

## Children: "Better environment for better quality of life for children"



Bupati, Vice Bupati and Chairperson of PKK observed discussion

"This activity should be conducted in other areas and not only in Tulungagung. If Tulungagung could do it, why other districts could not" said Putra Utama, 15 years old, a student from Malang Municipality who became a visiting participant in Children Meeting that is named "Kumpul Bocah". The Children Representatives Council (Dewan Perwakilan Anak or DPA) in Tulungagung organized the second Kumpul Bocah on 29-30 January 2007. The meeting was participated by more than 150 children who came from all sub-districts in Tulungagung with various backgrounds. They represented students, street children, disabled children, child labour, orphan children, children of migrant workers, member of DPA. Besides them, there were 30 visiting participants from Malang, Sumenep, Bondowoso, Probolinggo and Lamongan representing children and government officials.

The meeting was fully supported by Government of Tulungagung, PKK, LPA-Tulungagung, UNICEF and private sector. It opened by Bupati and all senior government officials attended the opening ceremony. Bupati, Vice Bupati, the Chairperson of PKK and several senior government officials directly observed the discussion of the children.

The opening and closing sessions were organized in Bupati residence, while discussions were done in town square in front of Bupati's residence.

"This was the second Children Meeting in Tulungagung. The first meeting conducted in 2005 under the theme 'Please Hear Our Voices'. In that time we disseminated child rights. While the meeting in 2007 is raising the theme 'Conserve the environment and save the energy to secure the future of children' explained Ibu Winny Isnainy from LPA Tulungagung who has dedicated her life for children in Tulungagung since several years ago. Siti Zulaikah, 17 years, a member of DPA added: "The theme came out after discussion in DPA on the situation of Tulungagung. I saw landslides in my village. Houses were ruined. The landslide is caused by people. They cut trees carelessly and never plant new trees to replace cut trees. By promoting the importance of conserving the environment, we hope that no more disaster will happen in Tulungagung. Green environment will bring better life to children"

As practical action of the theme, in the second day participants plant new trees in the "City Forest" of Tulungagung. District Agriculture and Forestry and District City Planning Office of

Tulungagung provided more than 200 trees. While, District Health Office and District Education Office displayed more than 500 posters on promotion of avian influenza prevention. The posters selected from poster competition among Grade 4-6 of Elementary Schools in Tulungagung. Children also discussed on how they - children - and adult could converse the environment. Competition on slogan or yell on child rights and environment conservation was also carried out.

All participants rode becak to go to and back from the city forest. The Organizing Committee of this meeting mobilized around 80 becaks.



Results of discussions then were compiled and handed over to Bupati in the closing session of this meeting. Bupati agreed to support the effort of environment conservation for securing children's future. The winner of slogan competition performed its slogan in front of audience in the closing session.

Children were very happy and enthusiastic to follow agenda of two-day Children Meeting. Ibu Diah Fajar Haryanti, a teacher of Disabled School Wiyata Dharma in Tulungagung expressed her opinion: "Participation of disabled children in this Children Meeting has helped disabled children to feel confident in interacting with other children. They will have broader perspective on what happen outside their world. The attention of Bupati when he observed discussion group of disabled children really supported them to reach their dreams. And the most important thing is the disabled children felt that their participation was a great experience and opportunity -- since it is very rare -- to speak out their voices and those are heard by other people respectfully"\*\*\*\*\*

