CONCEPT NOTE

REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON DIGITAL DIPLOMACY 2019: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Jakarta, 10 September 2019

BACKGROUND

Rapid development and interconnectedness have directly transformed practices of diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy. One of the many interpretations of diplomacy in the digital age refers to the use of various platform of social media and Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-based innovations in the conduct of diplomatic objectives.

As a tool, digital diplomacy has been utilized by almost every country in the world. However, it remains a challenge to understand its effectiveness and limitations, as well as on how it changes the core function of diplomacy. Adding to the challenge, as one of the most dynamic digital landscape in the world, home to the fastest adopters of new technologies and the largest concentration of mobile and social media users, Asia-Pacific has offered a divergent approach in adopting digital diplomacy.

As follow up of the International Seminar on Digital Diplomacy: Beyond Social Media conducted in Jakarta, on 12 July 2018, the Government of Indonesia will hold a Regional Conference on Digital Diplomacy (RCDD) in Jakarta, on 10 September, 2019 themed **"Digital Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities".** The conference will host experts in the field of digital diplomacy, coming from think tanks, related ministries and institutions from the region.

The conference will become a platform for governments and stakeholders in the region to discuss opportunities and challenges regarding how diplomats and stakeholders use ICT to communicate and formulate policy recommendations. RCDD will also enable future cooperation in narrowing the technological and digital divide in the region.

OBJECTIVES

The conference aims to promote exchange of ideas and experiences and seek opportunities for future cooperation in the field of digital diplomacy between countries in the region by facilitating discussions as follows:

a. Discussion on how digital diplomacy has been implemented in the region;
b. Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to share their knowledge and experience in using digital technologies as instrument to conduct diplomacy;
c. Experts and Government representatives to discuss challenges, opportunities and the future of digital diplomacy, including the effective use of the instrument thus far;
d. Government representatives, private sector, civil societies and practitioners to explore possible collaboration and supports in regional cooperation to develop tangible target in digital diplomacy.

The conference will also introduce opportunities for digital cooperation between private sectors and enable the participants to utilize digital assets as subjects in digital diplomacy.

FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is expected to deliver remarks on the opening of the conference. The conference will be attended by 16 countries in the region, namely Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, or approximately 115 delegates consisting of:

a. The Foreign Ministers or other Ministers related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and digital diplomacy;
b. Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the other ministries related to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and digital diplomacy;
c. Private sector, practitioners and international institutions or NGOs;

The sessions in the conference are arranged as follows:

Session I:
Digital Diplomacy: Overcoming Challenges and Seizing Opportunities

a. **Digital Diplomacy: Beyond Social Media** - presentation about current digital diplomacy practices in the respected countries.

b. **Opportunities and Challenges in Digital Diplomacy** - unveiling challenges and opportunities in the implementation of digital diplomacy and how countries can work together in the field of digital diplomacy.

Session II:
The Role of Digital Diplomacy in Crisis Situation

a. **Digital Diplomacy and the Communication Crisis** – discussion on how false information impacts diplomacy, for example in the event of disasters or protecting citizens abroad and how diplomats can strengthen their capacity and help people counter false information.

b. **Best Practices of Digital Diplomacy** – discussion about how to build messages in the world of diplomacy to minimize the possibility of misinterpretation and how technology and cyber security can help to achieve certain objectives.

Session III:
Utilizing Digital Technology to Achieve the Goals of Diplomacy in Economic Development

a. **Potentials Exploration** – discussion on how to utilize digital diplomacy for economic development in the region.

b. **Current Digital Technology** – discussion about current available technology and how relevant stakeholders involve and utilize technology to form networks and platforms.

Closing Session:
Future Cooperation – wrap up session to review opportunities for future cooperation, creating plan of actions for concrete cooperation and to form regional networks in support of digital diplomacy.

The conference will also include digital technology exhibition held on 10-11 September, 2019. Indonesian unicorns, start-ups and other potential partners are expected to participate in the exhibition.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The results of this conference will be summarized in the **Jakarta Message on Regional Cooperation in Digital Diplomacy** which contains:

a. Recognition of the importance of digital diplomacy, commitment in building messages and digital diplomacy cooperation between relevant stakeholders, including calls for building community free of false information;

b. Plan of Action for sustainable cooperation between governments, private sectors, and other stakeholders in building regional networks to improve the utilization of digital technology for diplomacy.

TIME AND VENUE

Time   : 1. 10 September, 2019 (the conference)
                  2. 10-11 September, 2019 (the exhibition)
Venue   : Hotel Mulia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Thank you for your help in making RCDD a successful event. Should you need any further assistance, kindly contact rcdd@kemlu.go.id.