities in the Legislative body. Some public groups, especially student and lay people, come directly to the House building in the frame of study tour or to do some research. In connection with the activities, one of the tasks of the Secretariat General is giving an explanation to the coming delegation about the activities working on and the products of the House.

7. Office facilities and Infrastructure

As a supporting element of the execution of the House's tasks, the Secretariat General is also responsible for the facilities and infrastructures to run the tasks of the House smoothly. The facilities and infrastructures are focused on the fulfillment of office equipment - computer sets to speed up the technical administrative works. All of these are done to ensure the House to work in full

concentration in the execution of its tasks for the goodness and welfare of the nation and all citizens.

8. Provision of Housing Facilities and Health Care to the Members of the House

In addition to the office facilities and infrastructures, the Secretary General is also responsible for facilities of fully housing, health care and medication. The Secretary General has striven to improve health care services by way of increasing the number of doctors and paramedics as well as medical equipment. The services of doctors and paramedics are not only limited in the health centre located in the Legislative Assembly building but also the environment of official house of the House members in Kalibata.

9. Security Facilities for the Assembly's Office and Official House

Other facilities provided by the Secretariat General is the safeguarding of the work environment and the housing of the House members. To anticipate the era of reform which is still flooded by the political euphoria, the Secretariat General has striven to improve the quality of security both in regard to the House of Representatives/the People's Consultative Assembly building area and to the official house of the Leaders and members of the Assembly by increasing the number of security men, especially to manage the demonstrations which take place nearly every day in the Assembly's building area.

The security guidance's to the House are taken in coordination with the Police in order that the House members can carry out their duties peacefully. For that purpose, the Secretariat General has established Routine Security Direction for the House of Representatives/the People's Consultative Assembly building complex and Direction for Handling Demonstrators. Security guidance's are also taken in the housing complex of the Assembly members.

10. Support for International Delegation Visit

Other assistance made by the Secretary General is accompanying the House delegation in conducting activities in international forum. In addition to accompany the Indonesian House of Representatives delegations going abroad, the Secretariat General also arranges and assists in the activities of welcoming the visiting guests of foreign parliamentary delegations as well as various diplomatic guests of foreign countries that will meet the Leaders of the House, the Chairmen of Committees, and the Chairman of the Committee for the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation.

11. Maintenance and Development of Human Resources (Staff)

Employees are the most important human resource in the execution of the tasks and function assumed by the Secretariat General. Therefore the Secretariat General pays serious and meticulous attention to the maintenance and improvement of the quality of its employees by taking two-ways approach maintenance, namely the quality improvement approach and welfare approach.

Quality improvement approach is taken by way of boosting the ability and widening the horizon through academic, structural, or functional and technical education. The activities are taken by sending some of the employees of the Secretariat General to formal education institutions both home and foreign universities. Some groups of staff which need of ability and expertise improvement, for examples, researchers, and law drafter. In this regard the Secretariat General in collaboration with sponsor send some researchers to take education and technical training, including legislative drafting both home and abroad.

In addition to formal education, the Secretariat General has also assigned some employees to take various education and technical training gradually, both home and abroad university. The education and technical training cover English language, computer, financial management, design management, autonomous

position analysis, protocol, photography, electrical courses, lift, and seminars. Meanwhile, welfare approach is taken by way of increasing the provision of facilities to enhance the performance of the employees through giving incentive and extra nutrients and the provision of transport facilities and official raiment.

12. Some Handicaps

On the other side, there are some handicaps encountered in carrying out the tasks of the Secretariat General, i.e. the lack of coordination among units in the execution of an activity. Therefore, we always strive to put in order and improve the coordination. Other handicap is the lack of human resource capability, such as transcriptors both qualitatively and quantitatively, as well as the shortage of facilities and infrastructure in the framework of supporting the main task of the Secretariat General of the Indonesian House of Representatives, for instances computer sets, etc.

13. Restructuring Program of the Secretariat General Organization

One of the important programs being in process at present is the restructuring of the organization of the Secretariat General of the Indonesian House of Representatives. The restructuring is intended so that the structure and capacity of the existing human resource in the Secretariat General of the House of Representatives be adjusted with the development of government structure or constitution and with the demand for professionalism of human resource that could support the execution of the tasks and function of the House.

III. Closure

This brief description on the role that can be assumed by the Secretary General as the head of the Secretariat General of the Indonesian House of Representatives in supporting the execution of the tasks of the Indonesian House of Representatives.

Thank you.