

## Ninieck Kun Naryatie<sup>1</sup>

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**Q:** *This year marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Argentina and Indonesia. What is your opinion regarding the state of bilateral relations between the two countries?*

A: Indonesia and Argentina have enjoyed a long and harmonious diplomatic relationship since 1956, since the first State visit, followed by visits of high-ranking officials of both countries, shows that the relation is growing stronger. Both countries shared the same aspirations to create a better world based on freedom, lasting peace and social justice. In global issues, Indonesia's non-aligned and non-interference policy are in compatible with Argentine's neutral position. Representing middle income countries and as supporters of international cooperation and trade liberalization, both countries have been working side by side in many forums. As middle-income countries, Indonesia and Argentina strive for the interests of developing countries.

Indonesia's G20 presidency in 2022 will provide broader opportunities for both countries to shape the global economic architecture, increase economic growth and make efforts to overcome the global crisis caused by the pandemic.

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In the economic sector, Indonesia recognizes Argentina as a reliable trading partner. Argentina is Indonesia's second most important trading partner in South America. Indonesia is also one of Argentina's largest trading partners in Southeast Asia. Despite the pandemic, the value of Indonesia's imports from Argentina shows no signs of declining, which proves the strong fundamentals of the Indonesian economy. But plenty of opportunities are there to be exploited, especially in the economic sector. There are commodities and semi-industrial products produced by Indonesia. Our economic structure is compatible and Indonesia is in a better position to supply for the growing demand of raw material needed by the Argentinian industry. In this regard, Indonesia and MERCOSUR, where Argentina is an important member, have decided to establish a Comprehensive Economic Partnership. I hope that next year we can launch the official negotiation status towards this end.

**Q:** *The Government of Indonesia has been pursuing public and cultural diplomacy to increase the awareness of Indonesia abroad. Could you mention a few of the initiatives the Embassy of Indonesia is carrying out to promote Indonesia's cultural and social attractions in Argentina?*

**A:** Public and cultural diplomacy is part of our commitment to enhance people-to-people contact and promote better understanding, also friendship, among citizens. As an archipelagic country located at the crossroad of ancient trade, colonized for hundreds of years, the cultural identity of Indonesia is enriched by many different parts of the world. Local rulers absorbed foreign influences, and Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms subsequently flourished. Islamic Sunni traders and Sufi scholars brought Islam, while Christianity was brought mostly through European explorers.

Indonesia consists of more than 714 ethnic groups and 1001 distinct native languages. But the concept of "Indonesia" as a nation-state had emerged long before we proclaimed our Independence in 1945. A national identity with the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", which means "unity in diversity", has been developed and nurtured since 1928, the time when the youth pledged to fight for their homeland, nation and language, called Indonesia.

Our rich identity and culture are part of the heritage of the world and we have been called for sharing and promoting the sublime values of our culture as our mandate to promote peace and prosperity. Therefore, in each and every Indonesian Embassy around the world, cultural promotion plays an important role in promoting Indonesia's values to the world. In Buenos Aires, we organize "gamelan" music classes at the Embassy every Saturday. Gamelan is a musical instrument made of mixed metals, such as bronze and copper, with pentatonic tones. The Embassy has a group of gamelan players named "Sang Bagaskara", consisting of Argentinians who have been playing the gamelan for 10 years. Over the years the group have performed in many events and recently participated at the RUIDO Festival in *Centro Cultural Kirchner* (CCK) (25 September, 2021) and at The Indonesian Cultural Night at Teatro del Globo (18 November, 2021).

The Embassy also provides a traditional dance class and courses on *Bahasa*, the Indonesian language. Almost every year we also actively hold gastronomy events and participate in tourism exhibitions.

**Q:** *While being the biggest Muslim country in the world, Indonesia is a great promoter of inter-faith dialogue internationally. Could you mention some of the elements that explain the success of Indonesia as a peaceful multi-faith society?*

A: Indonesia has *Pancasila*, the five principles underlying the state ideology of Indonesia, consisting of the belief in God, Just and Civilized Humanity, Nationalism, Democracy and Social Justice. Furthermore, freedom of religion is guaranteed in Article 29 of the 1945 Indonesian Constitution, which states that the State is based on God and the State guarantees the independence of each person to embrace their own religion and to worship according to their religion and beliefs. In Indonesia, there are six religions recognized by the State, namely: Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

It is undeniable that the many differences and diversity make Indonesia vulnerable to conflict. However, the majority of Indonesia is Muslim and, thus, believes that Islam is a blessing for all humankind and promoting tolerance is part of their faith. The tolerant attitude and behavior towards diversity in society possessed by Indonesian citizens is the key to increasing unity and integrity, as well as to preventing conflicts between people.

**Q:** *The current administration of President Joko Widodo is promoting an active foreign policy on economic issues, especially oriented towards non-traditional partners. Could you mention any of the initiatives to increase trade and economic cooperation between Indonesia and the countries of Latin America?*

A: The Indonesian Government continues to pay attention to the Latin American region, especially to increase trade and the economy. On October 14-15, 2021, the 3rd Indonesia– Latin America and the Caribbean (INA-LAC) Business Forum was held on a hybrid basis, attended by 70 keynote participants and 2,745 virtual participants. The Forum has resulted in business deals with a total value of US\$ 87.96 million, consisting of agreed business transactions for US\$ 19.08 million and potential transactions for US\$ 68.82 million. Through its online platform (INA-Access at [ina-access.com](http://ina-access.com)), we encourage businessmen from the Latin American Region to participate and showcase their products in the platform.

Also, to facilitate the businessman from the region, we have established the INA-LAC Business Network, which serves as a forum to encourage the establishment of business networks, dialogue and cooperation between Indonesian and Latin American and Caribbean businessmen. On November 2021, four parties –the Argentine Chamber of Commerce for Asia and the Pacific, the Mercosur-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce (MACC), the Chamber of Importers of the Argentine Republic (CIRA), and Argentina-Indonesia Business Council (CEAI) – signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to join the INA-LAC Business Network, to forge a better link between businesses of the two regions.

**Q:** *Next year Indonesia will assume the presidency of the G20. What are your expectations regarding the coordination of the forum by Indonesia? Could you mention any specific proposal that the Government of Indonesia is willing to push forward in the forum?*

A: Under Indonesia's Presidency, Indonesia will work together with other members of the G20, including Argentina, to establish a new global financial architecture to overcome postpandemic challenges, so that we can recover together and become stronger. We hope the conditions in 2022 will be more conducive for G20 meetings to be held in person.

During its Presidency, Indonesia will push forward five pillars, namely: enabling environment and partnership, promoting productivity, increasing resilience and stability, ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth, and having a stronger collective global leadership.

Indonesia's priority agenda specifically on the finance track is as follows;

- a) Exit Strategy to Support Recovery: discussing how G20 will protect member countries on the road to economic recovery (particularly developing economies) from the spillover effect of exit policies in countries further along in their economic recovery journey (typically advanced economies).
- b) Addressing the Scarring Effect to Secure Future Growth: addressing the scarring effect of the crisis to increase productivity and growth in the long term, while paying due attention to the labor market, households, corporate sector and financial sector.
- c) Payment System in Digital Era: standardizing cross-border payments (CBP) as well as the General Principles for Developing CBDC.
- d) Sustainable Finance: discussing climate risk and the risk of transitioning towards a low carbon economy as well as sustainable finance from a macroeconomic and financial stability perspective.
- e) Digital Financial Inclusion: utilizing open banking to increase productivity, as well as support the economy and financial inclusion for underserved communities, such as women, young people and MSMEs, including cross-border aspects.
- f) International Taxation: discussing international taxation, particularly implementation of the joint OECD/G20 inclusive framework on tax planning strategies known as Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS).

**Q:** *Indonesia was one of the first countries in proposing a vision on the Indo-Pacific regionalization process already in 2013, an issue that was continued by ASEAN in 2019. Could you comment on some of the particular aspects of this vision?*

A: First and foremost, Indonesia's vision on the Indo-Pacific regionalization is a platform to showcase its leadership in regional affairs. With the adoption of the Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, ASEAN is expected to join the Indo-Pacific Infrastructure and Connectivity Forum for its members' own development needs. With Indonesia leading the way, it will encourage other ASEAN member states, especially the maritime states of Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore, to use this Outlook to bypass the strategic rivalry between China and the US. ASEAN member States can use it as another platform to obtain financing support from international organizations as well as from these extra regional powers. This may compel external players to participate in this event as they find it useful to work within this ASEAN-centric Forum to realize their agendas in Southeast Asia.

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific is based on the principles of strengthening ASEAN Centrality, openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention, complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks, equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit and respect for international law, such as UN Charter, the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and other relevant UN treaties and conventions, the ASEAN Charter and various ASEAN treaties and agreements and the EAS Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (2011).