**Press Release**

**31 August 2022**

**Indonesia And Its Important Role in International Diplomacy**

JAKARTA – Indonesia is seen as having a very important role in the fields of economy, trade, human rights, security, and world peace. Indonesia is also able to maintain good relations with various neighboring countries such as Timor Leste, Japan, and South Korea. In fact, Indonesia as one of the founders of ASEAN has always been at the forefront of solving problems that arise through dialogue.

This was revealed in the webinar “Indonesian Foreign Politics in the Eyes of Friendly Countries” which was held in Jakarta, Wednesday, August 31, 2022. This activity was held by Synergy Policies, Indonesia Strategic and Defense Studies (ISDS), and ILUNI FISIP, University of Indonesia, presenting various speakers from neighboring countries. They were Xanana Gusmão, former President and Prime Minister of Timor Leste; Dr. Aurélio Sérgio Cristóvão Guterres, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Timor Leste (2017 - 2018); Prof. Kosuke Mizuno from Kyoto University (Japan); Dr. Jiwon Suh, Human Rights Specialist at Seoul National University (South Korea); and Budi Arie Setiadi, Deputy Minister of Villages and Development of Disadvantaged Regions.

Xanana Gusmão said that the world today is changing. The post-Cold War period is over. According to Gusmão, global security has diminished, globalization is in decline, and all countries are facing great instability with international concerns about climate change, food shortages, inflation, geopolitical competition, and wars in Africa and the Middle East.

"In response, many countries are increasing their military spending and preparing themselves to face conflicts such as the one we see happening in Ukraine," Gusmão continued. Gusmao continued, that with such an increasing chaos, Indonesia had given a warning about arms race in the region. This is consistent with Indonesia's history of promoting international security. Gusmão mentioned that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is a great example of what Indonesia can achieve when working for global order and security.

“It is only through UNCLOS that Timor-Leste was able to force Australia to negotiate maritime boundaries when Australia willfully ignored international law and took oil revenues from us. On the other hand, Timor Leste and Indonesia were discussing the settlement of our land and sea borders in the spirit of cooperation and friendship," said Gusmão.

Therefore, according to Gusmão, all countries are currently moving towards a multi-polar world. He emphasized that Timor Leste needs Indonesia to play a central role in global affairs and lead regional and international dialogue. "And we are happy to see this is already happening, not only with ASEAN and the United Nations but now with the G20," said Gusmão.

Gusmão continued, that many countries, including Timor Leste, need Indonesia as a great nation to continue to stand tall and defend international law and promote dialogue between groups and countries, as well as tolerance between religions, beliefs, and peace in every country, region, a continent even all over the world.

Dr. Aurélio Sérgio Cristóvão Guterres said that the relationship between Indonesia and Timor Leste is very unique and special. In historical records, Timor Leste was once part of Indonesia. To date the Indonesian atmosphere is still felt in the daily life of the people of Timor Leste, from language, and songs, to foods. The dark history of the two countries was recorded, but for them, the event provided a valuable lesson. Both countries are now focused on looking forward to building a society and living side by side in peace and harmony. According to Guterres, both countries have made a lot of progress in the fields of economy, trade, education, health, transportation, telecommunications, banking, defense, and security.

The border security of the two countries is one of the safest in the world. Since the restoration of independence in 2002 until now, there has never been an incident on the border between the two countries. Indonesia and Timor Leste build cooperation based on mutual trust and respect. Guterres said the world in the 21st century is no longer unipolar and dominated by Western countries.

“This can be seen from the Ukraine War, where most countries, including Indonesia, did not participate in imposing sanctions despite the pressure. Indonesia as the President of the G20 has an important role in world peace. For example, recently President Joko Widodo met with the President of Ukraine and the President of Russia and asked the two countries to stop fighting and have a dialogue,” said Guterres.

In the Asia Pacific, Indonesia is a respected country and has a very important role in terms of the regional economy, trade, and security. For example, when China claimed over the South China Sea or the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia immediately took action because it saw that what China is doing is not in accordance with international law. At the ASEAN level, Indonesia's role is very large. "As one of the founders, Indonesia has always been at the forefront to solve problems that arise through dialogue," said Guterres. And Timor Leste is always ready to cooperate with Indonesia, especially on regional and global issues.

Budi Arie Setiadi said that the relationship between Indonesia and friendly countries was based on the principle of mutual respect. This is reflected in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. Indonesia as a nation also plays an active role in creating world peace.

According to Setiadi, Indonesia's free and active foreign policy is based on the historical aspect that Indonesia has many relations with other countries, starting from the kingdom era until now. He said that from the beginning there was no problem with continuing a free and active foreign policy. "I see it is still strategic to carry out this policy in order to maintain relations with all countries. We don't have to worry about choosing this path because we are a country that has no enemies. Therefore, we can all emphasize cooperation with all countries. So, if this politics is called irrelevant to today's era, I don't think it is correct. Because this policy has been well thought out by the founders of our country,” explained Setiadi, who also serves as the Head of ILUNI FISIP UI.

Regarding village development, Setiadi emphasized that Indonesia is an attractive country for investors compared to other countries because it has tropical agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and natural resources such as mining products. “This potential has not been fully explored. We are a nation that is strong in food security, as well as energy. It is up to us how to wisely and sustainably develop, explore, and grow this potential. But don't destroy the ecology. We have tropical forest land and mangroves, so the responsibility is also big,” said Setiadi.

According to Setiadi, one of the characteristics of President Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) development is village development. This is because the start of the Jokowi administration in 2014 was accompanied by the enactment of the Village Law. Therefore, the government is very concerned with the development that starts in the village. "Because the challenges of future development start from the villages," said Setiadi.

Professor Emeritus of Development Studies, Kyoto University, Japan, Kosuke Mizuno said that Indonesia has always been prioritized as a friendly country for Japan. For example, when the new Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was elected, Indonesia became one of the countries first visited after Vietnam. So indeed, Indonesia and Japan are friendly countries. However, according to Kosuke, all this time, different views began to appear between Indonesia and Japan. For example, during a visit where the Japanese PM invited Indonesia to be anti-China and anti-Putin because the atmosphere inside Japan demanded that. As a result, Indonesia is firm on the issue of the South China Sea, but from an economic or diplomatic point of view, it does not join the ranks of anti-China countries. And Indonesia did not sanction Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. “For the Japanese government it is a bit frustrating, there are diverging views. But the views of Japanese people varied,” Mizuno explained. But for sure, Mizuno said, Indonesia's visits to Ukraine and Russia deserve appreciation.

Indonesia does not join Western countries in imposing sanctions on Russia in the war with Ukraine. There were also accusations that Indonesia can vote with China on the grounds of economic interests. "There is an opinion like that, so indeed, the Japanese people appreciate Indonesia's diplomatic politics. Moreover, Indonesia has a non-aligned history since the Soekarno era" said Mizuno.

Associate Professor Department of Asian Languages ​​and Civilizations Seoul National University, South Korea, Jiwon Suh mentioned the opinion of the media in his country about human rights and Indonesia. There are media in South Korea that highlighted the kidnapping of the bride and groom on Sumba Island and the issue of virginity testing in the TNI. Both are very detrimental to the rights of women. “In the past, there was a virginity test to enter the TNI but not anymore. So, in conclusion, even though Indonesia used to have harmful policies, now it has improved the human rights situation,” said Suh. So that the enforcement of human rights in Indonesia is seen as improving. He also mentioned Indonesia's role in the field of human rights is very important. Even compared to Indonesia, South Korea's role in the field of human rights is relatively less to that of Indonesia internationally.

According to Suh, Indonesia is one of the leading countries, both in ASEAN and the world. In ASEAN, Indonesia's role concerning the Myanmar Crisis is highly expected. But such a role is nothing new. Previously, Indonesia had done many things, such as building a Galang Center for Vietnamese refugees during the Indochina war, and also chairing the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference in 1955 which criticized colonialism. "As far as I know Indonesia has pride in its diplomacy in the field of human rights," he insisted.

The program shows can be seen on the Youtube channel: ISDS Indonesia.

Link: https://youtu.be/\_324ajSp3UQ

Contact us: event.isds@gmail.com

synergypolicies@synergypolicies.com

This press release can also be downloaded from Synergy Policies’ website: <https://www.synergypolicies.com/publication>

IG: @synergypolicies\_

@isds.indonesia





