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The Green New Deal and Future Uncertainty

In 2008, the Australian government predicted how climate change would cause paramount damage in the fire season. The thing is, not much had been done to prevent this from happening, which resulted in the recent massive bushfires killing 1 billion animals and 60 humans and destroying 10 million hectares of land.

In Indonesia, extreme rainfall resulted in torrential flooding on the first day of the New Year, which has caused quite a stir politically, particularly on flood management and river development. We can expect to see more extreme weather-related disasters in the not-so-distant future with or without sufficient political will to make appropriate changes in protecting the environment.

Throughout the world, natural disasters caused by global warming and overall climate change mark the so-called “new normal,” which requires ongoing environmental appropriation simply to survive. The future is uncertain, and if we do not do anything, a dystopian one is looming.

In the United States, a 14-page resolution named the Green New Deal has been proposed by the US legislature under Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey to address climate change and economic inequality with US President Donald Trump’s trade war with China and threats of actual with Iran as the backdrop. It is a 10-year plan to mobilize every aspect of US society to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2030. The deal also aims at a guaranteed living-wage job and a just and fair transition for both workers and frontline communities.

Such a commitment has sparked corporations and non-profit organizations to show significant support. Independently, wealthy and distinguished individuals have also contributed billions to fight for change.

Indonesia needs our own version of the Green New Deal, preferably proposed by the central government



with a top-down approach. Sure, President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo and his cabinet have been working hard to catch up with neighboring countries in tackling climate change. However, they still lack a unifying deal that would inspire and motivate collaboration in reaching 100 percent clean and renewable energy within a specific timeframe and aggressive natural protection and disaster management.

The US Green New Deal would eventually eliminate 62,000 air pollution deaths annually, saving \$600 billion in costs. Zero carbon emissions would save \$3.3 billion a year. And all would continue for at least 100 years. Above all, the newly adopted technologies would create 2 million jobs.

Indonesia ratified the Paris Climate Agreement on April 22, 2016. Its central goal is strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping the global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The thing is, most people in Indonesia are not

even aware of this agreement and its measurable goals.

We must continue educating the public on the

importance of the environmental needs necessary for our survival. On the startup front, many notable companies are making their mark, including Impossible Foods (meat from plants), Choose Energy (shopping for low-cost energy), Holganix (agritech), Freight Farms (farms on freight containers), Solar Kiosk (portable solar energy kiosks), and others.

The future is, indeed, uncertain, but humans as the most intelligent life form on this planet have a tremendous capacity to make changes, even now --at this late stage of irreversible climate change. After all, we owe our next generation, represented by Greta Thunberg, their livelihoods. 

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