Increasing The Role of Civil Society through LAPOR!: National Complaint Handling System in Indonesia

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Abstract—Since 2011, Indonesian government launched an integrated national complaint handling mechanism called LAPOR!. With this program, public can submit any complaints or report their problem concerning development programs and public services in Indonesia through website, short message services, or mobile applications. Beside some difficulties that need to be solved, LAPOR! has unexpectedly contributed to various successful cases concerning public services. This paper will examine the effectiveness of LAPOR! as a tool to increase the role of civil society in order to develop better public services in Indonesia.

Keywords—Civil Society, Complaint Handling System, Indonesia, LAPOR!

I. INTRODUCTION

T HE role of civil society has become prominent issue in the past few decades. Many countries become more and more aware that the involvement of civil society is very important to develop better policy making, public services, and eventually may lead to the quality of good governance itself. The United Nations Development Program identified four major principles to ensure good governance: participation, accountability, transparency, and rule of law. *Participation* referring to the citizen involvement in decision making process, *accountability* reflected in the obligation of public officials to explain their decisions and actions to the citizens, *transparency* suggesting free flow of information, and *rule of law* implying the existence of fair and impartially enforced legal framework [1].

Global Policy Forum in their report stated that there are five good reasons for civil society to be engaged in global governance; (1) to conferring legitimacy on policy decisions; (2) to increasing the pool of policy ideas; (3) to support less powerful governments; (4) countering a lack of political will; and (5) helping states to put nationalism aside [2].

Realizing the importance of public engagement, in 2011 Indonesia's government introduced its highlight program: LAPOR! (*Layanan Aspirasi dan Pengaduan Masyarakat*-means "to report" in Indonesian), an online portal where public can directly report their problem concerning public

services, send their complaint regarding public servant, and monitoring government's development program.

LAPOR! designed in an easiest way possible, so that anyone can access and use this program. Public can submit their problem via website (*lapor.go.id*), text message, or mobile application which available for blackberry and android. LAPOR! aims to catalyze public participation as well as increasing the role of civil society in order to develop better public services.

First introduced by Presidential Working Unit for the Supervision and Management of Development (UKP4), LAPOR! has grown rapidly in relatively short time. According to the report in 2014, the portal has over 292,547 registered users, receiving an average of 821 reports every day. With the number that keeps growing overtime, LAPOR! is one promising tool to increase the public awareness and boosting the role of civil society.

II. BACKGROUND OF LAPOR!

Indonesia is a big country where the people are scattered in its large region of country. With a population totaling around 250 million individuals, Indonesia is the fourth largest country with regard to population size. Without proper mechanism, it was difficult for the government, especially the central government, to heard and reaches all of its citizen complaint and problem concerning their right to public service. Indonesian government, from time to time trying to figure out the best way for all its citizen to be heard.

Apparently, research conducted by Ministry of Telecommunication and Technology in 2011 shows that Indonesia is a leading country when it comes to social media. About 236 million people in Indonesia use cellular phone. Facebook users in Indonesia are the fourth largest in the world, while twitter users are the fifth largest in the world. There is also a significant increase of active internet users in Indonesia, from 32 million in 2009, to 72 million in 2013. The government saw this number as an opportunity to built a new platform to engaged the society, a social platform, which enable interactions between the people and government. Thus, LAPOR! was initiated.

When LAPOR! first introduced in 2011, it was only designed as a tools to monitor national priority program. Turns out, the public enthusiasm was high. People started to use LAPOR! as a tool to 'talk to the government'. In 2012, LAPOR!, collaborate with DKI Jakarta administration, started

a new feature in which public can submit their complaint about any problem in Jakarta, and LAPOR! will then deliver it to the relevant authorities to be solved. This program was a major success. Hence, in 2013, LAPOR! officially launched its system which enable society to complaint any problem concerning development and public services in Indonesia.

III.   How LAPOR! work?

LAPOR! defined as National Complaint Handling System (SP4N) by Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform as mandated by Public Service Law and its derivative regulations. In order to fulfill this duty, LAPOR! have three main principles.

First principle is "easy to access". With their three main channels, website (lapor.go.id), SMS (to 1708), and mobile application in android and blackberry, LAPOR! desire is to serve public as easy as possible. LAPOR! also have an anonymous feature, in case the informant want their identity to be protected. With their IT-based platform, LAPOR! make it easier for the public to digitally documented their report. Every report that has passed the verification will be documented and published automatically in the website so that everyone can access it. There is also notification feature which give the user progress report of their complaint.

The second is "integrated". LAPOR! establish an integrated system that can associate all government agencies in Indonesia. This integrated system has now connected with 81 ministries office, 44 state owned enterprises, and 5 local governments, with more than 800 governments working units. LAPOR! use digital disposition and follow-up in order to accelerate coordination between government agencies.

The third principle is "transparent". It means that LAPOR! provides an interactive and accountable process, where every user can track their report through tracking ID, a special number for every report submitted. LAPOR! also allowing public discussion, everyone can give comment, support, and share the report through Facebook or Twitter. LAPOR! also published statistic performance of each participating government institution as a social audit, so that public can see and evaluate the response rate of each institution itself.

The report mechanism in LAPOR! can be summarize in three major stages: reporting, follow up, and closure. In the reporting stage, public firstly need to submit a report to LAPOR! via website, text message, and/or mobile application. The reports will be verified in order to check the relevance, clarity, and completeness of the information. If the report passes the verification, it will be distributed to the relevant government institution in maximum 3 work days.

Next, is follow-up stage. In this stage, LAPOR! will publish each report that has been forwarded to the relevant institution, and giving the user continued notification. LAPOR! can also actively guard the report and pushed the government institution to solve the complaint. Based on Public Service Law in Indonesia, there is maximum 60 days for government institution to finish the problem concerning public service. The reports that relate to the national priority program will also be submitted to the relevant institution under Presidential Working Unit for the Supervision and Management of Development, while report that related to public service will

be submitted to the Ombudsman, in addition to the relevant institution. [3]

The last stage is called the closure report. If the institution has provided the answer and/or solved the complaint report, the report will be considered complete. This complete report will be automatically added in LAPOR! statistic which can be viewed and downloaded from each connected government institution.
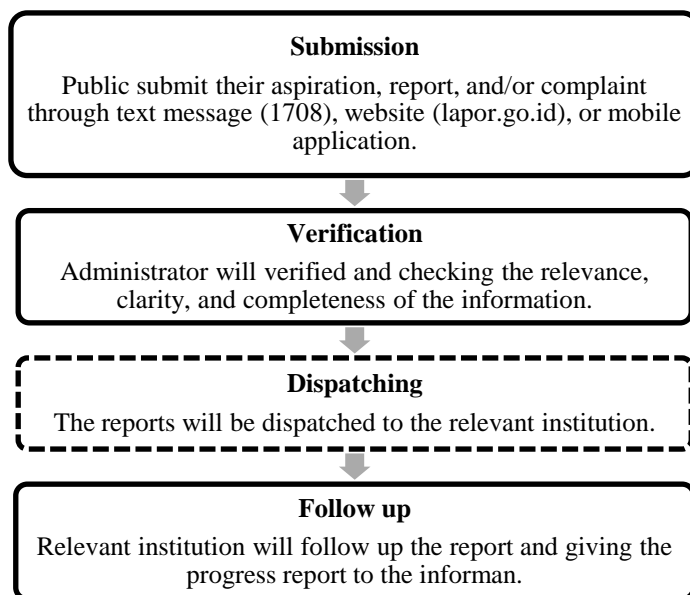
Submission
Public submit their aspiration, report, and/or complaint through text message (1708), website (lapor.go.id), or mobile application.

Verification
Administrator will verified and checking the relevance, clarity, and completeness of the information.

Dispatching
The reports will be dispatched to the relevant institution.

Follow up
Relevant institution will follow up the report and giving the progress report to the informan.

Fig. 1 Report handling mechanism of LAPOR!

IV.   Increasing the role of civil society

Since the very beginning, the goal of LAPOR! is to create a portal which can easily engaged public participation. LAPOR! encourage public to be more involve in order to develop better public service. In relatively short time from its establishment in 2011, LAPOR! has grown rapidly with excellent progress.

From the statistic published in April 2015, there are 292,547 registered users of LAPOR!, with the average 821 report per day. This might looks like a small number comparing to the total population of Indonesia, but actually, the growth of registered user is quiet promising. There are thousands of new users registered in LAPOR! every month.[4] With the new promotion strategy of LAPOR!, and with more government institution integrated, there is high expectation that public will be more aware with the use of LAPOR!

There are approximately 624,444 reports has been submitted to LAPOR!, 69,767 passed the verification and has been forwarded to the relevant institution. The response statistic of this report is different for each institution, but for overall statistic, the percentage of completed report is about 45%. Another 12% is in the follow-up status, while the rest 43% is still in the stage of no follow-up at all.

Again, in a blink of eyes this statistic might look like unimpressive number. But in its very young age, LAPOR! itself is still work in progress. The management board of LAPOR! admit that until now, they still face some difficulties when it comes to the follow up stage. The problem arises because some of the integrated government institution is not

yet considers public engagement as their priority. The government institution which still stuck in this old paradigm tends to neglect the report that goes into their institution, and take forever to follow up the report.

However, the condition is different in each institution. There are some government institution that are very responsive in following up any reports submitted through LAPOR!. *Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial Kesehatan* (*BPJS*-Health Insurance Provider in Indonesia), is one of the leading example. According to LAPOR!'s data per April 2015, 95% of reports and complaint submitted to this institution has been solved and completed. The other 4% is in the follow up stage, while only 1% is still pending without any response. Apparently, *BPJS* is also an institution that received one of the most reports and complaint from public, with approximately 2,275 reports so far.

Despite some difficulty that they face, LAPOR! is continue growing in the hope of establishing national complaint handling system that can engaged all of its citizen and increasing the role of civil society in Indonesia. From the public survey that LAPOR! held in 2015, more than 70% of respondent who use LAPOR! is satisfied and feel that this program is reliable. This survey suggest that the public response toward LAPOR! is very positive, and expect LAPOR! to be maintained.[5]

V. SUCCESS STORIES

Public engagement is one key point that will make LAPOR! going. In order to increase public awareness, this program has to gain more and more public trust. But, how? LAPOR! already have some strong features that will attract public trust, for instance, the fact that this program is cutting of bureaucracy process. With its digital-based program, people will be able to make complaints and reports about government action without the difficulty to pass bureaucratic process. Anonymous feature in LAPOR! also expected to allay the fears of people to report any kind of problem, even if the problem concerning sensitive case, such as bribery or corruption allegation.

This system has proven countless times to help citizen's voice be heard by the government. There are a lot of touching success stories of LAPOR!. Such as in September 2011, a man from Aceh (Indonesian province that located at the northern end of Sumatra), text his report to LAPOR! concerning a broken bridge near his house. He said that this bridge has not been repaired since 2004 because of the tsunami disaster. That report then forwarded to the Aceh government and monitored by LAPOR!. In December 2011, only 3 months after the report submitted, the local government committed to rebuilt that bridge. The construction finished in December 2012, triggered only by the power of single text message from one citizen.

Another benefit of LAPOR! is that people do not need to bother in which institution their complaint should be address. With its 'wrong door policy', admin of LAPOR! will help to determine which institution responsible to your complaint. LAPOR! even support cross border service. Public who have problem related to authorities outside Indonesia is still allowed to report their problem through LAPOR!, with the possibility

to be solved. There is an example, where some fishermen from Indonesia were arrested by Australian Customs because they surpassed Australia's maritime boundary. Family of the fishermen then, using the text message feature of LAPOR!, asked help to Ministry of Foreign Affair and Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Republic of Indonesia. Receiving this report, LAPOR! then forwarded the report to both ministries, and the response was fast. Both ministries then made coordination and contacting Indonesian Embassy in Australia for further diplomacy. Long story short, all of the fishermen were released to Indonesia safely.[6]

Within short period of time, LAPOR! has unexpectedly contributed to various successful cases including: breaking the record for the fastest complaint solving for less than an hour by National Land Agency; proven as a whistle blowing system to fight corruption including the removal of upper echelon officer in the Ministry of Agriculture; specially utilized as a quick response system during a major flood in Jakarta; and specially utilized for central complaint handling by national socialization team for subsidized fuel price increase and compensation.[7]

VI. OPEN GOVERNMENT INDONESIA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAPOR!

In 2015, World Justice Project launched their first Open Government Index, a report that measures government openness in practice based on the experiences and perceptions of the general public and in-country experts worldwide. The WJP Open Government Index 2015 provides scores and rankings on four dimensions of government openness: (1) publicized laws and government data, (2) right to information, (3) civic participation, and (4) complaint mechanisms.[8]

According to this report, Indonesia's overall scores for open government is 0,58 (the maximum score is 1,0) which placed Indonesia in ranking 32 of 102 countries around the world. For individual score per section, Indonesia scored 0,49 (ranking 39) for published law and government data, 0,56 (ranking 46) for right to information; 0,68 (ranking 31) for civic participation; and 0,57 (ranking 45) for complaint mechanism.[9] In general, this score is a positive credit for Indonesia's effort to improve government openness and increasing civic participation in the last few years.

Indonesia itself since 2011 has join Open Government Partnership, a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.[10] The launched of LAPOR! is actually part of Indonesia's commitment of improving open government. Hence, LAPOR! has been named as one of the world's best initiatives presented in the event of the Open Government Partnership Summit 2013 in London.[11]

However, LAPOR! should not be easily satisfied for what they achieved so far. There are still a lot of things that can be improved in order to make LAPOR! a complete package for national complaint handling system in Indonesia. One of the things that should be done immediately is encouraging utilization by local government. So far, there are only 5 local governments that has been integrated through LAPOR, over

34 province, and more than 100 cities in Indonesia. Integration with local government all over the country is important to ensure that the right to complaint, monitoring government action, and participating in the improvement of public policy is not privilege which solely owned by the resident in capital city.

LAPOR! should also keep improving its management capacity building. As this program growing big and bigger, the management of LAPOR! should expand the method of collecting public complaint and enquiries, and also optimizing the data submitted from the public, in order to create the greater benefit for public service improvement.[12]

Regardless its strength and weakness, LAPOR! is clearly a potential tools to increase the role of civil society in Indonesia. With proper development, in the next few years LAPOR! will become the central of national complaint handling system, ensuring that each and every voice of Indonesian be heard, and gradually improving the quality of public service in Indonesia.

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