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Government issues bylaw guidelines

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The Justice and Human Rights Ministry has launched a book of guidelines to help regional administrations draft ordinances.

The book comes amid concerns about a series of bylaws that "run counter to higher regulations" and "disrupt the investment climate".

The government has revoked 974 bylaws since the introduction of regional autonomy in 1999, Justice and Human Rights Minister Andi Mattalata said.

"If the process of drafting a bylaw costs, let's say, Rp 20 million (approximately US\$2,173), then the country has squandered at least Rp 18 billion," he said at the book launch here Monday.

He said the central government would revoke another 804 "problematic" bylaws.

The publication of the book, titled *Practical Guidelines to Understand the Drafting of Local Regulations*, was supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) under its Enhancing Communication, Advocacy and Public Participation for Legal Reforms (CAPPLER) project.

According to CAPPLER national project director Wahiduddin Adam, most of the revoked bylaws were not business-friendly.

Wahiduddin, also a director at the justice ministry, said many bylaws had created an unfavorable climate for economic activities in regions, and some had led to environmental destruction.

The Home Ministry's head of law examination and evaluation, Janiruddin, said last week many bylaws had been made solely for the regions to increase their revenue.

As many as 3,000 of the 8,000 bylaws across the country's 500 regions are potentially problematic because they enact redundant taxes that deterred investment in regions, he said.

Revocation of the bylaws could have been avoided had the regions known how to draft them, Andi said.

But he promised the government would not put all the blame on the regional administrations.

"The government will not arbitrarily revoke a bylaw just for the sake of landing some huge foreign investment without considering what really happens on the ground," he said.

The reference book explains the technical and legal aspects of making regulations, including human rights, gender equality, sustainable development and good governance.

The Justice and Human Rights Ministry will also organize training for trainers to become familiar with the guidelines, starting from Monday. Heads of the legal bureau, legislation committee and legal service divisions under the justice and human rights offices across the country are expected to take part.

The ministry also relaunched its website *www.hukumham.info.go.id* [1], which is expected to serve as a portal for the country's legal products and current legal information.

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